

MCPS Tennis Program Restructuring Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- Q: What specifically does the new regulation adopted by the Maryland Public Schools Secondary Athletic Association (MPSSAA) say?
- A: The new MPSSAA regulation says: “*Student-athletes may only participate in MPSSAA post season events when their regular season coincides with the season in which the state championship is held.*”
- Q: Did Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) support the state regulation change?
- A: No. MCPS did not support this change and advocated over several years against this regulation. MCPS was the only district opposed to this regulation.
- Q: Why did the MPSSAA decide to make this change?
- A: One of the main arguments from proponents of the regulation was that having separate seasons violated out-of-season participation regulations. Seasonal limitations are defined in the [MPSSAA Handbook](#) (page 18). Other arguments included equitable competition, safety, and the opportunity for student-athletes to compete in club/non-school tournaments and competition.
- Q: Why wouldn't MCPS just keep the same format and choose not to compete in the region and state tournaments?
- A: If MCPS keeps the existing format, boys and girls tennis players would not be eligible to compete in the state and region tournaments. In the spirit of gender equity, girls and boys would both be affected equally by such a move; therefore, all tennis players would be ineligible to participate in the region and state tournaments.
- Q: What is the timeline for the change?
- A: The state provided a transition period for the implementation of the regulation. Thus, the regulation does not take effect until the 2018–19 school year.
- Q: Were coaches notified of the regulation change?
- A: Following almost two years of debate, the state regulation was passed in April 2016 by the MPSSAA Board of Control. During the years leading up to the change, coaches, athletic directors, and principals were updated on the status of the regulation. Schools, including principals, athletic directors, and coaches, were notified of the change when it was passed and that a workgroup would be formed to guide the transition.
- Q: How is MCPS handling the transition process?
- A: A diverse workgroup representing multiple stakeholders is being convened to guide the transition. The workgroup consists of student-athletes, parents, coaches, athletic directors, principals, and the central athletics office. The efforts of the workgroup will be communicated throughout the process.

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Q: What is the timeline for the workgroup?

A: The workgroup's first meeting will be held October 10, 2017. The goal is for the workgroup to have a recommendation prepared for consideration in December or January. The proposal would then have to go through an approval process.

Q: Will there be a coed team or separate boys' and girls' teams?

A: Some counties feature coed teams, while other counties have separate boys' and girls' teams. For MCPS, nothing has been discussed yet or determined. The workgroup will explore all possible models to ensure the most effective tennis program for our student-athletes.

Q: Will there be junior varsity tennis?

A: If the coed model is implemented, there would be a possibility of a junior varsity coed team. It should be noted that both the varsity and junior varsity teams would need to compete during the spring season. We could not have JV play in the fall and varsity play in the spring.

Q: Can we have two tennis teams—boys/girls' or varsity/JV—in one season?

A: Yes, we can have two teams in one season, as other counties have successfully implemented this model. There would likely need to be two practice times, coaches would need to work collaboratively to structure practices to maximize court availability and participation. It should be noted that similar facility constraints exist in other sports – there are two baseball teams (varsity and junior varsity) and one baseball field, two softball teams and one softball field, four basketball teams and two gymnasiums. The practice times would be an adjustment for tennis, but they do exist in other sports in the MCPS athletics program.

Q: How about matches? How would scheduling matches occur with two teams in the same season?

A: One match would occur at one site and the other match would occur at the opponent's site on the same day.

Q: How about the number of starting spots in a starting line-up? Will this change?

A: The workgroup will look at this. Currently a starting line-up for tennis consists of 10 student-athletes (four singles and three doubles teams) per gender. Depending on the structure going forward, this number could be adjusted. It is too early to say at this point.

Q: What about the length of an individual match? Will we still play the best out of three full sets?

A: The workgroup will look at this structure from a time and court availability perspective. There are a number of structures that can be considered, including various tiebreakers and pro sets.