

9. **What is my role?** As a parent, you have tremendous influence over the quality of the practice and game-day experience for your child. Here are some things we encourage you to consider as the season progresses:

- Consider being a team parent or other volunteer. This can help the coach maintain a focus on the children while such things as a snack schedule are tended to by a team parent.
- Have your player to practice and games on time. With introductions and lineups to make, knowing that your child is going to be present makes things much easier for the coach. If you are going to miss a game, let your coach know ahead of time.

- Ask your child about the skills and life lessons learned in practice. Review with them the practice card they received – both the skill and the Bible verse.
- Support the coach and the referee with positive comments and actions. Neither the coaches nor the referees are perfect, but it is their goal to provide a great sports experience for your child. Your positive actions will translate to a positive view of the experience by your child.
- Join in with the team after the game and cheer for each child as the award stars are presented.

10. **Tell me about [www.TeamUpward.com](http://www.TeamUpward.com).**

- Upward Sports wants to make sure your child has the best opportunity to learn more about the sport and life lessons the coach shares each week. This website is designed to support what is shared at each week of practice.
- One-minute skills videos will add to your child's knowledge of the sport, while funny animated videos will entertain and encourage the player. Each week's Bible verse also has a video that explains it in greater detail.
- Each week your child will receive an unlock code to open up brand new areas of the site.

11. **What happens when the season is over?** Check and see what else this church has to offer. With this kind of focus on children (conducting a volunteer sports league for the community) you can be confident they have other exciting and fulfilling opportunities for your child and maybe even for you too.

**GET READY FOR AN EXCITING SEASON!**

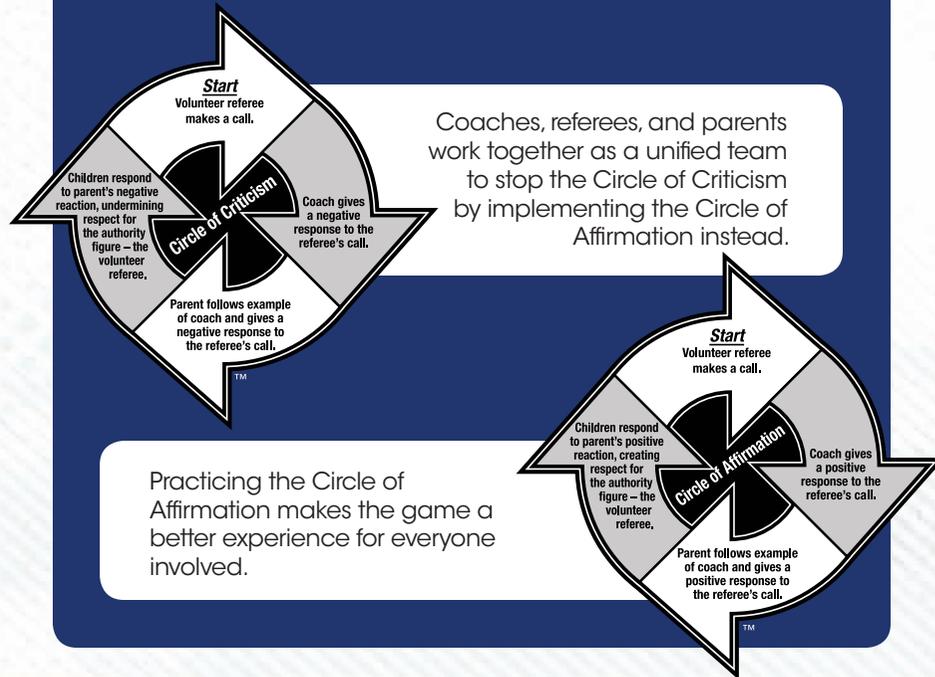
Practices are underway and we want to make sure that you have all the facts you need to be fully informed this season. This guide is designed to answer questions you may have about the league. You can find further information about Upward Sports by visiting [www.Upward.org](http://www.Upward.org).

- What is the purpose of Upward Basketball?** We aim to provide the **best sports experience** for your child. By best, we mean that at the end of the season, we want you to be thinking, "That is exactly what I wanted my child to experience." From the skills and drills, to the lessons on life, to the game-day experience, your child is the focus.
- How is this sports league different from other leagues?** Upward Sports is focused on teaching and further developing a child's athletic skill in a fun, yet competitive environment. This is accomplished through the church's commitment to training all volunteer coaches and referees. In addition to training all volunteers, Upward Sports has created and enforces unique rules to ensure that each participant has an equal opportunity to grow in their athletic skill and enjoyment of the sport.
  - Every child makes the team – there are no cuts in Upward Basketball.
  - Our drafting system balances talent on each team to create the most competitive games possible.



**CIRCLE OF CRITICISM AND CIRCLE OF AFFIRMATION**

The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple concepts that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.



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**UPWARD BASKETBALL**  
**PARENT GUIDE**

c. Upward Sports' unique substitution system makes sure each child plays at least half the game and is in the starting lineup at various times throughout the season. Over the course of the season, each child will have equal playing time.

3. **What are we trying to accomplish?** We really care about your child! Upward Sports knows this is a critical time in the life of your child. During the season, he or she is learning about sports and about life. Along with the church, we want your child to develop athletic skills and a lifelong love of the game. We also want your child to experience positive values, character-building opportunities and a healthy self confidence.

4. **What is my child going to learn?** The Upward Basketball program has several key components:

a. How to play the game of basketball – a positive sports environment where every child improves each season

b. Fundamental skills for playing the game – to play now and possibly at the next level, age appropriate skills and drills are used to develop each player

c. Healthy competition – how to win or lose a game, but remain a winner in life through lessons learned in either situation

d. Life lessons based on truths from the Bible – coaches share Bible verses and personal stories to help each child grow in character and understanding of life from a biblical perspective

5. **How can I find out about the rules and modifications that are part of Upward Basketball?** The rules unique to Upward Basketball can be found online at [www.Upward.org/rules](http://www.Upward.org/rules). Here are examples of a few of these rules and why we have them:

a. Games have 18-minute halves with breaks for specific substitutions each six minutes. By implementing and adhering to this unique substitution system, we can be sure your child is in the game at least half the time, and the games can be played at a high energy level since each player gets time to rest.

b. Defense is not played in the backcourt. This allows the offense to get the ball across the half-court line unchallenged, continuously developing the dribbling, passing and control skills needed once the players are in the forecourt.

c. Man-to-man defense is played at all times. This keeps player matchups consistent by skill level and prevents a very skilled player from dominating the game from a defensive or offensive position, allowing all players to develop and enjoy the game.

6. **As a parent, what about this league will appeal to me?**

a. Upward Basketball is focused on teaching your child skills for the sports arena and values for life while having fun.

b. Your child will be playing at least half of each game, so you won't be watching a game and wishing your child got some quality playing time.

c. This league has supportive coaches and a positive sports environment. It is designed to bring out "the winner" in your child regardless of the game's score.

d. Upward Sports' fun and child-focused leagues limit the time commitment to one practice and one game per week, avoiding parent and player burnout. Parents have asked for a competitive alternative that "stops the madness" in today's kids' sports schedules. Upward Basketball delivers just that.

7. **What is the purpose of the Bible verses during mid-practice huddle and prayer before each game?**

a. Upward Sports has worked hard to prepare messages that teach values for sports and for life. These life lessons are applicable to people of all backgrounds.

b. Coaches will share Bible verses and personal stories to help each child grow in character and understanding of life from a biblical perspective.

c. Each game will begin with prayer. This is done to set the tone and atmosphere for the games. Starting with prayer helps to encourage participants and fans alike to cultivate good attitudes and sportsmanship.

8. **What will Upward Basketball do to help my child feel good about the sport and about the game, win or lose?** We know there is going to be a winning and losing team during each game. We don't keep score for younger ages to prevent the score from being a distraction. But as the players get older, they will experience healthy competition that involves winning and losing. The league director, coaches and referees are trained to bring out the best in each child, regardless of the final score. Here are some of the things they will do:

a. Leagues will be focused on fun as well as learning the sport.

b. We will not keep standings or have end-of-season tournaments. This allows each game to begin with equally matched and ranked teams, with the win or loss only existing for the game time, not for weeks at a time.

c. Referees will explain violations and fouls as needed. This way, your child will understand what he or she did wrong and see how to not repeat the offense in the future.

d. At the end of each game, every player will be recognized for performance and contribution to the team during the game. The coaches will use different colored stars to point out a positive quality of each player, like **Offense, Defense, Sportsmanship, Effort, or Christlikeness**. These qualities will create not only a better player but also a better person.



e. Your child will be recognized with an end-of-season award at an awards celebration. This is an exciting event that allows all athletes and their fans to come together to celebrate the entire season.