Frequently-asked questions about youth sports programs

1. I haven't heard from my coach yet and a) I signed up a long time ago; b) I see other kids out practicing.

Coaches will contact their players after they have had a coaches meeting with the Program Director. This meeting is typically a week or two after the deadline. For some of our programs, they have staggered starting dates i.e., T-ball and Toss Ball start two or three weeks before Boys Baseball and Girls Softball. Occasionally, a team may still be in need of a coach and practices would be on hold until a parent or volunteer steps forward.

2. My child played on their Middle School / Senior High School team. Are they eligible to play with Kent Parks?

For boys baseball and girls softball, kids that play for their school team are eligible to participate in Kent Parks programs. Field space and the fact that the Kent Parks seasons run into the summer months allow kids that can work it into their schedule to participate in both.

For those kids that play for their school basketball team, this includes home team and fifth quarter kids, are ineligible to participate in the Kent Parks basketball program because gym availability is extremely limited and the seasons overlap. This gives those kids that do not make the school team or chose not to play for their school an opportunity to gain valuable playing experience.

3. Are practices scheduled by Kent Parks or the coach?

For outdoor sports (soccer, flag football, t-ball, toss ball, softball and baseball), practices are scheduled by the coach. Kent Parks reserves Kent School District facilities for practices and / or games. This information is passed onto the coach and they are allowed to schedule their teams practices as they see fit. For some leagues with limited field availability, Kent Parks will gather the coaches together and have them arrange a set schedule as to day, time and location of their practices. Teams are limited to no more than 3 hours per week for practice.

For indoor sports (basketball, volleyball), coaches are assigned a school location and sit down with other coaches assigned to that same site and schedule out their practices. Before that meeting, Kent Parks thoroughly goes through the time available at each location and how many teams can practice with in the allotted time. Some teams may have a majority of kids from a particular school but may be assigned to another site for practice. This may be due to an overflow of teams or lack of available time at that site.

4. How are shirt sizes ordered?

When shirts are ordered they are ordered with a random amount of sizes that fit that age group. Occasionally, there are kids that may be smaller, larger or taller than average. In this case, the parents can make a special request on their registration form or inform the coach of the special need.

5. I signed up the first week of registration and did not get my request for coach / team.

All kids that sign up on or before the deadline fall into the same priority. Being the first to sign up does not automatically fulfill a request for a coach, player or team. We have a published Kent Parks Team Selection Priority Sheet_we use to put all teams together. Anybody signing up after the deadline is assigned a team on a space available basis.

6. We didn't receive a registration form in the mail?

Kent Parks sends out registration forms for upcoming programs to all those kids that played in a Kent Parks program within the last year that are still eligible to participate. If you did not receive one then it could be that your child is to old, did not participate within the last year or it was lost in the mail. On each registration form, there is a section that lists the important dates for each sport. Please make a note of the date registrations are available and if you do not receive one within that time frame, feel free to call the Kent Commons (253) 856-5000 and we'll be glad to resend one to you.

7. How come you don't offer soccer after 6th grade?

Once kids move onto Middle School, there are a lot of school activities and other programs that can take up their time which does not leave enough to run a league. In turn, Kent Parks works with Kent Youth Soccer Association (KYSA) for those kids that are in Middle School and still interested in playing soccer. After our season has concluded, we pass the kids and coaches information on to KYSA so that they can send out season information for the following year.

8. Can my child play up a grade? I need them to a) because of carpooling, b) so they can play with their friends / sibling, c) because they're too good for their age group, etc.

Participants must play in the grade level in which they are currently in school (i.e. players are not allowed to move up or down a grade level).

When a child plays up a grade, they are participating with kids that are older, more experienced, bigger, stronger, etc. Although some kids may be ready to participate with older kids, once an exception is made for one, it is hard to justify saying no to another. Not every kid is ready to play up, and to do it for convenience sake is unfair to the child. These kids typically have a hard time keeping up with the drills, understanding the rules and in a lot of cases, their maturity level isn't there. Its also unfair for those participating to have to play with/against someone younger as well as for the coach that may have a system for practices but have to go slower or handle the immaturity of a younger participant. It is our observation that when a child plays up, they become discouraged, dejected and disheartened by the experience. They may not tell their parents, but a lot of times they relay this to the coach.

9. My child is young for their grade / skipped a grade / is small for their age, can they play down a year?

Kent Parks sets up the sports leagues by grades and not ages. Age break downs can be confusing as to what day/month/year they have to be a certain age. Playing by grades allows kids to play with classmates that they may not be able to otherwise. Unfortunately Kent Parks does not make exceptions for kids to play down a grade. Kids that fit the above criteria or something similar are only allowed to participate in their current grade.

10. I filled out a state patrol background check with a) my child's school, b) my employer, do I have to fill one out with the City of Kent.

Yes. All coaches, volunteers, officials or anybody that would be left unattended with a child must fill out a Washington State Patrol background check. The form is good for two years.

11. How are the shirt colors chosen and how come we don't get full uniforms?

For the most part, sponsors request particular colors. These may be their company colors or just a preference of their choosing. For those without a color request, Kent Parks chooses the remainder of the teams shirt colors so that they are not duplicated or similar to another team.

In order to keep registration fees at a minimum tee shirts are the common uniform for all of our team sports.

12. Why isn't there a post season tournament to determine the overall champion?

For elementary age groups, we do not offer post-season tournaments as the league philosophy is to teach and build on fundamentals and sportsmanship. To have a win at all cost tournament or set of games contradicts that philosophy.

For middle school and senior high age leagues, we do offer a post season or mid season tournament. Although our philosophy does not change, by the time the participants reach these age groups, they have a better understanding of the game and competition.

13. How do you put your leagues and divisions together?

For sports in which we keep standings, if we have enough teams we will split them into different divisions. The purpose of doing this gives us flexibility in scheduling and allows us to divide teams based on the previous year's record so that teams competing against one another are comparable. This is not an exact science as some teams may be placed into a particular division that they may dominate or struggle in, but for the most part, it does allow teams to play similar skilled teams.

For entry level grades, teams are randomly placed in divisions. In some cases, when multiple grades are combined, for example 3rd/4th grade girls softball, teams may be divided based on grades, one division being teams with a majority of 3rd graders one of 4th graders, etc.