

LOS ANGELES LIGHTNING RELEASE
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Lightning moving to IBL Winter season **Pro basketball team will start in mid-November**



The Los Angeles Lightning is switching seasons.

After playing in the spring for its first three years in the International Basketball League, the pro basketball team will compete in the 2011 IBL Winter season, which runs from mid-November to the playoffs in January.

The Lightning, which has featured eight former NBA players on its star-studded roster, captured the 2009 IBL Championship. That squad was led by Lamond Murray, Fred Vinson and Toby Bailey.

The team went 14-6 in 2010, led by IBL All-Star Trayvon Lathan (26 ppg, 11.5 rpg), and has won 19 of its last 22 home games.

"We have a developing business opportunity that would have created a conflict with the latter part of the Spring season," said Lightning owner and GM Mark Harwell. "After three years in the spring, we felt it was time for a change. I think it will be a good fit to play during the traditional basketball season."

The IBL, a high-scoring league that allows just one timeout per quarter, will start its seventh Spring season in April. The first Winter season was held in 2010 with nine teams competing. Four advanced to the playoffs and the Kankakee Soldiers won the inaugural Winter Cup on a 40-foot shot at the buzzer on Jan. 16, 2011.

The Lightning will continue to play its home games at Cal Lutheran's Gilbert Sports Arena in Thousand Oaks. They expect to play about 20 games in the winter campaign.

Harwell said the team will also continue to hold fund-raisers for local charities and high schools. The Lightning provides local high schools with 500 tickets to sell for a specific game and then shares half the proceeds with the school's athletic department.

The Lightning has made a big impact in the community by offering free youth tickets to Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Ventura County; Boys and Girls Clubs and local youth baseball leagues. They've also established charitable partnerships with the Agoura Youth Basketball Association and the Rising Star Music Fund.