**MLSA for Girls**

**FAQs**

**Why is MLSA making changes to its girls’ programs?**

There are two principal drivers for these changes and they are closely connected.  The first is that we have, for some time, been experiencing decreased enrollment in girls’ programs (travel, Lebo Cup, etc.).  The second is that we want to give our girls a better opportunity to play and improve at the right comfort level for them.  We think that if our players are put in positions to succeed while also being challenged, they will enjoy soccer more and be more likely to play longer.

Our changes are intended to impact girls starting much earlier than we have historically because we want their first experience with soccer — and many experiences after that — to include female coaches and trainers as well as their friends.  A more positive first experience with soccer — and Rec soccer is that for many players — can lead to a lifelong love of the game.  Unfortunately, we believe that for many girls a co-ed first experience isn’t as positive as it could be, and this discourages them from further participating in the beautiful game.

Additionally, grouping girls more broadly in a program Lebo Cup, for example, increases the likelihood that girls from the same school will be able to play together longer.  We also hope to encourage Lebo Cup players who have new, positive experiences to consider our other programs, both now and as they grow older.

**Why is girls travel registration for the fall season only?**

It all comes down to numbers.  We’ve heard more and more that a two season commitment is discouraging girls who love soccer from playing travel soccer.  For girls who only want to play soccer, that structure is great, but for those who want to play softball, field hockey, lacrosse or something else, a spring season creates challenges that we think can be addressed by offering fall and spring seasons separately. If a fall player wants to also play travel in the spring, they can! They just don’t have to.

**If it’s only one season, why does girls’ travel registration cost more than half of boys’ travel registration?**

We are very cognizant of making sure all of our programs meet the needs of the different players. One of the other changes to the girls travel program is that we plan to involve more trainers (including a keeper trainer) in the fall season.  The spring season will have less trainers and rely more upon coach-led practices, so the total cost for both seasons should be the same or very, very close to it.

**Why is my U-X player trying out with U-Y players?**

While it is true that we haven’t had the players try out like this in the past, we have ‑ typically out of necessity —formed combined teams.  The reason ties back to the comfort and skill level discussion above.  We’ve seen it both ways where a younger player is so good that her teammates often watch or wait for her to do something; that player likely needs a greater challenge in order to grow.  Similarly, there may be an older player whose team is playing at a higher level than she is comfortable with (e.g., tougher competition than perhaps she’s experienced before), and that player may benefit from playing in a more appropriate division and assuming more of a leadership role than she otherwise would have.

The idea is NOT to break up teams for the sake of change.  We like to keep teams together wherever possible to foster continuity and comradery. Teams that are working may be supplemented with a player or two, but any changes will be discussed among parents, coaches and, if appropriate, the players.  We are cognizant of the need to balance the social benefits of soccer with those associated with training, competing and being part of a team.

**Why isn’t MLSA making similar changes to its boys’ programs?**

It really comes back to the numbers.  We haven’t experienced the dip in participation or skill level on the boys’ side, so we don’t want to change what is working!  If something changes, then we will re-evaluate. We are consistently evaluating what our players need to thrive.

**Why can’t I register my daughter (2007) for travel soccer for next year?**

There have been a limited number of female players in that U15 group who have registered for travel soccer in the past.  Since we never have enough U15s for a full team, including them puts younger girls (U14 and sometimes even U13) in the difficult position of having to play up.  We are confident that the middle school and high school programs as well as RT19 soccer are better options for these players. The middle school program has excellent coaching and was partially put in place to address this issue, so it is a great option for the girls in this age group.

**Why can’t I register my daughter (2012) for travel soccer for next year?**

We are in a transitional year for the youngest travel players on the girls side, between our new and old structure.  Current 2nd Grade 2012 players who we would want to put into our new 3rd Grade Academy in the fall are already playing travel soccer.  Most also participated in the U9 academy (former name) in the fall of 2020 ***and learned the 7v7 game there***.  If your 2012 player is playing travel soccer this spring, you will be able to register for travel soccer.  If we do not have enough 2012 players sign up, then we may open up registration and conduct tryouts.

The program for you otherwise is the new 3rd Grade Academy League! Your daughter will receive pro training, play soccer with old friends and new friends and learn to play the 7v7 game while growing passion and skill in a fun and competitive in community atmosphere.