

Osseo / Maple Grove Basketball Association (OMGBA)

Combined Osseo / Maple Grove Traveling Basketball Teams

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

What is the Osseo / Maple Grove Basketball Association (OMGBA)?

- Non-profit organization of approx. 25 – 30 volunteer board members
- Community-based youth basketball organization
- Approx. 2,000 participants in 1st through 12th grade
- Schedule gym space through Community Education
 - o Gym space priority:
 - High School activities
 - Park-n-Recreation programs
 - OMGBA basketball

What is the Mission of the OMGBA?

The Mission is to provide the appropriate basketball opportunities for players residing in both the Osseo and Maple Grove high school attendance areas.

What types of basketball programs are offered by OMGBA?

- House Leagues
 - o 1st through 12th grade programs
 - o OMGBA designation utilized throughout all programs
 - o Approx. 1,700 participants
- Traveling Basketball
 - o 5th through 8th grade boys and girls
 - o More competitive than house league – teams selected via tryouts
 - o 280 – 320 participants (28 – 32 teams of 10 players)
 - o 2 practices per week, 9 – 11 tournaments / 30 – 40 games per year
 - o Volunteer coaches
 - o Community-based program (not AAU)

What Traveling Basketball issues are driving the OMGBA to consider combining the teams?

- 1) Declining numbers of Osseo high school attendance area players
 - o Examples:
 - **2008-09 and 2009-10 seasons** – no girl's teams (5th thru 8th grade) had 10 or more Osseo high school attendance area players @ tryouts
 - **2009-10** 5th grade boys tryouts had 9 Osseo high school attendance area players participate
 - **2008-09** 5th grade boys tryouts had 10 Osseo high school attendance area players participate (A pure Osseo team was formed but one player quit early in the season ... the team competed with 9 players for remainder of season)

- 3rd & 4th grade Osseo high school attendance area house league participants remain low
 - For many years, the OMGBA has attempted different methods to generate additional interest in Osseo attendance area players, but the interest continues at reduced levels
- 2) Administration of the separate alignment is increasingly difficult
 - a. Identifying qualified and interested Osseo high school attendance area coaches due to the decreasing number of participants
 - b. Coordinating uniform orders ... team uniform worn dependent upon tryout numbers and team selection
 - c. Coordinating tryouts – not knowing how many Osseo participants
 - d. Selecting traveling tournaments -- entries have to be secured prior to team formation ... variability in team formation negatively impacts tournament placements
 - 3) Due to the lack of players, separation of high school attendance area participants can cause significant disparity in talent levels playing on Osseo “pure” boys traveling teams and at times on the first combined “A” girls teams (*For example: Osseo boy “A-level” players may be participating with “C-level” or potentially a “house league level” players ... when participating in “A-level” tournaments, the team loses badly with the “C-level” or “house-level” players are over-matched ... when participating in “B-level” tournaments, the “A-level” players are not challenged*)
 - 4) Osseo and Maple Grove high school attendance area players, at certain times, are wearing the opposite high school uniforms
 - a. Combined team philosophy instituted to ensure that **ALL** players eligible to play within the OMGBA have an opportunity to participate in traveling basketball regardless of the tryout participant numbers from each high school attendance area
 - b. Combined team uniform worn determined by the high school attendance area of the majority of players on team (5 – 5 split, teams wear Osseo uniforms)
 - c. Players may change uniforms year-to-year based on tryout results
 - d. Parents continuously express concerns with uniform changes
 - e. Based on recent trends, no “A” level combined Osseo teams created at some grade / gender levels (2009-10 season – 7th and 8th grade girls)
 - 5) Losing top high school attendance area talent to other programs because of perception that the traveling teams are not competitive enough
 - a. Farview, small private schools, other associations
 - b. Risk losing these players entirely from playing basketball in ISD 279 in the future recruitment of players to high schools starts during traveling basketball years

What are the anticipated benefits of a combined program?

- Consistency with the rest of the OMGBA offerings
- Similarly talented players practice and play together - allows a coach to teach more advanced skills and concepts
- Combined tryouts...consistent tryout procedures
- Everyone eligible to play on any team by grade / gender
- Best coaching candidates aligned with better players
- Teams / players participate at the proper tournament level
- Uniform consistency across all teams and year-to-year by participant ... could allow re-use of uniforms and possible fee reduction
- Program will become a destination / draw to all Osseo and Maple Grove attendance area youth
- Administrative efforts and uncertainties of tryouts / team formation reduced
- Participants in 7th and 8th grade already attend junior high schools together before separating by high school boundaries in 10th – 12th grade for classes and 9th – 12th grade for high school sports...this would provide them a chance to play with friends and current schoolmates through 8th grade

What are the high school coaches perspectives related to this situation?

Members of the OMGBA met with all four high school coaches in May-2009 to discuss this issue. The mission of the high school programs was expressed to *enhance and grow the basketball players in their respective high school attendance areas*. In support of their mission, each high school coach stated that they did not want their high school attendance area players wearing the other programs uniform and desired to have only “pure” high school attendance area traveling teams. They felt this way even if that meant not allowing higher caliber players to participate in OMGBA traveling basketball when their respective high school attendance area did not have enough tryout participants to field a “pure” team (i.e. OMGBA would not provide a traveling team opportunity for those players and they would be eligible to participate in the OMGBA house league or a possibly more unfavorable outcome – tryout and participate in another neighboring basketball association’s traveling basketball program).

How do other sports handle this issue?

Most other local organizations (*OMGAA Baseball, OMGAA Softball, OMGFA Football, OMGHA Hockey, and Soccer - all club teams / programs*) have combined programs / teams similar to how the OMGBA currently handles its large house league program and to how it is considering handling its traveling basketball program in the future.

Would traveling basketball team numbers be impacted by the change?

No impact to the number of OMGBA traveling basketball teams is expected. It is anticipated that this change will enhance the ability to field more appropriately competitive traveling teams at all grade / gender levels.

How would traveling team player selections be impacted by the change?

Few overall changes are anticipated. All tryout participants at a respective age / gender would tryout together. Independent evaluators would evaluate all tryout participants. Tryout participants would be ranked by tryout scores and traveling teams would be selected in accordance with the OMGBA current team selection criteria (top 5 automatic, 5 of next 10 eligible for placement on team at the coaches discretion, steps repeated for the next team, and so on).

How would the number of “A” teams be impacted by the change?

No impact is anticipated. The level of play will continue to be determined by grade / gender based on the talent / skill level of the tryout participants and the levels played at in the previous year. OMGBA sees no reason why **two or more teams** at a grade / gender level could not participate at an “A” level.

What uniform would a combined OMGBA traveling team wear? What would a team be named?

OMGBA does not yet have an answer to these questions. It has given consideration to many naming conventions (i.e. Osseo / Maple Grove ‘nickname’ grade/level – coaches name; OMGBA ‘nickname’ grade/level – coaches name; ‘nickname’ grade/level – coaches name; etc.). Input related to these questions would be appreciated.

How / when would the OMGBA implement this change?

OMGBA is looking for public input related to this particular question. The following lists some options available for implementation of this change:

Option A: Implement for all traveling teams formed in the 2010-11 traveling season and beyond.

Option B: Implement only for all incoming 5th grade teams in the 2010-11 traveling season ... grandfather-in all existing grade / genders through the remainder of their traveling years under the existing traveling team formation guidelines.

Option C: Implement for all incoming 5th grade teams and for all age / genders that did not have at least one pure traveling team for each high school attendance area in the 2009-10 traveling season ... grandfather-in all existing grade / genders with at least one pure traveling team for each high school attendance area in the 2009-10 traveling season through the remainder of their traveling years under the existing traveling team formation guidelines.