



West Ottawa Basketball | Tryout Guide for Coaches

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This document contains comprehensive information to help guide coaches through the entire competitive tryout process, from athlete check-in to roster offers.

Pre-Tryout Communication

We recommend that you email all tryout registrants 1-2 days before the tryout to introduce yourself as the coach and inform or remind them of a few key things:

- A little bit of background about yourself and your coaching staff and about our West Ottawa values
- Tryout dates, time, and locations
- Arrival time
- Reminder to stay outside the gym until the preceding tryout is done and those athletes have exited the gym
- Reminder to **bring a ball** (make sure you underline and call this out). Coaches' balls easily go missing when lent to players who forget to bring their own. Also, call out that all player balls should have their name marked on them.
- Reminder to bring 1-2 water bottles and to fill them up at home. Players will not have time during the tryout to run to water fountains.
- Reminder to ensure valuables, such as cell phones, are not left out in the open during tryouts. We have had them go missing before at tryouts.
- Notification that only coaches and athletes are allowed in the gym during tryouts. The one exception to this rule is that parents may stay in the gym for the first ten minutes of our U10 tryouts.

Template: [Pre-Tryout Communication](#)

Athlete Check-In

Here are some key tips for managing the athlete check-in process for each tryout:

- We recommend two non-coaches manage the check-in table. Coaches will be busy prepping the gym, connecting with players and reviewing the tryout plan. A coach's

spouse, older child, or a West Ottawa executive member have been used in the past to manage check-in.

- When you receive your registration roster from our admin team, number each player on your evaluation document. At check-in, mark both legs of each athlete with their tryout number.
- If there is a tryout in progress before your tryout, all athletes must remain outside the gym until the time of your tryout.
- Only athletes and coaches are allowed in the gym during tryouts. Parents, siblings, and other spectators are not allowed in the gym and are asked not to watch through the doors. One of the reasons we do this is that we have had coaches from other associations try to come into our tryouts in the past to recruit players. The one exception to this rule is that parents may stay in the gym for the first ten minutes of our U10 tryouts.

Number of Tryouts

All players are guaranteed two tryouts with West Ottawa. Since players can feel significant anxiety, be ill, or just not show their best selves on a single day, we enable everyone with two opportunities.

Coaches may choose to offer a third tryout if needed and pending gym availability.

Tryout Format Tips

Coaches are free to use whatever format they prefer for tryouts. That said, here are some recommendations:

- Putting players in small-sided games (2v2, 3v3, 4v4) is an excellent way to really see how a player performs in game-like situations and how they think the game. The smaller the numbers, the more touches a player will get and the more they can show you their capabilities.
- 1v1 is a great way to see how a player defends on the ball. It's also a great way to see if a player can break down a defender, use counters and make great reads.
- Consider the style of play you desire to play and reflect that in your drills and games. For example, if you like your team to play with a lot of pace in transition you could consider advantage/disadvantage transition games.
- One good thing to observe is how a player reacts to being uncomfortable and how they react to being coached. Running a drill where you are teaching them something new is a great way to do so. See who is willing to be uncomfortable in trying something new and who has more of a fixed mindset and isn't willing to be vulnerable. See who reacts well to coaching, with positive body language, and who isn't listening very well.

- Remember to run a good warm-up and cool down. Many athletes may be trying out for multiple teams. They also may not be fully in game shape. We have seen a lot of injuries in tryouts in the past.

Tryout Plan Template: Here's a [template](#) you can use to develop your tryout plan

Tryout Plan Sample: Here's a [sample plan](#).

Evaluating Players

Here are some tips for properly evaluating players:

- The hardest thing to do at a tryout is to run it, and at the same time properly evaluate players. Our recommendation is to leverage a member of our executive team or the coach of another West Ottawa team to help you run the drills and games so that you stay focused on evaluating players, not worrying about if the cones are in the right place, and the players are executing the drill properly.
- You should however, ensure that you have a strong presence with the athletes at the tryout. Many players are likely trying out for other teams so they are also evaluating you. Communicating to the group at the start and end of tryouts, and running some drills is a good way to demonstrate your presence, your style, your communication abilities, and your knowledge of the game.
- Don't select players in your mind before the tryouts. Be open to seeing how they have developed over the summer.
- Consider your style of play and what you value the most when evaluating players. The 12 best players might not be the best 12 for *your* team.

Evaluation Templates:

- [Simple Template](#)
- [Detailed Template](#)

In our experience, the more detailed template above looks better on paper, but in practicality is harder to complete in the midst of watching players in a tryout.

Making Offers

Selecting the team and making offers is one of the most difficult, and stressful, parts of coaching. Here are some tips to help make this process a little easier:

- We prefer that all offers are made at the conclusion of the tryout process. That said, you may make offers after one or two (if you are holding three) tryouts. We have done this in

the past when there has been a gap in between the tryouts and the team was concerned about the strongest players accepting offers from other teams in between.

- We recommend putting a 48 hour time limit on your offer. This ensures that you confirm your roster ASAP and, importantly, can then inform the players who were not selected as quickly as possible.
- When you make an offer after a first tryout and it is not accepted by a player within your 48 hour time frame, the offer is withdrawn. The player can still be offered a second offer after the second tryout, but their roster spot is not guaranteed if other players are stronger in the second tryout and you would prefer to select them.
- You must inform all players who were not selected. Our reputation as a club is built on doing things the right way, with character, integrity, and respect. Informing players who were not selected, and ideally giving them some insight on what they can work on is in keeping with our values and reputation.
- As soon as you have your roster complete, send it to Dee Whitmore ASAP. She needs to submit it to the OBA and she will send you an email for you to forward to your parents with a link to register and an OBA Player Contract for each player to sign. Player rosters must be sent to the OBA before your team can practice, for liability purposes.

Offer Templates:

- [Player Offer Communication Example](#)
- [Player Not Selected Communication Example](#)