

Upward Basketball and Cheerleading 2011 Parent Information Sheet

My name is Jim Rogers, the director of the Upward League, and I want to welcome up to our 2010 Upward Basketball and Cheerleading season. Some of you will be new to Upward, so hopefully this information sheet will answer some questions you might have. If you ever have any problems or questions during the season, please let me know. This league is for you and your children and we want to make it the best experience possible.

The Team. We assemble our Upward basketball teams to be as equally matched as possible. Each child is evaluated in 6 different areas and given a number. This number along with other information is input into a computer program provided by Upward and the program selects the players for each team. Our basketball teams are coed. If you do not want your daughter to play on a coed team, we can move her to a cheerleader team or we will refund your money. Our coed teams have worked fine in the past, so hopefully you will opt for her to play. Our plan is to have 6 player teams this year. Each team needs a team parent.

The Game. Upward games are different from other leagues you may have participated in before. Upward provides a rotation system so every child plays at least half of the game. **We ask all players to arrive at least 10 minutes before game time.** If a player arrives after that time and is scheduled to start, they will have to sit out the first period, but will be put in depending on their place in the rotation. Games are played in three 6-minute periods per half. The clock does not stop. No child should sit out two periods in a row. If your child does not play at least half the game or if they sit out two periods in a row (unless caused by injury, illness, late arrival, fouls, or discipline problems), please see me as soon as possible and we will correct the situation. Each player wears a colored wristband. We use the wrist bands to match up players of equal ability giving each player a better chance to succeed. We will play 4 on 4. All games will be on Saturday. We will take one week off for Thanksgiving and three weeks for Christmas. In case of inclement weather please check the web site www.wmumc.org/upward to see if games or practices have been cancelled. We will try and make contact by phone if games or practices are cancelled.

Scores are not kept for the youngest league. In the older league scores are kept but you will not see one team get more than 10 points ahead of another team on the scoreboard. The scorekeepers will keep the correct score and sometimes you may see scores go up for both teams at the same time, for example when one team is ahead 22-10, you will only see 20-10. If the team behind scores, then you will see the score of 22-12. There are some unique rules in Upward during the last two minutes of the game. If fouls occur, points are awarded rather than shooting free throws. The referees are to explain this before the last period begins.

Practices. Practices will be held one hour a week on Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday nights. We will do our best to accommodate any scheduling conflicts marked on your registration form. Part way through each practice, each team will take time for a devotion. Any children not practicing must be accompanied by an adult and must stay off courts and in the Celebration Center.

Stars. Upward stars will be awarded after each game. Different colored stars are awarded for different accomplishments, for example a blue star is awarded for Best Effort. In addition, at each practice, each child who learns the scripture for the week will be awarded a green star. Iron the green stars on one sleeve of the T-shirt and the other colored stars on the other sleeve. Cheerleaders will also receive stars.

Concessions. There will be a concessions stand providing snacks and drinks before, during and after each game. We will offer each player and cheerleader the opportunity to buy a snack coupon good for the season. Details and costs will be provided later. This is an optional purchase.

Picture Day. We have scheduled our picture day for Saturday December 10. We will have professional photographer take pictures and offer packages for purchase. This too is optional.

Coaches and Referees. All of our coaches and referees are volunteers. In our Upward program, no one is paid. Background checks will be run on all adult coaches. All adult coaches will be required to be familiar with our church's Child Protection Policy. The head coach must be a Christian. This is not a requirement for our assistant coaches. Referees are coaches on the floor. They will call violations but may not always take the ball away from the offending team.

Volunteers. We have plenty of opportunities for you to help with this league. As mentioned above, a team parent is needed for each team. We also need coaches and referees. You can help us set up for the games and take down after the games. You can volunteer in other areas such as keeping score or working with concessions.

What Is Expected of Parents. Winning is not stressed in this league. It is much more important for us to build each child's self esteem and character as well as teach respect for coaches, referees and other players. This league is competitive but communicates every child is a winner. All parents are asked to express words of encouragement for all players. Parents are discouraged from expressing negative comments toward players, coaches, or referees. **Please do not express any negative comments where the children can hear them.** If there is a problem with a referee or a coach, please come and find me and I will resolve it. Upward has symbols called Circle of Affirmation and Circle of Criticism. If the children see their parents reacting to coaches or referees in a negative way, they will think it is OK for them to act that way also. That is not what we want to teach. Any player not acting in a proper manner will be removed for the remainder of the period. If the children hear their parents encouraging players, affirming coaches and referees, that is what we want them to learn. The best way to enforce this policy is for parents to police themselves and if you witness someone acting in a negative way, just politely remind them that this is not what Upward is about. If the person continues to make negative comments, please find me and I will deal with it.

Award Celebration Night. This event is scheduled for Tuesday night, February 16, 2012. In Upward, every child is a winner and every child will receive an award. Last year's awards were backpacks for each basketball player and cheerleader.