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The following generous donors are sponsoring this year's Main Line Girls Basketball teams. Please thank these folks if you see them in the stands and, if you can, support their businesses.

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Main Line Girls Basketball Association
 P.O. Box 528, Wynnewood, PA. 19096.



MLGBA NEWS

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE



Indeed, the rule on equal playing time applies even in the playoffs. Our priority is that every girl gets the chance to make all that she can out of participating in our league. If a girl keeps playing as she gets older, she'll soon reach the point where her playing time is determined by performance, whether that means she never sits on the bench or never gets off it. That's not the MLGBA.

Then there are the gyms. Although we pay rent, we are guests in our gym space; no school, college or other institution has to let us in. So we need to treat the gyms with respect. One piece of trash not picked up, one spilled drink, one broken piece of equipment could cause us to lose our privileges. That would hurt all of us. So please take care.

In addition, for 12 years, we have been lucky enough to have generous sponsors who help us offset some of the rising costs of equipment, insurance, and gyms. These sponsors have helped keep our fees reasonable. (See the list of this year's sponsors on the back cover, and please thank them and support them.)

And finally, let's talk about you, the parents. We want you to be encouraging and supportive for your daughters, and for all the girls. What we don't want is for you to yell at the coaches or the referees. You may think you could do a better job than they do, and maybe you could, although we doubt it; it looks so easy from the bleachers. But you're not doing the job. They're the ones putting in the time and making the effort, and they deserve your respect if only for that reason. So except in the most extreme cases, keep your thoughts to yourself. If you feel compelled to criticize, do it away from the gym, and away from the ears of your daughters.

Remember, this isn't the NCAA or the WNBA or a high school game. These are young girls playing a game. This is the MLGBA.



In the 12 years since the Main Line Girls Basketball Association was created, much has changed.

The league has gotten bigger. We started with 8 teams and 75 girls in grades 2 through 5; now we have more than 50 teams and close to 700 girls. We use an astounding 1,600 hours of gym time for games and practices. We offer girls from second grade through high school the opportunity to play the game.

And the overall experience for the girls has continually improved—the quality of play, the quality of the coaching, and the swell sweatshirts the girls receive at the end of the season. We have developed an ever-expanding cadre of volunteers who know and love what they're doing.

Some things, though, never change. One is our belief that the purpose of the MLGBA is to teach girls about basketball, to compete and to have fun. The balance between competition and fun, obviously, is different for second-graders than in the high-school division. We understand that the joy of winning isn't to be ignored, and that some girls will keep score even when there's no score being kept. But in our league, no matter the circumstance, we see no value in one team's kicking another when it's down. To the degree possible, we won't allow it.

Another unchanging element is our approach to playing time. Our rule, our credo, is that every girl in the elementary and middle school divisions gets the same amount of playing time as every other girl on her team, regardless of ability. At this level, in this setting, we feel that providing equal playing time is more important than winning and losing.

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visit us on the web mlgba.com

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Send us your letters to the newsletter editor.

Please let us know what you think about the league. We want to hear your ideas on how to make it better, and with your permission, will publish them in the next newsletter. We even want Letters to the Newsletter editor. Would you like to see more women coaching? Would you like to become involved in the league? Do you think some of the divisions are not competitive enough? You can call your suggestions into our hotline: 610.617.9999 (leave your comments at option 1: general information), or mail them to: MLGBA, P.O. Box 528, Wynnewood, PA. 19096.



For the process to run smoothly, a coach without a full squad must keep track of who was shorted a rotation the prior week. They try to keep it fair since the league's philosophy is to give all players equal time—even if it is spread over two games. That is a league rule.

Here are a couple of other rules you may not know: In the 5th/6th and 7th/8th grades, we have instituted what we call the "seat-belt rule." That means that all coaches must sit down during the game. We want to keep all the energy on the court. We also insist that coaches stay off the court.

There is no trapping and no double teaming allowed. If a team is ahead by 10 or more points, the coach must begin to implement some of the following:

- No pressing
- Pass the ball to girls who haven't scored yet
- Have a mandatory number of passes before a shot is taken
- No fast breaks
- Pull back to a zone
- Pull back the star player(s). If the star player cannot be controlled by the coach, then she should be substituted for in mid-rotation.

The bottom line for this division, and the entire league, is this: We want each girl to leave the gym after a game feeling good about herself, that she played a good game and had fun. Those who win should "win with class." Every team gets to go to the playoffs, so in reality winning or losing doesn't really matter at all but it is all about how you play the game.

PLAYS FROM RECENT GAMES



DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR COMMISSIONERS ARE?

operation of the league including scheduling gyms, reffing games and teaching young refs, distributing uniforms, coaching teams, and traveling from gym to gym to watch games. The grade level commissioners organize each grade level and attend many meetings and games. When you see them, let them know how much you appreciate their efforts. There would not be 700 girls playing basketball every Saturday and Sunday if it wasn't for their tireless energy. And thank you to all the coaches and assistant coaches for their willingness to volunteer.

12 years ago Bill McLaughlin and Rich Lawson launched the MLGBA to provide their own daughters and friends a venue for the dads' favorite sport. Now there are many others who help in running the league. An essential one is Diane DiBonaventuro who is responsible for much of the day-to-day

THE DIVISION COMMISSIONERS

Second Grade
John Leone
Rich Lawson

Third Grade
Wayne Goldenberg
Rick Herman

Fourth Grade
Jim Stotter
Bob Wegbreit
Jim Brodo

Fifth & Sixth Grade
Mitchell Spector
Jon MacManus
John Rothschild
Valerie Mack

Seventh & Eighth Grade
Dan Carpey
Rick Caron
Rich Ongirski
Donna McGowan

High School
Jeff Shore
Barbara Beck

League Commissioners & Founders
Bill McLaughlin (Founder)
Rich Lawson (Founder)
Diane DiBonaventuro
Barbara Beck (Newsletter Editor)
Mitchell Spector (Treasurer)

Commissioner Emeritus
Marty Malloy

Special Commissioner
Natalie McLaughlin

SECOND ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER NAMED

Justine Malloy, who graduated last June from Lower Merion High School, was the winner of the second annual Main Line Girls Basketball Association \$1,000 Scholarship award. The MLGBA Scholarship was created to recognize and encourage athletic ability, academic performance and community service. Eligible girls are now seniors in high school who have participated in the league for at least three years and have maintained a grade point average over 3.0. The Scholarship recipient in 2003 was Kirsten Lawson. Applications for the 2005 MLGBA Scholarship Award are available by calling the league's hotline at 610-617-9999, and will be available on the website in March. The deadline for applying is the end of May.

We thought we would take you inside one of our larger, more competitive divisions, the 7th and 8th grade, to illustrate the workings and philosophy of the league.

Once the players are evaluated by the division's volunteer coaches, the league commissioners meet to draft girls onto 12 different teams. The concept of the draft following the evaluations is to make the division fair so that all of the teams are equally competitive. All the players were assigned based on last year's coaches' evaluations (occasionally modified by points per game) and height, with practice day requirements as a final determinant. The division commissioners put each girl's name on a color-coded card based on rating, the back of which had only her rating, height and practice days. The commissioners then went around the table and blindly dealt the cards. Coaches' kids and twins were obviously dealt with directly, but their rating was carefully noted. As a result, all teams have almost equal point values. In theory each team should win half/lose half. This isn't rocket science, but these volunteer commissioners and coaches work very hard to make sure that each girl in the MLGBA has the most positive experience.

The 7/8 Division alternates games Saturday afternoons at Lower Merion High School's Downs gym, and Saturday mornings at Rosemont College. Two to four games are played every Sunday afternoon at Harriton's Back Gym.

Players are substituted every five minutes. It is the assistant coach's job to keep careful notes tracking who was in and who was sitting on the bench. The clock runs during substitution time, so the girls have to be ready to get right out on the court when the whistle blows or the coach will be sacrificing playing time for his/her team.