

Youth Basketball Tournaments Keep Budget Afloat

At a time when recreation departments everywhere are being asked to do more with less, Ogden continues to thrive thanks to a four weekend fundraiser each winter.

When the Ogden Community Services Department was created in 2005, the Ogden Middle School handed over the Little Bulldog Basketball Tournament. This tournament generally consisted of a few 5th and 6th grade boys' and girls' basketball teams from out of town playing against the Ogden school teams on two weekends. Finding teams was a challenge, and the tournament was never completely filled.

In 2006, the department's first year of running the tournament, we changed from a double elimination bracket to a single round-robin format with 4 teams per division. All games are played in one gym at the middle school. One grade plays each weekend, so there are 6 hours of boys' games and 6 hours of girls' games each Saturday. To keep things fun and competitive, teams from schools and towns similar in size and/or in close proximity to Ogden are given priority, and no all-star or AAU teams are allowed to enter. Each participant receives a ribbon, and the winning teams receive medals and a team trophy. The tournaments filled up quickly the first year and 16 teams were scheduled to play on two weekends. Coaches and parents appreciated knowing that they would get 3 games and play against each team. They also enjoyed that each division played its games within a 6 hour time span, so the tournament did not take up an entire day.

To maximize the profit, these tournaments have relied mostly on volunteer officials and scorekeepers from the community, and we charge a small admission fee for spectators. A shared use agreement with the Ogden Community Schools allows us free use of the gym. A concession stand is available and is run by civic groups from the community. This allows us to focus on the tournament and give another group in town the chance to raise funds.

In 2007 fees were increased (at the suggestion of the competing teams amazingly) and the tournament was expanded two more weekends to include 7th and 8th grade teams. For 2007 and 2008, 32 teams participated each year with the tournaments sometimes filling up 3 months in advance.

The past two years, these tournaments have accounted for nearly 20% of the recreation revenue brought in by the Community Services Department, and most of the funds come from outside of the community. This allows us to charge less for our other youth programs that are held throughout the year, maximizing the funding that we are given.

If you have any questions regarding these tournaments, please contact me.

Matt Beatty
Community Services Director
City of Ogden
Phone: (515) 275-4800
Fax: (515) 275-4888
Email: lgccogden@netins.net
Website: www.ogdeniowa.net