



## Clippers Junior Basketball Program Review

Clippers Basketball is reviewing the structure of our Junior Basketball Program to ensure it best supports:

- **Player development**
- **Fair and competitive competitions**
- **Positive experiences for families, coaches, and volunteers**
- **Clear pathways for players of all levels** (including social, development, and representative)

Right now, Clippers uses a centralised team allocation model where players register and are placed into teams by a small group of organisers. Some members have told us this system feels too top-down, offers limited choice, and lacks consistent coaching and training pathways.

This survey presents **three options** for how our Junior Program could run in future. Please read each option carefully and share your feedback.

### **Important note:**

All options would still include grading and rules to maintain fair competition. The key difference is **how teams are formed and how development/coaching pathways are organised.**

### **Option 1 — Current Model: Centralised Allocation**

#### **What this looks like**

- Players register directly with **Clippers Association.**
- A small group of organisers decide:
  - which team each player is placed in
  - what division each team plays in
- Teams may change significantly from season to season.
- Coaches may not coach the same group long-term.
- Training is not consistently organised as a “team pathway”.

#### **How it would work in practice (example)**

- A 13-Year-Old boy registers as an individual.
- Clippers allocates him into “Team U14 Boys Greentech” based on organiser assessment.
- The coach will be a parent volunteer for the games, but no team training sessions are included.

- The following season, he might be placed in a completely different team with different teammates and a different coach.

### **Positives / Potential strengths**

- Simpler to administer (one registration system, one organiser process)
- Reduces the chance of pre-made teams stacking divisions (because teams aren't self-selected)

### **Challenges / Risks**

- Limited player and parent sense of belonging to a group/club
- Less opportunity for consistent training plans and long-term player development
- Less chance for coach continuity, mentoring, and development pathways
- Can feel opaque (members may not understand how decisions are made)
- Heavy reliance on 1–2 people, creating risk if they step away

## **Option 2 — “Stepping Stone” Model: Self-Nominated Teams + Strong Fairness Controls (Grading + Points/Rules)**

### **What this looks like**

- Players still register through Clippers.
- Families, coaches, and groups can **create and nominate their own teams**.
- Clippers introduces **fairness rules** like:
  - a **grading period** (e.g., 2–3 weeks at the start of the season)
  - a **player points system** or rep-player limits
  - rules on transfers and movement to prevent stacking
- Teams are responsible for:
  - arranging a coach (parent or community coach)
  - organising team training. Clippers would still offer Saturday morning group training.

### **How it would work in practice (example)**

- A group of 8–10 kids from the same school wants to play together.
- A parent volunteers to coach.
- They nominate a team: “Dream Team U14 Boys”.
- During the first 2–3 weeks, teams play grading games.
- Clippers places them into Division 2 based on results.
- If the team is clearly too strong/weak, Clippers can regrade after Week 3–4.

### **Example fairness tools that could apply**

(These are examples only)

- All Div 1 and 2 rep players must be in Div 1.
- Maximum number of lower-level representative players per team in lower divisions

- A points cap per team (rep players = higher points)
- Restrict “importing” rep players from other teams/associations.
- Transfer approvals if movement impacts competition integrity.

### **Positives / Potential strengths**

- **More choice and autonomy** for families and players
- Stronger **team identity**, belonging, and enjoyment (players can stay together)
- Better **coaching continuity** (coach can work with the same group over seasons)
- Encourages voluntary **team training** and development
- Reduces the “centralised allocation” feeling by making the process more community-led
- Still maintains fairness through **structured grading and clear rules**

### **Challenges / Risks**

- Higher risk of **stacking** if fairness systems aren’t strong enough
- Some players may register without a team and still need support being placed
- Quality of coaching/training can vary depending on volunteers
- Requires clear communication so members understand the rules

## **Option 3 — Full Club-Based Model: Clippers as the Umbrella + Multiple Clubs + Pathways Under Each Club**

### **What this looks like**

- Clippers becomes the overarching association body.
- Under Clippers, there are 4–6 official clubs (examples only):
  - Clippers North
  - Clippers Central
  - Clippers South
  - Clippers Development Academy Club
- Players join a **club** (not just the association).
- Each club has:
  - a small committee/volunteer structure (Club Director, Coaching Coordinator, Team Managers, etc.)
  - responsibility for team nominations, coach support, training programs, and culture
- Clippers sets association-wide policies:
  - competition rules (points/rep limits)
  - grading processes
  - integrity and fairness controls
  - dispute and appeals processes
  - referee development structures, etc.

### **How it would work in practice (example)**

- A new U12 girl registers and selects “Clippers South Club”.

- The club runs an induction / assessment session.
- The club places her into:
  - a development team, or
  - a competitive team, depending on skill level and preference.
- That team trains weekly under the club's structure.
- Coaches receive support:
  - coaching resources
  - mentoring
  - shared training plans
- Each season, players remain in their club, creating long-term relationships and identity.

## What “pathways” could look like inside a club

Example pathway:

- **Social Teams** (learn to play, minimal training)
- **Development Teams** (1 training per week + skill focus)
- **Performance Teams** (structured training + advanced tactics)
- **Representative Pathway** (club supports and prepares players for rep trials)

## Positives / Potential strengths

- Strongest model for **belonging and community culture**
- Clear player pathways from beginner → competitive → performance
- Best model for **coach development**:
  - mentor system
  - coaching education funded/organised by clubs
- Removes the reliance on 1–2 central organisers to run everything
- Makes Clippers sustainable by distributing workload across clubs
- Aligns closely with how many successful associations operate

## Challenges / Risks

- Biggest change to implement (more planning and transition time)
- Requires volunteers to run clubs (committee roles need filling)
- Needs clear governance so clubs don't run “wild west”
- Requires consistent fairness controls across all clubs to avoid:
  - uneven talent distribution
  - recruitment issues
- Needs a staged rollout plan (often 1–2 seasons to build properly)