Middle School Basketball- FAQ

What is the goal of the program?
The goal at the middle school level should be a focus on teaching the fundamentals of the game, teaching valuable life lessons (dedication, accountability, teamwork, etc.) through sport and of course a love for the game of Basketball. It is our goal to prepare as many young student athletes as possible for involvement at the next level. We do this through keeping kids active and engaged in the game for as long as possible.

How is my child evaluated?
All students are evaluated by the DOBO (Director of Basketball Operations) in partnership with the High School Program Staff. They use a rubric that is created by each varsity head coach to assess certain skills and abilities. Helper coaches may be asked to assist or to provide input on student placement, but all decisions will be made by the DOBO and High School Staff.

What do the tier colors mean?
The tier colors are simply a way to divide students based on their grade, skill level and ability. Our program philosophy is that students do best when they can learn and grow at the same pace as their peers, regardless of grade level. We have 3 tiers in middle school basketball (gold, white & green/black):

Gold Tier Teams: All 6th graders are placed on a gold tier team. Gold tier team rosters are created with players of a similar skill set based on evaluation results. With rare exception, 6th grade teams will only play other gold tier teams from both East and West Middle Schools.

White Tier Teams: The white tier has a combination of grade specific teams, as well as teams made up of both 7th & 8th grade students. White tier teams will play other white tier teams from EMS and WMS. On occasion, white tier teams have the opportunity to play outside competition. These teams are still working on growing and improving their fundamental skill set, while also working towards involvement at the next level. Combining grades on some white tier teams allows for intermediate level players to learn and grow at the same pace as their peers, regardless of grade level.

Black & Green Tier Teams: The black & green tiers are made up of the most advanced players in 7th & 8th grade. These teams are considered our MHSAA Travel teams. TCAPS Middle School athletes participate under the umbrella of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA)**.** Athletes placed in the black/green tiers will play most of their games against teams from other school districts. Students placed at this level have strong fundamental skill sets and are ready for a higher level of instruction and play. It is our goal to prepare these student athletes for involvement at the next level.

If my child does not make the highest level team, is he or she less likely to make a high school team?
No. When playing at a certain perceived level of talent is the priority prior to high school, then the focus is on short term success over long term development. If you are truly concerned about your athlete's long term sporting future, focusing on continued development over team placement is very important.

Why didn't my child advance? Why is he or she playing at a lower level than last year?
Each year brings a new set of students with a new set of talents. Middle school athletics are a transition to the high school program where tryouts and cuts are made. Although we do not believe in cuts, we do believe that students must be assessed and placed on an appropriate team each year. Being a year older or having a year of experience at a certain level does not guarantee a placement for the following year. If a child does not develop or progress in the off season, placement could be affected. If an especially talented group of students presents itself that was not present the year before, placement could be affected.

If my child missed evaluations will it affect team placement?
A student will not be penalized for missing, however this may give other athletes an advantage as they have had more time in front of coaches. Any players who miss all of the evaluation period will be placed on a gold or white tier team. If after further evaluation a player's skill level warrants a change, we will move them to a more suitable tier/team.

Can I make a request to have my child on a certain team?
As stated earlier, so much time and consideration goes into team placements. For this reason, team placement requests will not be considered due to friends, rideshare, or any other matter of convenience. The single exception would be for sibling requests which will only be considered after all evaluations are complete. Siblings will only be placed on the same team if 1) they are placed into the same tier and 2) placing them together does not affect the overall team dynamic one way or the other. Such requests should be directed to the DOBO for consideration prior to the start of evaluations. Once teams have been finalized, players will not be moved.

Can I contact the DOBO to discuss my child's evaluation?
Your DOBO will be happy to discuss your child's evaluation and as well as make suggestions to help your child reach his or her goals. However, scheduling a meeting will not result in a change being made to a child's placement.

Why are there no cuts made in this program?
As said before, it is our goal to prepare as many young student athletes as possible for involvement at the next level. Cuts at the middle school level indicate a focus on outcomes (winning games), and not the process of getting better.