

Basketball Parent Checklist

Printable one-pager AAU + recruiting + injury-prevention + program evaluation

1. AAU Entry Timing When your athlete should join travel basketball

Readiness checklist - green lights before you commit the family schedule and budget:

- * Fundamentals hold up under pressure - dribble, passing, defensive footwork.
- * Coachable - takes correction without shutting down, asks questions.
- * Family bandwidth - multi-day tournaments + distant travel are realistic.
- * Financial awareness - AAU commonly \$2,000 - \$6,000 / year all-in.
- * Intrinsic motivation - the drive is theirs, not pushed by parents.

Age bands:

- U10 Build the foundation first. Rec leagues + skill clinics. Avoid travel.
- U12 First exposure window. 1-2 tournaments / season. Skill > winning.
- U14 Ramp intentionally. Elite coaches, competitive brackets, scout exposure.
- U15+ Recruiting visibility. April + July NCAA evaluation windows at 15U / 16U.

2. NCAA Recruiting Timeline Freshman through senior year

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| Freshman | Lock the academic baseline. D1 needs a 2.3 core GPA; competitive programs ride 3.0+.
Take and track the 16 NCAA core courses - they are the eligibility floor. |
| Sophomore | April + July AAU evaluation windows at 15U-16U open. Build a 3-5 min highlight film by EOY: basketball skills first, then 3-5 plays with game context. |
| Junior (Sept 1) | Coaches can have off-campus in-person contact from this date. Official visits open.
Before Sept 1: prospects may initiate in writing (email / text / DMs). |
| Unofficial vs official | Unofficial = self-funded, any age. Official = coach-funded, opens junior year.
Prioritize 3-5 visits max; quality of fit beats volume of campus stops. |

3. Injury Prevention Common issues + parent protocol

Common overuse issues worth flagging:

- Patellar tendinitis - jumper's knee, front-of-knee pain after heavy loading.
- Ankle sprains - proprioception work + bracing on return-to-play.
- Sever's disease - heel pain ages 8-14, heel cups + load reduction.
- Stress fractures - persistent single-spot soreness -> imaging early.

Parent protocol - baseline for the season:

- * Two full rest weeks inside every 12-week block. Tissue repair happens in rest.
- * Cross-train 1-2x / week: swim, cycle, or yoga break repetitive-stress patterns.
- * Rotate footwear every ~6 months; shock absorption goes before the shoe looks worn.
- * Sleep 8-10 hrs / night for ages 10-17; measurable reduction in injury risk.
- * Hydration baseline: 0.5 oz water per lb bodyweight per day, more on practice days.
- * During growth spurts, reduce training volume even if the athlete feels fine.

4. Evaluating Training Programs What a quality program looks like

Green flags - interview any trainer with these:

- * Credentials + philosophy - verifiable background, written training philosophy.
- * 80 / 20 practice structure - 80% fundamentals + skills, 20% team / live play.
- * 4 : 1 player-to-coach ratio max - individual feedback drives development.
- * Written 30 / 90-day progress updates - clear benchmarks, not vibes.

Red flags - walk away if you hear:

- * Recruiting outcome promises ("we'll get you a D1 scholarship").
- * Multi-sport discouragement - youth athletes benefit from varied movement.
- * Over-scheduling - no off-season, no rest blocks, year-round intensity.