

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we prepare for the start of the upcoming basketball season, we want to take a moment to share our vision for the Ponchatoula Basketball Association (PBA) and set the tone for the year ahead. Though PBA and Ponchatoula Area Recreation District (PARC) are separate entities, we wanted to write this letter collectively to express our partnered support for changing the culture of sportsmanship in Ponchatoula.

I wanted to also use this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Mark Verbois, and I recently accepted the role as Director for Ponchatoula Area Recreation District (PARC). In speaking with the heads of our individual sports leagues, including the Ponchatoula Basketball Association and their Commissioner, Raymond Belvin... one of our main goals this year, and going forward, is that we are committed to building a culture of good sportsmanship, respect, and positivity for our kids, coaches, and families.

At the heart of our program, we want to create an environment where every child can learn, grow, and have fun through the game of basketball. This is a youth sports recreation league, and it is essential that we keep things in perspective. **This is a game**—a chance for kids to develop skills, build friendships, and enjoy the experience of being part of a team. We are here for those kids and priority #1 for them, and for us as adults, should be FUN.

We ask for your support in fostering a culture of positivity, respect, and encouragement. To that end, I'd like to share a few reminders and expectations for the upcoming season:

- **Coaches are volunteers:** Our coaches are dedicated individuals who give their time and energy to teach and guide your child. They are here to support the kids and create a positive environment. Please remember, they are essential, and they are doing their best to help kids learn and have fun.
- **Referees are human:** Our officials are here to ensure that games are played fairly and safely. Mistakes may happen, but we ask that you model patience and respect toward them. Criticism or negative comments about the officials will not be tolerated. Finding referees/umpires is becoming a major obstacle for sports programs and this is at the heart of it.
- **This is not professional sports:** We are not here to create a competitive, high-stakes environment. This is a league focused on fun, learning, and sportsmanship. Our goal is to provide a positive, supportive experience for all involved.
- **Respect for all:** We expect all players, parents, and coaches to show respect to each other—whether on the field, in the stands, or on the sidelines. **No negativity**

towards other teams, players, referees, coaches, or anyone involved in the game will be tolerated. We want our kids to see that playing with integrity and good sportsmanship is the true spirit of the game.

As parents and guardians, you play a key role in setting the tone for the season. Please encourage your child to embrace the values of teamwork, respect, and positivity. Help us create an environment where all kids feel safe, supported, and excited to play.

Thank you for your understanding and commitment to making this season a positive experience for everyone involved. Let's work together to make this a season focused on fun, learning, and building lifelong memories for our kids!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of us.

Warm regards,



Mark Verbois

Director

Ponchatoula Area Recreation District #1



Raymond Belvin

Commissioner

Ponchatoula Basketball Association