

Upward Basketball and Cheerleading Parent Information Sheet

My name is Jim Rogers, the director of the Upward League, and I want to welcome to our 2008/2009 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. Upward teams are assembled 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. We hope to have enough girls in the league so we can have girls and boys teams. If we do not have enough girls, then we will have coed teams. 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 worked fine last year, so hopefully you will opt for her to play. Each team needs a team parent.

The Game. Upward games are different from other leagues you may have participated in before. In Upward, every child plays at least half of the game. 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 our 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 wrist band, We use the wrist bans to match up players of equal ability giving each player a better chance to succeed. 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 call the church 877-2270 and select Upward from the menu or check the web site www.wmumc.org to see if games or practices have been cancelled.

In the 5-6 grade league, we will play the first half of the season with no fast breaks, This was done in response to some feedback last year that the teams did not learn enough teamwork. No fast breaks forces teams to play more basketball rather than just run up and down the court. We will reevaluate at the midpoint and make changes if necessary.

Scores are not kept for the youngest league. In the older leagues 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 sheet. Part way through each practice, each team will take time for a devotion.

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 green stars on one sleeve of the Tshirt 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. The cost is \$12 which is \$1.50 per game. With the coupon, each child will receive a choice of one of the following: hot dog, pretzel with cheese, or nachos with cheese plus Gatorade and 1 candy. This is an optional purchase.

Picture Day. We have scheduled our picture day for Saturday December 13. We will have professional photographer to 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 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. Youth coaches and referees are welcome and will be teamed with an adult. 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 discouraged from expressing negative comments toward players, coaches, or referees. 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, then 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 their period. If the children hear their parents encouraging players, affirming coaches and referees then that is what we want then 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 17, 2009. We will have a guest entertainer. In Upward, every child is a winner and every child will receive an award. Last year's awards were basketballs for each basketball player and a cheerleader picture frame for each cheerleader.