

Commonly asked questions about the MSA Program:

Dear Parents:

Welcome to another fun and adventurous school year. The Middle School Athletic Program is excited to kick off another great year with your student-athletes participating in the multiple seasons we offer. For those parents who have never been involved with the Middle School Athletic Program, I have listed some of the top questions and answers that typically occur at the start of school. Please take a few minutes to go over these questions, and if you are still confused or have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Chase Hartmann, MSA Coordinator: 650-329-2464 or email me at Chase.Hartmann@cityofpaloalto.org

1. How does registration work?

Answer: You should receive a registration form in your back-to-school packet that was sent home by your respected schools. At the top of the front page of this form, you will see the first set of charts labeled "Fall Season." The date of registration for the fall season will be there, which signifies the first day registration begins for all families. You can either register in-person at the Lucie Stern Community Center starting at 8:30am that day, or go on-line and register that way, again beginning at 8:30am sharp. All registrations are at a first-come-first-serve basis.

2. How do I get information about the upcoming sports and when to register?

Answer: Look on your registration form and you will see all the different seasons listed. Each season has its own separate registration date, so please mark your calendars. You will not be able to sign up for all three seasons in the fall; only the fall season will be accepting registration forms for the sports offered first.

3. Who is the contact person at my child's school that I can get in touch with?

Answer: Each school has their own Athletic Director, who is on sight after school each day to ensure all the practices and games are running smoothly. The Athletic Director's contact information should be on each school's specific websites or the city's website at www.cityofpaloalto.org

4. Who is my child's coach?

Answer: The MSA program is made up of many different types of coaches. I often times hire students and adults who have experience in specific sports that they are coaching. Many of them were athletes themselves and have a wide variety of expertise to offer to your child. Sometimes, some former students of the middle schools here in P.A. come back and coach, while they are still in high school. I also have multiple college students, other adults over the age of 21 and even parent volunteers. Unfortunately, finding all the coaches needed before the season begins is not always an easy task. Some coaches get hired right as practices begin, so not all parents will know who the coach is until the first day of practice.

5. When do practices occur during the week?

Answer: Practices, depending on the sport, will often occur right after school is out, typically from 3:15-4:30 on regular days, and 2:00-3:15 on early-release days (Wednesdays). However, sports such as volleyball and basketball have so many teams each year, that staggering practice times to ensure all teams are allowed court time has to occur. Which results in practice times varying from starting right after school to as late as 7pm. Often times, the practices will begin at the same time each day, but again, your child's practice might fall at a later time.

6. When do games occur during the week?

Answer: Games can occur Monday-Thursday, as the season gets going. Typical start times will fall between 4-7pm on regular school days, and on early-release days, the early games can start as early as 3pm until 7pm.

7. Why are limits put on the number of students who are allowed to register for certain sports?

Answer: Since some sports are more popular than others, and the space at each school is very limited, to ensure all students are in a safe environment, a limit to the number of students is a necessity. For sports such as volleyball and basketball, court space is the biggest issue during the season. Since the number of courts can only allow so many teams to be practicing at one time without interfering with each other, the cap for each grade must be applied. There are also times that not enough coaches are found in time for the start of the season and I can only assign the coaches who are there to a certain number of students per team. If any parents know of people who would be interested in coaching, please feel free to give out my contact information. The more coaches I can find, the more teams I can create.

8. What do the fees I pay for my child to participate go towards?

Answer: The fees you pay for each season have multiple uses. Most of the fees go towards the coach's salaries as well as the officials the city is under contract with for games. Another part of the fees goes towards equipment for all teams, as well as uniform purchases.

9. Is it really important that I attend Parent Night?

Answer: YES!! Parent Night is set up for all parents to meet their child's coach, the Athletic Director at their child's school and other parents whose children are on your child's team. This also gives the coach a chance to hand out practice and game schedules as well as set up a very important aspect of the season, a carpool group. All parents are responsible for getting their child to and from games, so being present at Parent Night will allow you to have a say in how often you are driving to away games.

10. If my child does not make the A team, does that mean he/she will not get a good coach?

Answer: NO!! I have many good coaches who coach both A and B teams. Simply because your child is not on the A team does not mean they will not have a good experience and get a quality coach. Also, if your child is put onto the waitlist, please be patient with that. If I have enough coaches to make another team, I will do so. I personally conduct the coach's training with all of my coaches, regardless of what skill level they are coaching. I am a former college athlete, high school and middle school referee, middle school coach and middle school P.E. teacher, so my personal experience and knowledge weighs heavily on the type of coaches I select for this program. Once again, welcome to the MSA program with the City of Palo Alto. We hope your child's experience this coming year will be a great one!!

Please feel free to contact me with any other questions you might have about the MSA program.

Sincerely,

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