

Summer, 2011

Dear Benchmark Parents/Guardians,

As a concerned coach and teacher who wants all my students to feel good about themselves and their athletic abilities, I am writing to share with you an overview of the soccer program at Benchmark school and to answer common questions raised about the selection of the players for the Varsity/Junior varsity soccer teams.

There are three different parts of the soccer program – the Varsity team, open by tryout and invitation to students twelve and over; the Junior Varsity team open by tryout and invitation to students ages nine through eleven; and the Junior Soccer club, open to all interested students in the Lower School who would like to improve their soccer skills. The Varsity/Junior Varsity teams practice on Mon/Wed/Fri, and have games against other schools during autumn. “Tryouts” for the Varsity and Junior Varsity teams are conducted in gym class the first week (s) of school, and invitations to join the teams are made on the basis of the student’s soccer performance during those classes, as well as on the student’s overall attitude toward the program. The Junior Soccer activity club, which meets Tues/Thurs, serves as a “farm team” for the other two programs and allows students to develop and improve their soccer skills. Students who don’t make the Junior Varsity team are strongly encouraged to participate in the Junior Soccer club. Most of the students presently on the Varsity and JV teams participated in Junior Soccer for a couple of years.

All three parts of the program are co-ed, and I am very proud of the fact that most years we have several young women on the Varsity and Junior varsity teams (which is not true of many of the schools we play). There are often a number of girls in the Junior Soccer club each year, although I would like to see even more girls come out to work on their soccer skills.

Unfortunately there are limited positions on the Junior Varsity and Varsity teams, which means that not all interested students will be asked to join. The reality is that for many years we have had a number of very talented soccer players as students at Benchmark, and that every year I am not able to offer a position on a team to some good and dedicated soccer players. Parents frequently ask what could help their child’s chances to make one of the teams. I suggest that students who sincerely want to make the JV and Varsity teams participate in Junior Soccer, participate in community soccer programs throughout the year, attend soccer camp during the summer, and practice their skills at home or whenever they get a chance

I ask that parents encourage their children to participate in Junior Soccer and other soccer programs in order to further develop their skills, and that parents will underscore that the selection process is not a popularity contest or in way reflects my feelings for the children as students or athletes. I do agonize over these decisions, and it is important to me to be fair about the selection process. I trust that parents will help their children to understand this. I am always available to talk with students about how they can improve their chances for next year, and what aspects of their game that they might specifically focus on to improve.

Thanks for your thoughtfulness, understanding, and support in this process.

Respectfully,

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Physical Education

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