

# Youth Basketball Landscape in the U.S.



An Overview for parents, players, and others provided by  
the National High School Basketball Coaches Association

## NOW



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## THEN...



# A.THE LANDSCAPE

*The landscape of amateur basketball in the United States continues to change rapidly, particularly in Youth Basketball. There are so many people, leagues, programs, and organizations vying for a spot in the marketplace that it can be overwhelming, as there are so many voices with differing messages and it is hard to know what to do. **Some say that Youth Basketball is in a state of crisis.***

## CONSIDER SOME OF TODAYS REALITIES:

The United States Sports Association, or USSSA, is a non-profit with 501(c)(4) status, a designation for organizations that promote social welfare, According to its most recent available IRS filings, it generated \$13.7 million in revenue in 2015, and the CEO recieved \$831,200 in compensation. The group holds tournaments throughout the nation, and it ranks youth teams in basketball, baseball, and softball.

Youth sports is a 15.3 billion dollar industry. A huge number of people have created products, programs, or events to lure parents and players to make money as a business.

Youth sports travel is scoring big as communities across the country build sports complexes to draw young players and paretns to their sites as a method of economic development.

Many parents sincerely believe their child will only be able to afford college if they get a basketball scholarship. The rumors and myths have become a reality to many.

There are national tournaments for teams as young as third grade.

Only 1 in 10,000 high school athletes get a **partial** college athletic scholarship

A growing body of research has found that intense ealy specialization in a single sport increases risks of burnout, injury, and depresseion among athletes

Less than 3% of all High School athletes play their sport in college.

Fees and travel costs are pricing out lower-income families.

## B. The Objective

The objective of this document is to ensure the overall well-being of individuals participating in youth basketball. The NHSBCA's sole desire is to help amateur basketball players and parents better understand the landscape, help them develop a process to navigate and enjoy the game of basketball, and provide them with resources to find the best information and organizations available.

**The NHSBCA hopes this package will help parents and players as well as all interested in the game to...**

1. Understand some of the basics and get the big picture view of amateur basketball in the United States.
2. Know where and how to find reliable and accurate information to aid in making informed decisions.
3. Develop a process to make informed decisions based on facts rather than fiction.

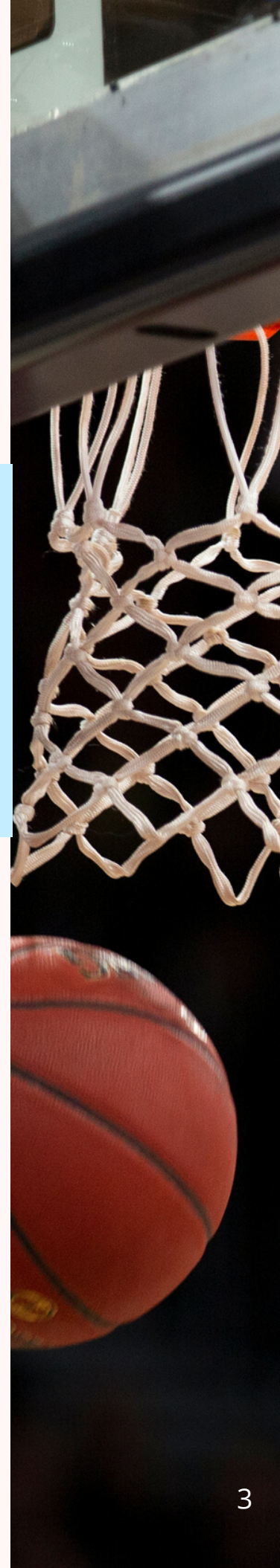
## C. What Does Research Say About Why Kids Play Sports?

Research shows that the number 1 reason kids play sports is **to have fun**. Picture to the right are the results of a survey of youngsters asking what the most fun aspects of youth sports are. (Source: Amanda Visek of George Washington University Fun Mapping)

1. Trying your best
2. When coaches respect players
3. Getting play time

4. Playing well as a team
5. Getting along with teammates
6. Exercising and being active

48. Winning
63. Playing in Tournaments
67. Earning medals/trophies
73. Traveling to new places



# D. Thoughts from the NHSBCA to Parents



1. A “Sports Parent” might be someone whose life is controlled by athletic events. It is as if youth sports have taken over everything for kids and parents
  2. Keep in mind that a major reason youth stop playing sports is parental pressure involved with playing a sport.
  3. Try to make decisions based on fact and personal research, rather than on rumors and what other parents tell you, “you must” do for your child.
  4. There may be no single factor driving the professionalization of youth sports more than the dream of free college conveyed to/by parents.
  5. Your child needs to feel your support, not your interest in wins and performance. Youth play sports to have fun, and that should be important to parents as well.
  6. Some kids feel that one of the most unpleasant parts of playing sports is the ride home with their parents.
  7. Parents should make sure that the people working with their child are competent, that conditions are safe, and should go watch D1, D2, and D3 college games in their area to see the various levels of play.
  8. Consider how good your kid is and who said so...Has your child reached puberty? This makes a great difference. Is your child: Elite? All-star? Top 100? A phenom? ← These terms are used by many to get the attention of a young athlete and their parents.
  9. Seek an honest and unbiased evaluation on a player’s ability and how likely it is they can achieve their goal
- \*\*\*Academic success is incredibly important as well
- \*\*\*The NHSBCA endorses programs like: *Power of Positive Coaching Alliance*.
- \*\*\*We recommend visiting their website: <https://www.positivecoach.org/>

## E. Consider Some Realities About College Recruiting

College organizations (NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA) have rules, guidelines, and restrictions as to when college coaches may recruit future players. The college organizations provide people lots of **FREE** information about the recruiting process.

It is critical that parents and players understand only a small percent of high school players move on to play on college teams. The problem is that people don't understand the process and how difficult it is to achieve.

A wide variety of individuals and businesses are angling to make a profit from the recruiting process. All kinds of promises are made to kids and parents.

The proliferation of youth coaches, teams, leagues, camps, recruiting services, specialization coaches, and exposure events is driven by the goal of "BEING SEEN" by college coaches.

"Agents" are third party people who try to influence the player and or player's parents in regard to college choice. They might say, "If you play on this travel team or go to this event, you will be seen."

There may be no single factor driving the professionalization of youth sports more than the dream of free college conveyed by parents.

## F. Different Levels of Collegiate Play

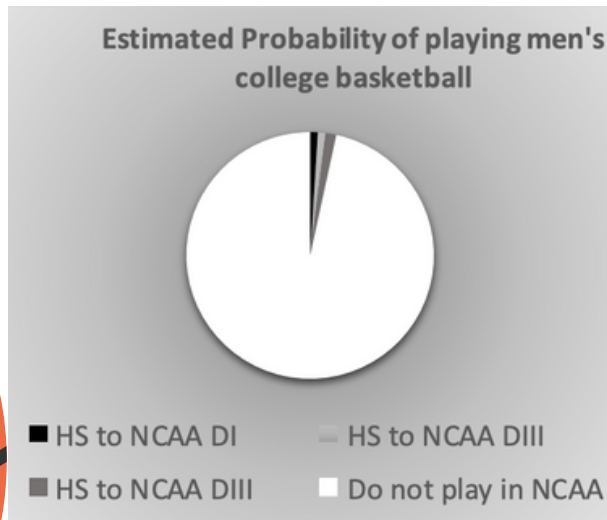
<b>NCAA</b> National Collegiate Athletic Association	<b>NAIA</b> National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics	<b>NJCAA</b> National Junior College Athletic Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Division I: Athletic Scholarships</li><li>• Division II: Athletic Scholarships</li><li>• Division III: No Athletic Scholarships</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Division I: Athletic Scholarships</li><li>• Division II: Athletic Scholarships</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Division I: Athletic Scholarships</li><li>• Division II: Athletic Scholarships</li><li>• Division III: No Athletic Scholarships</li></ul>

All levels of play provide varying levels of competition. It is important to research these levels to find what's best for your athlete.

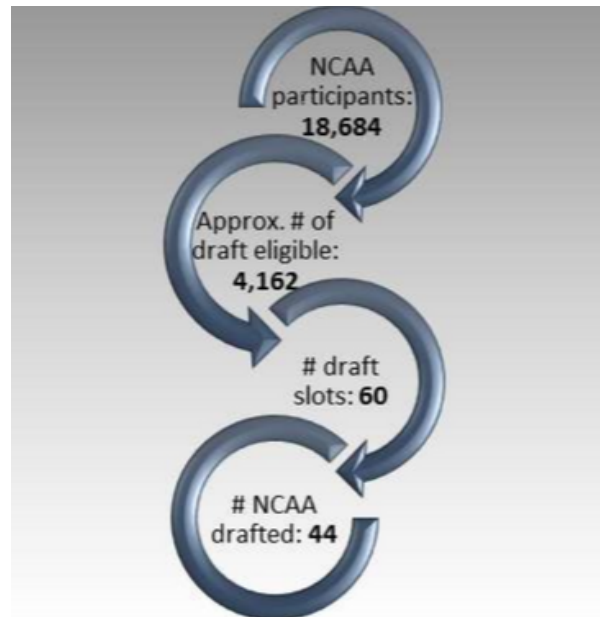


# G. Statistics About Playing in College

(Provided by NCAA probability of competing beyond HS)

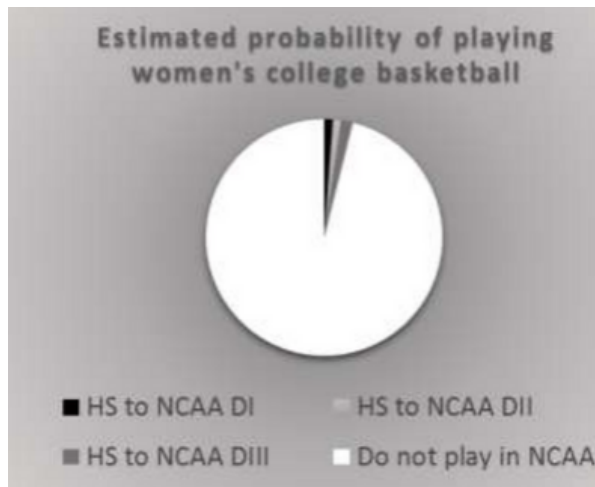


**Figure 1.** This figure shows the estimated probability (in percentage) of playing in the NCAA out of a sample of 546,428 high school players.

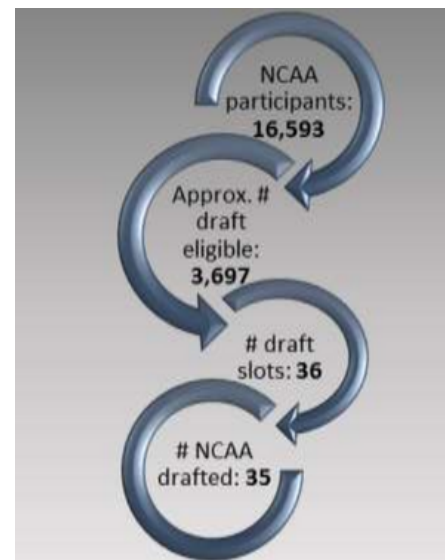


**Figure 2.** This figure shows the estimated probability of playing men's pro basketball.

*Of 546,428 HS men's basketball participants, **only 18,684** will compete in the NCAA*



**Figure 3.** This figure shows the estimated probability (in percentage) of playing in the NCAA out of a sample of 429,380 high school players.



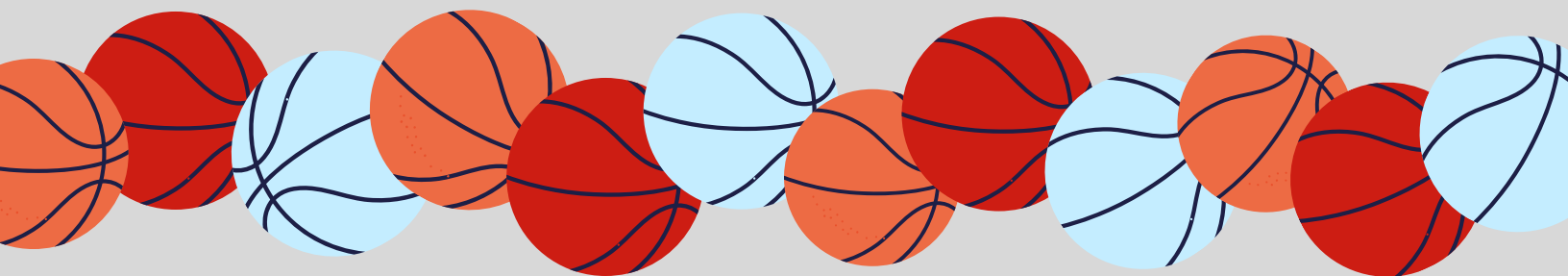
**Figure 4.** This figure shows the estimated probability of playing women's pro basketball.

*Of 429,380 HS women's basketball participants, **only 16,593** will compete in the NCAA*

# H. Consider the Rise of the Youth Sports Industry and it's Financial Impact on Families

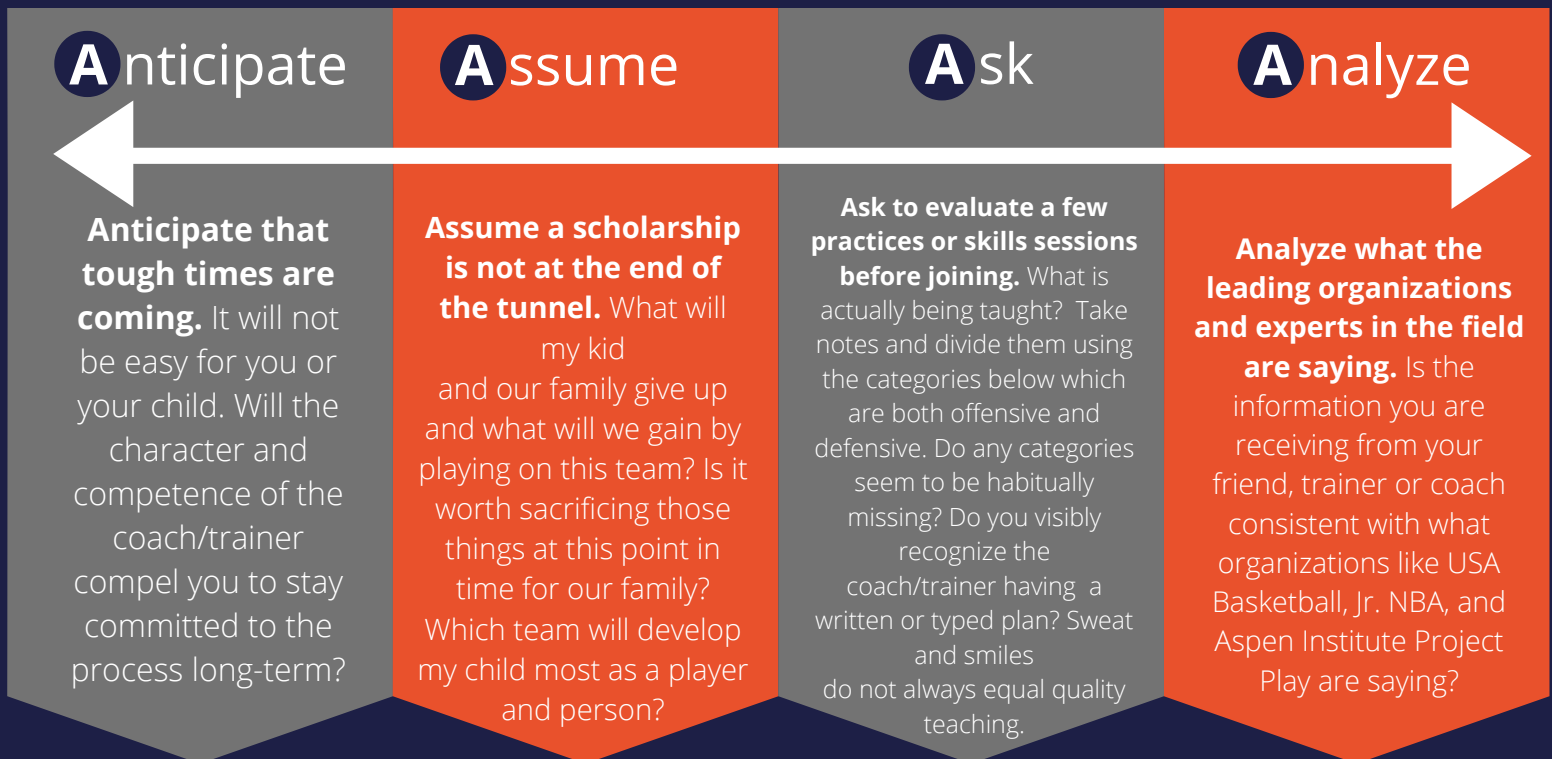
(From TIME Magazine article, August 24th, 2017, "How Kids' Sports Became a \$15 Billion Industry")

1. A range of private businesses are mining this deep, do-anything parental love, causing the nation's youth-sports industry to grow by 55% since 2010.
2. Major media and retail companies are investing in technology that manages peeewee schedules.
3. Parents have used GoFundMe to help pay for the travel expenses.
4. Companies do things like process payments for club teams, offer performance analytics for seventh-grade hoops games and provide digital social platforms for young athletes.
5. The national retailer Dick's Sporting Goods has acquired companies that specialize in online scheduling and score tracking for youth sports.
6. Last year NBC bought Sport Ngin, a scheduling and social app that has raised \$39 million in venture funding, and rechristened it SportsEngine. In August, SportsEngine launched a searchable directory of more than 100,000 youth-sports camps, teams and leagues.
7. TIME's parent company launched Sports Illustrated Play after acquiring three youth-sports-software startups. SI Play's apps now has 17 million monthly unique users. According to SI Play CEO in the past 18 months, investors have plowed over \$1 billion into the youth-sports market.
8. Westfield, IN issued \$70 million in bonds to build Grand Park Sports Campus, a 400-acre complex that opened in 2014 and includes 31 grass and synthetic fields for soccer, lacrosse and other field sports, 26 softball and baseball diamonds, and a 370,000-square-foot indoor facility. The city is hoping that tax revenue generated by new hotels, retail outlets and medical facilities near the park will eventually pay off the debt. In 2016, the facility had 1.5 million total visitors and put \$162.6 million into the local economy.
9. Opening soon is the Sports KingDome, a facility with 347,000 sq. ft. of indoor space--enough to fit a dozen multi-sport fields, or six Little League baseball fields -- is slated to open on the site of a former IBM campus in East Fishkill, N.Y., some 70 miles north of New York City. It will become one of the largest domes on the planet, and the owner plans to auction naming rights to the highest bidder. The \$25 million, all-weather complex will allow families in the populous northeastern U.S. to play travel soccer, lacrosse and baseball 12 months a year, just like they do in the Sun Belt.
10. Basketball is pricing out a lot of its player base between exorbitant fees for gym time, travel expenses for travel teams, trainers fee, etc. A kid today who wants to be good has few outlets to improve without a major financial investment.



# I. A Process to Help Navigate

## *Four A's to "Recognize Value" and "Eliminate Junk"*



## Questions to Ask Any Coach/Trainer/Organization:

1. Is this person someone your school coach knows/trusts/communicates with? If not, are they willing to?
  2. Is this person a high character individual with a good reputation locally? Are they willing to let you talk to their current clients about their experience?
  3. Will this person be conducting sessions in small groups/individually or are they just trying to fill a gym to maximize revenue? If it will be small groups training, what will the variance in player attributes be (size, gender, age, skill level, etc.)?
  4. Do they have experience training players of the same age, size, skill level, etc.?
  5. Are they making promises/claims (scholarships, playing time, starting role, etc.) if you train with them? If they are, are they willing to put those promises/claims in writing?
  6. What kind of feedback and growth measurements will they provide you? Will there be a long-term plan, or just a series of workouts?
  7. Where will training be located? Will it be a consistent location, or will it be floating based on availability?
- What is their cancellation policy (whether they cancel or you have to)? Do they work with another trainer who can fill in if they have a conflict arise? How do the questions above apply to that trainer?
8. How is my child's confidence and self-esteem going to be impacted by joining this team? Will my child be treated with respect and grow as a person?

(information provided by Greg Flynn, Basketball Coaches of NY and Rich Czeslawski, NHSBCA Board member)

# J. Individuals Involved With the Sport of Basketball



## *Important Things to Remember:*

As players and parents, you will want answers to the following types of questions: Are they Trained?  
Certified? Licensed?  
Approved? Making money from their work with youth basketball? Do they have clean background checks?



# K. NBA and USA Basketball Announce Guidelines for Youth Players

From the NBA:

The NBA and USA Basketball have teamed up to develop the first-ever youth basketball guidelines aimed at improving the way children, parents and coaches experience the game, with a specific emphasis on promoting player health and wellness.

These guidelines have received the endorsement of youth-focused organizations that collectively reach tens of millions of youth, including Boys & Girls Clubs of America, YMCA of the USA, National Recreation and Parks Association, JCC Association, National High School Basketball Coaches Association, and Positive Coaching Alliance. The NCAA also supports these guidelines as being in the best interest of the sport and the health and well-being of the youth basketball community. Additionally, these guidelines have received the endorsement of Adidas, Nike, and Under Armour.

In the spring of 2016, the NBA and USA Basketball established three expert working groups focused on the following areas: Health and Wellness, Playing Standards, and Curriculum and Instruction. Their work was endorsed by the Jr. NBA Leadership Council, which is chaired by Retired U.S. General Martin E. Dempsey and consists of prominent basketball influencers and stakeholders.

The Health and Wellness working group drafted a scientific paper that makes eight key recommendations for promoting a positive and healthy youth basketball experience. Highlights include:

**a. Delay single-sport specialization in the sport of basketball until age 14 or older**

Participation in multiple sports in early childhood is beneficial from a player health and player development perspective. Athletes that reach the highest level of achievement are more likely to have played multiple sports at a young age and delayed single-sport specialization until late adolescence.

**b. Limit high-density scheduling based on age-appropriate guidelines**

High-density competition scheduling can increase risk for injury and burnout. Parents, coaches and event directors should be cautious in considering tournaments that schedule multiple competitive events (i.e., games) in short periods of time.

**c. Ensure rest from organized basketball at least one day per week, extended time away from organized basketball each year, and adequate sleep each night**

Daily rest is important for injury prevention, sport development and overall health. Rest days should be taken each week, and extended time off should be taken each year for physical recovery as well as to recharge oneself psychologically. Such an approach, along with getting the recommended amount of sleep, helps to maintain motivation for continued participation.



**For detailed suggested and maximum participation recommendations, rest guidelines, and the suggested player segmentation model, please visit the following link:**

**<https://youthguidelines.nba.com/>**



# About the NCSBCA:

**The National High School Basketball Coaches Association is an umbrella organization uniting nearly 40 states that have State Basketball Coaches Associations to work for the betterment of the game. The NHSBCA is the national voice for high school basketball coaches, working to foster high standards of professionalism and to support coaches. The NHSBCA also welcomes representatives from States that do not have basketball specific organizations. The NHSBCA works with other organizations involved with basketball such as National Association of Basketball Coaches, Women's Basketball Coaches Association, NCAA, NJCAA, USA Basketball, Amateur Athletic Union, and the National Federation of High School, among others.**

To see a list of references, visit: <https://nhsbca.org>  
Questions or comments contact Dave Archer: [bcanyinfo@gmail.com](mailto:bcanyinfo@gmail.com)

Written and organized by Dave Archer, NHSBCA Senior Director of Operations, with help from NHSBCA Board

members including Rich Czeslawski, Greg Grantham, Tom Hursey, Matt King and NHSBCA President, Nalin Sood. Also Greg Flynn of the BCANY. Original Design by Thérèse Boyle.  
Updated Design by Kailyn Lukaszewski.

Last Modified: July 2020

# Appendix

## Some Organizations on the Youth Basketball Landscape Information and Information From Their Websites:

### **National Travel Basketball Association**

<https://playntba.com/>

The National Travel Basketball Association (NTBA) hosts tournaments across the country for boys and girls 3rd-12th grade.

### **Nike Elite Youth Basketball League**

<https://nikeeyb.com/>

Nike Elite Youth Basketball is dedicated to developing athlete potential through superior skill instruction, honest evaluation, and unprecedented exposure.

### **Big Shots**

<https://www.bigshots.net/>

Boasts 85 events, 32 cities, 18 states, and they label themselves as the nation's Premier Youth Basketball Events.

### **Middle School Elite**

<http://middleschoolelite.com/>

Ranks players and teams as young as second grade.

### **Adidas Uprising**

<https://adidasuprising.com/>

Each summer, Adidas Uprising provides a platform for tomorrow's basketball stars to develop their game, improve skills, and their individual game as well as experience basketball as a global sport with Adidas Nations.

### **GBA-Girls Basketball Association**

<https://www.gbabasketball.com/>

Running tournaments every weekend in March, April, June and into July. Most weekends, they have over 170 to 200 teams playing in tournaments throughout Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

### **National Youth All American Report**

<https://www.nyaabasketball.org/>

Ranks players as young as 3rd grade. NYAA "Finding' Tomorrow's Stars Today."

### **US Amateur Basketball**

(Not to be confused with USA Basketball-the official governing body.)

<https://usamateurbasketball.com/about>

US Amateur Basketball provides a national basketball platform that brings together the grassroots tournament operators from around the country

### **PTS-Prime Time Sports**

<https://www.playprimetime.com/>

Hosts 150 events over 48 weekends in 20 states, and claims the largest single venue national championship with 900 participating teams.

# Appendix Continued...

## **USSA- United States Specialty Sports Association**

<https://www.ussa.com/home/>

USSA's mission is to be the most visibly recognized, technologically advanced, and professionally represented sports organization in the world. It generated \$13.7 million in revenue in 2015 with their CEO being paid \$831,200. Ranks youth teams in basketball, baseball and softball. Softball rankings begin with teams age 6 and under, baseball starts at age 4.

## **YBOA- Youth Basketball Organization of America**

<https://yboa.org/>

Youth Basketball Organization of America is an international body, which promotes youth basketball worldwide. YBOA is a non-profit organization located in Orlando, Florida, which offers league development, tournaments, uniforms, educational clinics, scholarship programs, support materials, merchandise and insurance programs.

## **AAU- Amateur Athletic Association**

<https://aausports.org/>

The AAU has focused its efforts into providing sports programs for participants of all ages beginning at the grass roots level. AAU has organized basketball for players under 8 years old through 12th grade with thousands of teams.

## **USJN- United States Junior Nationals**

[https://www.usjn.com/about\\_new.php](https://www.usjn.com/about_new.php)

USJN is one of the longest running organizations in girls' basketball. As the first privately owned company outside of AAU to offer girls basketball tournaments, it started running tournaments across the country in 1986 and has been sponsored by Nike since the early 1990's.

## **Hoop Group**

<https://hoopgroup.com/>

A comprehensive basketball company dedicated to fulfilling the dreams of players, parents and coaches by providing the best instruction, competition and exposure. Team tournaments hosted by Hoop Group provide a premier stage for top high school student-athletes to compete and display their basketball prowess to fans, college coaches and scouts in their High School showcases.

## **JR. NBA**

<https://jr.nba.com/>

The Jr. NBA is the official youth basketball participation program of the NBA, with the goal of helping encourage and support youth basketball participation at the grassroots level and to improve the overall youth basketball experience for all participants.

