November 2026

Dear MKA Middle School Parent/Caregivers,

The Middle School Winter Athletics Season will soon be upon us. ALL practices will begin on **Monday, November 30.** Practices for most sports will be held Monday through Friday, from 3:00–4:00 p.m. throughout the winter season. If you have any questions or concerns about a particular sport, please feel free to contact the Head Coach via email.

Middle School Winter Sports Offered:

Sport	Grades Open To	Head Coach	Email Address
Boys' Basketball	6th, 7th, 8th	Spencer Pyke	spyke@mka.org
Girls' Basketball	6th, 7th, 8th	Cali Burks	cburks@mka.org
Ice Hockey	6th, 7th, 8th	Ken Smith	ksmith@mka.org
Boys' and Girls' Fencing	6th, 7th, 8th	Joelle Francht	jfrancht@mka.org
Boys' and Girls' Swimming	6th, 7th, 8th	Allison Brown	abrown@mka.org
Performance Training	6th, 7th, 8th	Leon Shade	lshade@mka.org

For our Middle School student-athletes, we seek to design an athletic program that allows for both exploration and competitive play; therefore, we use the following team structure(s):

I) "A" Level Team

- Tryouts for all "A" level teams will be open to all students in grades 6-8.
- The most qualified athletes will make the "A" team, regardless of grade or previous year's team placement, after a predetermined tryout period.
- Practices will be held Monday-Friday: 3:00–4:00 p.m.
- The "A" team will have 15 spots available for their roster
- "A" level team will compete in a full interscholastic schedule.
- There will be a roster size cap on the total number of athletes on each "A" team.

II) "B" Level Team

- Open to all athletes from grades 6-8 who do not make the "A" level team.
- The "B" team will have 20 spots available on their roster.
- Practices will be held 3-4 days a week; days may vary depending on game schedule(s).
- An interscholastic schedule will be utilized; however, the total number of games will vary from sport to sport depending on which opponents have "B" level or comparable teams.

III)* "C" *Level Team

- Please note that, because of limited gym space this winter and the large number of athletes projected to come out for middle school boys basketball, athletes who do not make the "A" or "B" team will be on the "C" team. The "C" team will serve as a skill-building program where the emphasis will be on sharpening skill sets through repetition, game strategies, conditioning, and film sessions.
- The "C" team will have a minimum of one practice every two weeks, taking place Monday through Friday, in addition to one ***optional*** practice on Saturday mornings each week.

The **Middle School Fencing** program will run 2x a week throughout the winter season from 3:30–5:00 p.m. (subject to change depending on Varsity meets and schedule) and will operate out of Lilov Fencing Academy (LFA) in Cedar Grove, NJ. MKA transportation will be provided to and from MKA to LFA.

Our **Middle School Performance Training** will run 3x a week throughout the winter season from 3:00–4:00 p.m. (subject to change depending on weather) and will be geared towards athletes who want to increase their speed, agility, strength, and endurance for their upcoming spring season or for other respective sports they play throughout the year. Athletes will train on the Middle School turf, Edgemont Park, and Brookdale Park Track.

All medical requirements for pre-season athletic clearance can be found on the Veracross Parent Portal. Athletes will NOT be permitted to participate in athletics unless all forms are up-to-date on Magnus and clearance has been provided by the nursing and athletic training staff.

The best way for us to have the kind of quality program we all want for our student-athletes is to continue to work together. Please keep your respective coach informed of any conflicts that may arise as it pertains to practices and games throughout the winter season.

To take a look at your child's upcoming winter schedule, please go to www.mka.org/athletics.

Regards,

Todd C. Smith
Director of Athletics
tsmith@mka.org