



APRIL/MAY 2021

MONTHLY UPDATE



GET YOUR MLSA INFO FAST & RUN WITH IT.

Spring Travel Teams Are in Full Swing

Have you checked out our social lately? You can get the travel team scores and brief recaps after every Sunday game. Check. It. Out! The kids are doing great and having a blast, and that's what it's all about.



But That's Not All

Boys & Girls (not Co-Ed) summer futbol is also open for registration!

SDP and RT19 have started (more about that next) and TOPSoccer started on Sunday, May 2nd.

Our next signups are for the fall season and they start in June:

- FDP (Fall Development Program) for Boys and Girls in 1st and 2nd Grades
- U9 Academy for Boys
- NEW 3rd Grade Academy for Girls: With more professional female trainers; girls learn 7v7 in a league of their own to prepare them for travel or Lebo Cup; this is very different from SDP
- Lebo Cup: Boys and Girls Programs for Boys Grades 3 - 8 and Girls Grades 4 - 7
- Goalkeeper Training
- Fall TOPSoccer
- Fall RT19: Co-Ed Grades 8-12

Register on [MLSA.org](https://mlsa.org) in June.

Overall program questions? Email info@mlsa.org

AWESOME UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Travel registrations for 2021/2022 end on 5/12 for girls and 5/31 for boys at [MLSA.org](https://mlsa.org)
- MLSA for Girls! Check out our FAQs
- SDP, RT19 Updates
- Summer Futbol registration is open and filling fast!
- Read our Return to Play & Masking Info.
- FREE referee recertification & training information
- Please check out our [volunteer info.](#) if you'd like to help!
- Something's always happening on social. Click our icons above to check in!
- Spotlight your player!
 - 1. Complete the form <https://forms.gle/UaKrAf29joEBv9w18>
 - 2. Send a player photo (action) in Lebo Gear with name in subject to social@mlsa.org

Watch your email & check [MLSA.org](https://mlsa.org), our social media and [school newsletters](#) for all updates!

INTRODUCING MLSA FOR GIRLS

FAQs

Dear MLSA Families,

We had a great Zoom meeting on 4/27 to review the upcoming changes that will kick in for our MLSA for Girls programs for the fall season. We put together some FAQs here. **Please head to the website for the video of the meeting and more specific FAQs on the new structure of the program. It's on the homepage: [links are at the top of the page](#).**

HERE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGES (SEE FAQs FOR MORE INFO.):

- 1. Travel:** Banding two birth years in travel for U10, U12 and U14 designations. This is developmentally the optimal way to group the girls, and common practice in most other sports. It also helps us keep our teams robust in number and competitive and appropriate for each of our age band skill levels. This will help the teams find success and the girls thrive.
- 2. Overall:** More female coaches and professional trainers as well as high school and college mentors.
- 3. Third Grade Academy:** All girls in 3rd grade start here, with this brand new developmental model that keeps our girls together while they learn the 7v7 game. The structure and training are identical to the travel program; however, they get to stay with their grade-level friends and develop in a smaller league to build the skill level they need to have a much more competitive and successful travel season in fourth grade.

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 were seeing a need to change with the game, the leagues and the culture, and to meet the needs of modern youth players. 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.

Here is what the overall framework will look like:

- A renewed philosophy specifically tailored to girls' needs
- Re-designed development initiatives and a development committee just for girls
- A re-envisioned culture incorporating what's important to girls' development and a culture committee to oversee it
- Female pro-trainers as often as possible
- Girl-focused goalkeeper training run by female goalkeepers
- Mentoring programs and events
- A re-invigorated and strengthened high school girls soccer team partnership
- Added flexibility in the travel program, with options to play one season or two seasons, as well as other specific changes

Love the Game

We've said it before and it bears repeating — this is a big change and it's going to open up a world of opportunities for our girls. With everything we do, we're focused on fun, teamwork, development and unity. Our goal is to make soccer an enjoyable, competitive and fulfilling experience for all — and for the girls to love this beautiful game and play with us for years to come.

We are excited and we know the girls will be too!

Thank you for joining us on this journey,

Tracy Adams
MLSA for Girls Coordinator



SDP (Spring Development Program)

Update

The Spring Development Program is off to a successful start. We have 146 players (75 boys, 71 girls) in first through seventh grade. This seven week program consists of one training session and one game day session per week.

The training sessions are run by professional trainers and help develop skills, sportsmanship and game tactics. Game days are small sided (3v3 or 5v5) games run by trainers and coached by high school student athletes.

Our players are enthusiastic and are having fun learning, competing and playing with friends!



RT 19

Update

RT19 (pronounced R.T.1.9.), also got off to a great start. There are a number of strong co-ed teams at Lebo. The kids' ages span 8th - 12th grades. They play local communities once per week. There's definitely a higher level of competition this year and the players are eating it up!

Check out the action below:



UPCOMING EVENTS

Boys & Girls (Not Co-Ed) Summer Futbol

We just opened up the registration for Summer Futbol! This fast and fun game is a great way for your child to play with their friends in a futsal-style environment for five weeks in the summer. It's very laid back and the kids love every minute!

2021 Summer Fútbol

- **Tournament Festival Format with short 5 v 5 games**
- **Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, from 6/22-7/21**
- **K & 1st Grade : 4:30-5:30**
- **2nd & 3rd Grade : 5:45 - 6:45**
- **4th, 5th, & 6th, Grade: 7:00-8:00**
- ***Subject to change based on enrollment**
- **Rosters will reset each week to allow everyone to get a chance to play together**
- **Focus on FUN!**

Registration runs from 4/20-6/1
This will fill up quickly, so register ASAP

CALLING FRESHMAN GIRLS

A Note from HS Varsity Coach, Seth Young

All,
I hope this note finds you / your daughters safe and well.

There will be a meeting for all incoming 9th graders interested in trying out for the high school soccer program on Monday, May 3rd at 4:15 in the high school bleachers. We will walk through the summer process, expectations, try-out format, etc.

Try-outs are scheduled for the week of August 16th. This process consists of two 90 minute sessions per day - a morning session (7:00 a.m. - 8:30), as well as an evening session (times TBD). Unless the weather impacts the schedule, team selection will be announced after the morning session on Thursday, August 19th.

There is also a pre-season camp currently in development for the week of August 2nd pending district approval. While the majority of the high school student-athletes elect to participate, this is not mandatory and has no impact on the tryout process.

A formal parents meeting will follow closer to August.

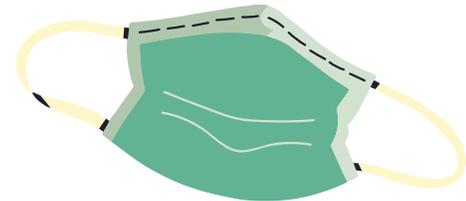
Lastly, I've asked the MLSA to share this meeting invitation with their travel distribution list, but if you're aware of anyone in the community who may not receive this information, I would appreciate it if you would please share with any families considering the program.

Best,
Seth



MUST READ

Return to Play Guidelines & NEW Mask Mandate



As we safely return to the beautiful game, there are some new guidelines and mandates we all must be aware of. Please read the [Return-to-Play Guidelines](#) and make sure you're familiar with them before your child steps on the field.

Please also review the following NEW mask mandate FAQs:

Why are masks required on the field of play?

The Commonwealth of PA issued a masking order on November 17, 2020 and revised it on November 23, 2020 that requires all Pennsylvanians to wear a mask when indoors or outdoors and not with the members of their household and they cannot sustain the appropriate physical distance.

What is sustained physical distance?

Sustained physical distance means the practice of staying at least six feet away from others to avoid becoming a close contact. On October 21, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its definition of close contact to "someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period." The guidance goes on to note that there are additional factors to consider when defining "close contact." DOH recommends using 15 consecutive minutes of exposure at a distance of six feet or less as an operational definition for "close contact." However, there are circumstances when someone should be considered a close contact of a case after being within six feet for fewer than 15 consecutive minutes. Additional factors that should be considered when assessing close contacts include but are not limited to close proximity to an infected person, infected person exhibiting symptoms, and environmental conditions like crowds or inadequate ventilation.

How long will masks be required?

Masks will be required until the Commonwealth of PA removes the requirement for athletes to wear masks while on the field.

What happens if I don't wear a mask?

The wearing of a face covering, such as a mask, helps us as a society to limit the spread of COVID-19 and successfully combat this pandemic; therefore, it is in everyone's best interest that all Pennsylvanians comply with this Order. As this is a legal Order under the Disease Prevention and Control Law, law enforcement officers are authorized to issue warnings or citations to anyone who does not comply with the Order. The Department of Health can also issue warnings and citations to businesses, persons, facilities, and organizations that do not comply.

Does the Order apply to athletes and sports activities?

Yes. Everyone who participates in sport activities including coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear a face covering, such as a mask, unless they fall under an exception in Section 3 of the Order.

Indoors: Coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear face coverings, when indoors and where another person or persons who are not members of the individual's household are present in the same space, irrespective of physical distance. This includes while actively engaged in workouts, competition, and on the sidelines, etc.

Outdoors: Coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear face coverings if they cannot maintain sustained physical distance from persons outside of their household. This includes while actively engaged in workouts, competition, and on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc. If sustained six-foot distancing can be maintained, face coverings may be removed when outdoors.

How will it be enforced at the game?

Masks will be considered part of a player's mandatory equipment to participate like matching uniforms, shin guards, and appropriate footwear as checked by the referees during pregame.

What happens if a player isn't wearing a mask?

Players not wearing a mask will not be permitted to participate.

Can an athlete remove their mask during play?

If an athlete is at a sustained distance from the other athletes, the player may lower their mask until play approaches leading to an elimination of sustained distance.

Can an athlete remove their mask during play if the mask causes a medical condition, including respiratory issues that impede breathing?

Yes, the Order provides an exception in section 3 that provides that if wearing a face covering would either cause a medical condition, or exacerbate an existing one, including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition or a disability. The order indicates all alternatives to wearing a face covering, including the use of a face shield, should be exhausted before an individual is excepted from this Order. Using football as an example, wearing a mask in addition to a mouth guard and a helmet would likely create a medical issue for the athlete whether the athlete is a professional or youth player even if a previous medical issue was not present. For example, the CDC says that "wearing a mask with these types of protective equipment is not safe if it makes it hard to breathe." There are other sports where there are similar concerns that a mask would create a medical issue where one would otherwise not exist in an athlete. For example, it should also be obvious that wearing a mask while swimming presents an imminent health issue.

According to Section 3, the athlete would be asked to work through alternatives that would reduce or eliminate the respiratory droplets that would impact others in proximity. If the sport, equipment, or exertion level does not allow for face covering to be worn safely then the athlete should not wear a face covering.

There are no exemptions for specific sports, leagues, teams, or levels. We know that some people don't like masks. We are asking everyone to please give this their best effort so we can continue these activities and others as we all unite to fight COVID-19.

REFEREE TRAINING

Get Ready to Ref - For FREE!

Hey Ref!

Online training for 2021 is in full swing. The authoritative source for refereeing info in Western PA is <https://www.wparef.com/>

Recertification for 2021 remains open for existing referees, **at no cost (it's usually \$50) and 100% online.** Full details at <https://www.wparef.com/2021-recertification-season-has-began/>, or you can go straight to registration at wparefs.gameofficials.net

Entry Level Referee Classes for new referees--registration now open for online modules, **at no cost!** Full details at <https://www.wparef.com/becoming-a-us-soccer-referee/>.

Now is also a great time to take care of clearances. We hope that by the time warmer weather comes, it will be safe to hold in-person sessions to complete your training.

When they can be scheduled, in-person sessions will cost about \$100.

We need adult referees, so come join in the fun!

Questions? Contact MLSA's Referee Assignor, Brian Auer, refkeeper@gmail.com, c 412.608.8676



Your "Games to Watch" in May

Download the LiveSoccerTV app for game times and channels.

Men's Games:

International Matches:

May 4 Man City vs PSG

May 5 Chelsea vs Real Madrid

May 7 Lens vs Lille

May 8 Man City vs Chelsea

May 9 Real Madrid vs Sevilla

May 15 Inter vs Juve & RB Leipzig vs Wolfsburg

Local College:

2020 NCAA Div 1 Men's College Championship

May 2 8PM Pitt at Monmouth

Women's Games:

International Matches:

May 30 USA vs Switzerland

NSWL ([More here](#))

May 3 Kansas City vs OL Reign

May 8 TBD vs TBD

Grab some friends and watch a game or two!