



**Joondalup Wolves**

**WABL Tryouts**

**INFORMATION PACK**

Designed to provide clarity for players, coaches & parents trying out for a Joondalup Wolves representative WABL team.

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## What is WABL Basketball?

‘The Western Australian Basketball League aims to provide a state-wide premier junior competition which develops players, coaches and officials. The League seeks to meet the high-level competition requirements through accessible education and training, while promoting positive mental, physical and emotional outcomes’

– WABL February 2017

The Western Australian Basketball League (WABL) is WA’s premier junior basketball competition catering for players in the following age groups: U12, U14, U16, U18, U20 and Open Age (D- League).

The WABL introduced divisions graded depending on ability. This process has been progressively phased in year to year and in 2023, U12, U14, U16s and U18s will all be graded at the WABL Grading Tournament in early 2023.

Games are played on Sundays over an 18-week home and away season, plus three weeks of finals.

The season generally commences in the last weekend of April with finals finishing at the end of September.

The WABL is currently comprised of 13 Basketball Associations from both the metropolitan and country regions extending from Joondalup to Southwest (Bunbury).



## About the Wanneroo Basketball Association (Joondalup Wolves)

Established in 1983, the Wanneroo Basketball Association is the most successful and professionally operated basketball Association in Western Australia. Based in the heart of the northern growth corridor, Joondalup, our popular and high-profile club has been in existence for over 35 years.

The Association has grown substantially, becoming a large, integral and highly influential organisation within the northern metropolitan community. In late 2017, the Association built and relocated from the iconic Joondalup Basketball Stadium to the new state-of-the-art HBF Arena, a bespoke facility for Basketball, a genuine home for the future.

Through its extended representation in Junior, Senior and representative competitions, the Association has more than 5,000 registered players (members) through what is seven large, volunteer governed affiliated domestic clubs; with numbers bolstered by the many thousands of spectators who pass through the stadium every week of the year.

The Wanneroo Basketball Association aspires to be 'The Destination of Choice for Basketball', welcoming and growing by over 500 new players per year, as a notably progressive, inclusive, accessible and affordable sporting option for the WA community.

The pinnacle of the Association is the NBL1 1 Men's and Women's teams. The Joondalup Wolves, as they are proudly known, have been in existence since 1983 and have experienced much success in their time, including 10 Championships between Men's and Women's teams.

The club is committed to sustainable success, and prides itself on a high-performance culture, from junior ranks all the way through to the professional levels of the sport and business.

The Wanneroo Basketball Association is a destination for physical health, participation, personal development and social connectivity. Management's objective is to position the club as a true destination for all, a genuine hub of the Perth community and our growth projections remain significant, as does our exploration of new models and stadia to service our demand.

Our commitment to further, sustained growth is evident in our recent recruiting activities, as we evolve our organisational structure to deliver more quality outcomes into our existing member base, as well as boosting our business and basketball development roles and activities.

Our club possesses an inherent belief and commitment in what we do, the quality of our service and the strength of our programs and products. Go Wolves!



## Playing WABL Basketball

The nature of WABL basketball is that players represent the Wanneroo Basketball Association, as the Joondalup Wolves, at an elite level in addition to playing local domestic basketball. Players from all domestic clubs are welcomed and encouraged to tryout for the Joondalup Wolves.

Benefits of WABL basketball include:

1. Opportunity to compete at an advanced level
2. Improved basketball skills and knowledge of the game
3. Exposure to different coaches and coaching methods
4. Developing new friendships and social networks

Players are selected into to age group teams as follows:

### State Championships – 2023

- Under 11 (Birth between 1st Jan 2013 & 31st Dec 2015)
- Under 13 (Birth between 1st Jan 2011 & 31st Dec 2012)
- Under 15 (Birth between 1st Jan 2009 & 31st Dec 2010)
- Under 17 (Birth between 1st Jan 2007 & 31st Dec 2008)
- Under 19 (Birth between 1st Jan 2005 & 31st Dec 2006)

### WABL Season – 2024

- Under 12 (Birth between 1st Jan 2013 & 31st Dec 2015)
- Under 14 (Birth between 1st Jan 2011 & 31st Dec 2012)
- Under 16 (Birth between 1st Jan 2009 & 31st Dec 2010)
- Under 18 (Birth between 1st Jan 2007 & 31st Dec 2008)
- Under 20 (Birth between 1st Jan 2005 & 31st Dec 2006)



## The Difference Between WABL & Domestic Basketball

WABL Basketball is highly competitive with increased expectations on players. WABL players are expected to listen with a focus on learning to improve their basketball skills and knowledge. Most players enjoy this challenging environment and thrive as a result of it; however, it is important to note that there is generally higher expectations and more pressure than in domestic basketball.

Other important differences include:

- No guarantee of selection – Trying out for WABL basketball does not mean the player is guaranteed placement in a team, and placements cannot be appealed or disputed.
- Roles – Players can be allocated specific roles in the team based on their size, their abilities and that of their teammates. They often don't have the opportunity to play in all positions in a game situation.
- Court time – Players are not rotated evenly as is often the case in domestic. Players will have more or less time on court during the game, depending on a number of factors including skill level, match-up to opposition players, participation, attitude, behaviour and attendance at training and performance in games.

## Required Commitment

WABL Basketball is a year-long commitment:

Try outs are held in October/November each year. There are 2-4 tryout sessions for each age group and teams are then selected by the selection panel and age-level coaches.

State Championships are played in November & December each year and form part of our WABL selection process.

WABL pre-season training runs from November to March (excluding school holidays) with practice games, pre- grading and grading games used to determine the appropriate competition grade for each team.

WABL season runs from April to August (excluding school holidays). Teams will play home and away games on Sundays, across metropolitan Perth and regional WA which may include overnight stays as required.

WABL Finals are played in September to determine the winner of each level of competition.



## Commitments Expanded

All players and parents/guardians must be prepared to meet the following commitments:

1. Weekly Commitments:
  - Sunday game, home or away dependent on fixture
  - 2 x Mid-week trainings for 1 to 1.5 hours on a scheduled evening
2. Tournament Weekends (All are compulsory):
  - State Championships in November/December
  - Grading Tournament in February
3. Domestic Commitments:
  - All players participating in representative basketball **MUST** play junior domestic basketball at WBA during the winter season. Exemptions apply in certain circumstances (refer to WBA website).
4. General Commitments:
  - All players, coaches, parents and spectators must agree to abide by the WBA and Basketball WA's Code of Conduct
  - Commit to pay all WABL fees as prescribed
  - Players are expected to attend all trainings and games even if injured
  - Players are only permitted to train in WBA sanctioned training sessions for insurance purposes
  - For any major injury, including concussion, players are required to provide medical clearance prior to recommencing training or games
  - All players must wear the official training and playing uniform and apparel as required by the WBA

PLEASE NOTE: WABL training and games takes precedence over all other basketball commitments except state or NBL1 representation. Players are expected to prioritise their commitments accordingly.



## Coach Appointment Process

WABL coaching applications are called for via the WBA website and social media. The WBA will identify, recruit and appoint coaches at its discretion.

Once coaching applications close the WBA WABL coach selection panel meet to appoint coaches to specific age groups/genders. Follow up interviews are held at the discretion of the selection panel.

Coaches are appointed to age group/genders prior to tryouts (this includes head and assistant coaches). Appointments are announced via the WBA website and social media.

At a later stage in the representative tryout process, coaches are appointed to specific teams and specific roles.

PLEASE NOTE: Coaches are not named to specific teams until later in the tryout process to ensure the upmost transparency in our selection process and to protect selected coaches from unfair accusations or perceptions. All coaching appointments are made at the discretion of the WBA selection panel and ratified by the WBA Management.



## Selection/Tryout Process

Joondalup Wolves WABL Program Tryouts are advertised via the WBA website, our social media networks and the WBA online database. Players trying out must register online prior to tryouts.

Players trying out are required to arrive 30 minutes prior to all tryout sessions to sign in. During the sign in process the players will have a number written on their arm and leg.

Players are NOT permitted to wear representative attire of ANY association to tryouts. This is to ensure a fair and open tryout process, with all athletes (representative or domestic) given the same opportunity without there being any perceived bias towards existing WABL players. Players who wear representative or state attire to a tryout session will be given a verbal reminder and a written note to take home by WBA staff in the first instance and have their name recorded. In the second instance, athletes will not be allowed to train.

NOTE: If players don't have a non-representative reversible, they will be required to bring a dark and light shirt to train in.

WABL tryouts are run by the appointed representative coaches and the WBA selection panel.

The tryout program and curriculum is set by the appointed WBA staff.

Tryout sessions for each age group will be run by coaches from different age groups to ensure the age group coaches can focus on making selections. E.g. when U/12 boys try out, the U/14 coaches may run the session so that the U/12 coaches can focus on selecting.

Head coaches and selectors compile their selections and make notes during the tryout sessions. At the conclusion of each tryout session, panel members and head coaches meet to discuss selections. All head coaches and selection panel members make selections for the entire age group, not just a specific team. This is to ensure that the right athletes are selected in all teams.

Selections are made utilising the "player selection criteria" (which can be found later in this document). In instances where coaches disagree with selections recommended by the selection panel, the onus will be on the coaches to provide (basketball related) factual reasons why the selection should be changed or altered.

At the conclusion of the last tryout all team selections are submitted to the WABL Tryouts Selection Panel for approval.

PLEASE NOTE: All selections are made utilising the "player selection criteria" and are based on merit/performance, not reputation or connections. All selections are made at the full discretion of the WBA selection panel. Only head coaches will be involved with the selections to minimise the volume of opinions.



## Mid Try Out Selections

Traditionally referred to as “cuts” mid try out selections will be made after the first round of try outs. Due to the volume of participants and the need to make decisions early in the process, the selection panel and coaches will make a first round of selections after the second try out. The final rounds of try outs will be by invitation only.

The players invited back for the final rounds of try outs will be posted on the WBA website in the week after the Mid Try Out Cuts.

PLEASE NOTE: After the second round of tryouts an initial “cut” or selections will be made and only selected players will be invited back for the final rounds. This means registered participants are only guaranteed a minimum of 2 sessions in the try out process.

## Try Out Exemptions

If you are unable to participate in the try outs due to injury or availability you can apply for an exemption to be in consideration for selection. The selection panel will work with you to discuss your options but please note if you are unavailable for try outs there are no guarantees of selection.

PLEASE NOTE: Try out exemptions are only offered using the criteria outlined in the exemption policy of the WBA website.

## Team Announcement Process

After the conclusion of tryouts, team selections will be announced on the WBA website and social media, this process may take up to a week.

Following the team announcements, the appointed team coach will email selected athletes with further information and ask players to confirm acceptance of their position in the team.

Teams then begin pre-season training/practice games and preparation for grading.

## Team Finalisation Process

Throughout the State Championships, WABL Grading and preseason training period players may be moved up or down in teams based on performance, commitment, attitude, behaviour or other factors.

At the conclusion of grading, teams are set and finalised for the remainder of the WABL season. No changes will be made from this point onwards, except under exceptional circumstances.

PLEASE NOTE: Teams are finalised at the discretion of the WBA appointed staff.



## Player Selection Criteria - Tryouts

The document provides the criteria the selection panel will utilise during the tryout process. While these criteria provide a guideline, subjectivity is unavoidable. All selections are made at the discretion of the WBA Tryout Selection Panel.

### ATTITUDE – *The attitude to become an exceptional basketball player*

Coachability, mental toughness, leadership, concentration, temperament, determination, commitment, performing in adverse conditions, resilience, coping with pressure/setbacks/criticism and persistence.

### PHYSICAL – *Athleticism and physical attributes*

Physical capabilities/attributes including height, arm length/wingspan, general fitness, vertical jump, sprint speed, aerobic and anaerobic capacity, endurance, flexibility and agility.

### TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL ATTRIBUTES – *Basketball specific skills and abilities*

Footwork, ball handling, passing, finishing, shooting, ability to defend 1 v 1, anticipation, decision making, ability to read play, understanding basketball specific concepts, cutting, spacing, playing off pick and roll, setting/using screens, ability to implement offensive and defensive structure/schemes.

### POTENTIAL – *Potential to improve and develop into a higher level basketball player*

Great attitude, coachability, room for growth/improvement, rapid improvement in performance level in a short period of time, physical attributes.

### APPLICATION - *Individual application in training and competition*

Reliability, availability, respect to coaches/teammates/officials, outstanding work ethic, compete in every drill, compete on every play.

### TEAM ORIENTATION - *The ability to fit into a team*

An individual's ability, to fit in and influence the team in a positive manner. The ability of the athlete to understand and accept a role. Is the athlete a great teammate? Are they encouraging and supportive? Do they celebrate other athlete's successes?



## Frequently Asked Questions

General WABL Basketball Questions:

Q) *What are the benefits of playing WABL Basketball?*

Playing WABL basketball allows athletes to play in the highest level junior basketball competition in our state and has been a key pathway for many of Australia's best players. It also exposes athletes to a higher standard of competition and a higher standard of coaching. The WBA has made significant investment in appointing professional coaches to support and guide our representative program, including a Player and Coach Development Manager and Coaching Coordinator. In addition to the basketball related benefits, there are also general health and fitness benefits, social benefits and the life skills learned on and off the court.

Q) *What level of commitment is required to play WABL basketball?*

WABL basketball is essentially a year-round commitment. At minimum, athletes are expected to attend weekly practices (normally evenings midweek) and a Sunday WABL game (these games are held across greater Perth and regional WA). There is also a financial commitment required to play representative basketball.

Q) *If I play WABL basketball with Joondalup do I have to play domestic basketball?*

Yes, all Joondalup Wolves Junior Representative Players are expected to play junior domestic basketball at the WBA. Exemptions may be available upon application and are granted at the discretion of the WBA, please visit the WBA website for more information on the exemption process.

Q) *Are WABL basketball athletes allowed to play other sports?*

Yes, representative basketball athletes can play other sports. However, representative basketball is a serious commitment and athletes are expected to meet the expectations as outlined throughout this document.

Q) *If my son/daughter cannot attend training sessions regularly due to other commitments, can they still play representative basketball?*

Representative basketball is a serious commitment, the inability to attend training sessions may impact player selection. These situations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis upon application to the WBA appointed staff. When registering for tryouts, athletes are required to outline any training restrictions.



*Q) Is playing time guaranteed for representative athletes?*

No, court time is NOT guaranteed. However, coaches are encouraged to fairly (not evenly) distribute court time based on level of commitment, application, behaviour and attitude at practice and in games. Playing time is distributed at the discretion of the head coach and will not be dictated by parents/guardians. Players who are concerned about playing time are required to appropriately discuss with the head coach, areas the athlete can improve to receive more court time. If there are still ongoing issues, the player may raise their concerns with the Player and Coach Development Manager.

*Q) How were the representative coaches selected?*

WABL coaching applications were called for via the WBA website, social media and distributed through the WBA database to domestic clubs and previous WABL coaches. The WBA coach selection panel appointed coaches to age groups/ genders prior to tryouts. At the conclusion of the tryouts coaches are appointed to specific teams and roles.

*Q) Why aren't coaches named to specific teams before tryouts?*

To ensure a transparent selection process, coaches are not appointed to specific teams prior to tryouts. Additionally, not appointing coaches to specific teams protects coaches from unfair accusations or perceptions of bias. This method of appointment also allows the WBA to have flexibility in appointing parent coaches as they can be placed where their child is selected not where the parent/coach is placed.

*Q) When are representative coaches appointed to specific teams?*

Representative coaches are appointed to specific teams after the conclusion of the tryouts. These announcements are made at the same time teams are announced.

*Q) Are all the Representative coaches qualified?*

Yes. All Joondalup Wolves representative coaches are required to hold a minimum Club Coach (Level One) Accreditation and Working with Children Check prior to the commencement of the WABL season. Additionally, the WBA invests heavily in coach education and development running multiple professional development sessions for representative coaches to attend.



Q) *What is the pathway for players at the Wanneroo Basketball Association?*

The Wanneroo Basketball Association offers the opportunity for players to progress from grassroots programs through to domestic basketball and then into state-wide representative basketball competitions. The junior representative teams play in the WABL and the senior representative teams play in the NBL1 competition. In addition to the core programs, Wanneroo Basketball also offers a number of camps and development programs to help players progress to higher levels in the pathway. In 2020 the WBA Representative Program implemented the “Wolfpack Way” Curriculum to ensure there is consistency of what is taught throughout the rep program. The “Wolfpack Way” curriculum aligns with directives set by Basketball WA and Basketball Australia so that our athletes have the best opportunity to progress to higher level programs.

### **Try Out Questions:**

Q) *Why are the tryouts closed to parents and spectators?*

Representative tryouts are closed to all parents/guardians and spectators to ensure that all athletes are given the best opportunity to perform without outside distractions and to avoid potential for perceptions of bias to arise. They are also closed to protect the integrity of our selections and allow coaches to avoid conversations and interaction with parents during the tryout process. Only coaches, selectors and WBA staff will enter the courts during tryouts. First aid will be on site and emergency contact details will be readily available in case of any emergencies. All coaches, selectors and WBA staff involved in the tryouts will possess a working with children check.

Q) *Why can't athletes wear Representative or state attire to tryouts?*

To ensure all athletes are given the same opportunity without perception or bias, athletes must NOT wear Representative or State attire of any kind to tryouts. This also allows players new to representative tryouts to feel comfortable and welcomed without the pressure of being in the minority that do not have representative attire. Please refer to page 9 for more information.

Q) *What happens if my child cannot attend any of the tryout sessions?*

You will need to apply for an exemption as outlined on the WBA website. Exemptions may be granted at the discretion of the WBA.

Q) *What are the coaches and selectors looking for in players?*

Coaches/selectors are looking at a wide variety of skills and attributes in athletes. Page 11 outlines the key attributes that players will be assessed on at the tryouts.



Q) *How are WABL teams selected?*

As outlined throughout this document, teams are selected by the WABL selection panel and age-level coaches. A team is selected on a balance of positions and although your son/daughter may be for example the 5<sup>th</sup> best guard in the age group it does not necessarily mean they will be selected in the first team, as each team requires a balance of players in every position.

Q) *When are the Rep teams finalised for the WABL season?*

While teams will be named after the conclusion of the Representative tryouts – teams for the WABL season are not finalised until the end of grading.

Q) *My child was promised that they would be in a certain team next year, why didn't this happen?*

The WBA does not make any promises to athletes about which team they will be selected in prior to tryouts. All selections are made on merit at the tryouts each year based on the selection criteria. If you or your child have been made promises or were under the impression that your team would stay together for multiple years, unfortunately this is not the case and is NOT in line with our selection process, policies or criteria.

Q) *If my child has made a 1st team previously, shouldn't they make a 1st team again this year?*

No, all selections are made on merit each year. Athletes that make 1st teams in one year, do not automatically gain selection in the 1st team the following year. Athletes all progress at different rates and some athletes may be early developers, while others may be late developers. Each year team balance may also change which could affect athlete selection. Athletes are assessed by the selection panel against the selection criteria and placed in teams accordingly.

Q) *Why aren't WABL teams finalised until the end of grading?*

By not finalising teams until after grading, the WBA can ensure all teams are appropriately selected with athletes in appropriate teams. Movement between teams may be made in the best interest of the program and only by approval of the WBA appointed staff.

Q) *What if my child doesn't tryout well or gets nervous during tryouts?*

It is unfortunate that some athletes do not perform well in tryout situations, however, it is also important for Representative basketball athletes to be able to perform under pressure as this will translate to pressure situations in games. As mentioned above, athletes can also be moved up or down if appropriate during grading to ensure teams are correctly selected.



*Q) My child is better than a child that was selected above them, how can that happen?*

While we understand each parent may have a subjective opinion on the ability of their own compared to others, the selection panel is led by elite professional full-time coaches who are experienced and trained in the assessment of player ability. The selection panel may provide feedback on areas to improve, however, under no circumstances will the WBA discuss the selection of athlete's with anyone other than their own parents. There are a number of factors involved in our selection process which are detailed in this document.

*Q) I believe my child is in the top ten players, why didn't they make the 1st team?*

When selecting Representative teams, the WBA selection panel does not just select the 10 best skilled athletes or the 10 best scorers; there are many factors that impact the selection of teams. For example: Positional balance - when selecting teams, coaches need to ensure there is an appropriate number of athletes selected in each position (guards or forwards).

*Q) My child plays A grade in domestic basketball, yet a C grade player was chosen above them. How/why does that happen?*

WABL team selectors and coaches do not take into consideration what level domestic team players play in. There may be many factors why a player does not play in A grade, for example, their club may not have entered an A grade team, so they played in the grade their club was placed.

*Q) My child wants to play with their friends, or we want our team to stay together. Can this happen?*

All selections each year are made on merit. This is a representative program and teams will be selected accordingly based on the selection criteria and at the discretion of the selection panel. Factors such as friendship and other non-basketball factors cannot be taken into consideration when selecting representative teams. Although, many coaches and parents want teams to stay together season to season this is not a philosophy shared by the WBA and many examples can be counter-productive in the development of young athletes.

*Q) I have two children in the same age group, can they be picked in the same team?*

Generally, this will not be considered due to the limited number of position available in our program, however in exceptional circumstances and based on team numbers an application to the selection panel will be considered. It is our preference that all athletes be selected in teams based on merit. In exceptional circumstances where parents/guardians request siblings be placed in the same team, both athletes will always be placed in the lower grade team that one of the siblings was selected. For example, if one of your children is selected in the second team and the other in the first team, the first team player would be lowered to the second team. The second team player would not be promoted to the first team.



*Q) Why was my child cut before the end of all the try outs?*

The try outs are split into two sections across four sessions. The first two sessions are used to determine which players are capable of playing at WABL level. The second two sessions are used to determine which team your child will be placed in at WABL level.

If your child was cut after the first two sessions this is due to the selection panel deeming your child is not quite ready to play at WABL level at this association. However, the selection panel encourage them to continue to play in the junior domestic competition, improve their skills and try out again next year.

*Q) I believe that my child did not get selected because the coach doesn't like them. How is this possible?*

No one individual is responsible for picking the team. All team selections are made by a selection panel comprised of a minimum of seven people. Therefore, no one person's bias can account for more than one seventh of the vote that decides player placement. The WBA does not allow personal bias or agenda to influence or dictate player selection. The WBA is fully committed to a fair and transparent selection process aimed at selecting players with the skillset and attributes aligned to our selection criteria.

*Q) I believe my child never played on the top court or against the "better" players during any of the sessions.*

The WBA does not identify a top or bottom court as such and only uses courts to group players of like ability. At each session players are initially placed on courts using their registration number so, therefore will be randomly placed on courts with players of varying size, skillsets, experience, and ability. The WBA selection panel will group players together that coaches want to see compete against each other in order to comparatively assess their ability against all players.

