

To: Harriton High School Boys Soccer Candidates
From: Biff Sturla, Head Coach, Boys Varsity, sturlab@lmsd.org
Date: June 15, 2022

This letter is going out to all Harriton students who have expressed an interest in playing in the boys' soccer program this coming fall season. If you are not interested in playing boys soccer this fall, please let me know so I can remove you from my e-mail list.

Pre-season soccer for all public high schools in Pennsylvania will start two months from today (Monday, August 15) at 7:30 AM. Similar to previous years, all players hoping to make Varsity or Junior Varsity **MUST** be ready to start that day. Showing up late for pre-season is not acceptable. Freshman who only want to be considered for the 9th grade team do not need to attend pre-season, but will NOT be eligible to move up to the Varsity or Junior Varsity later in the year.

In a typical year, the Varsity team is comprised of 20-22 players. Last year's team was a VERY young team and we have 17 varsity players returning. It will obviously be very difficult for other players to make the Varsity in 2022. Between the returning JV players, 9th grade team players and a very talented group of incoming freshman, the competition to earn a roster spot on Varsity will be difficult.

PRE-SEASON FITNESS TESTS

The most important thing that players need to do is to come into pre-season in top physical shape. Our very first activity will be the mile run for time. Returning Varsity players and seniors will be expected to complete their mile in UNDER 5:50. Incoming freshman will be expected to complete their mile in UNDER 6:10. All other players will be expected to complete their mile in UNDER 6:00. Players not making their time will NOT automatically be dropped from consideration for Varsity, but they will have shown the coaching staff that they are way behind the others in terms of fitness and desire to make the team.

On Tuesday, players will be put into pairs. Player A will run a lap and hand his baton to player B at the starting line. Player B will immediately run a full lap and hand the baton back to player A. This will continue until each player has run four laps (one mile). This type of running is more anaerobic (intense activity with rest periods in between) than the mile which is much more aerobic (able to maintain an activity at a less frantic pace for a longer period of time).

On Wednesday, players will be put into groups of three. Player A will **sprint** half a lap and hand the baton to player B who will sprint half a lap back to the starting line and hand the baton to player C. This will continue until each player has sprinted a total of 8 half laps (one mile). Again, this activity is much more anaerobic (similar to the sport of soccer) than the previous fitness tests and will give the coaches a better understanding of which players are fit enough to play at the varsity level.

The fitness test will run from 9:30-10:00 AM in sneakers each morning and will take place on the track. Players will then switch to cleats and shin guards for a 10:00-12:00 practice on the turf field. This will mainly consist of small sided games where the coaching staff will be able to evaluate the players and determine whether they make Varsity, J.V. or no team. Players will then break for lunch. Almost all players leave school and go home for lunch or go to a friend's house for lunch.

In the afternoon, we will be on the grass field right behind the stadium. Goalies will arrive and be ready to start by 3:00 PM for goalie training. Field players will arrive and be ready to start by 3:30. All players will stay until 5:30. Much of the afternoon sessions will consist of playing 11v11 games where the coaching staff can see the players in regular games.

PLAYER SELECTION

During the first week of pre-season, I will bring up some non-returning Varsity players to train with the returning Varsity players. By Wednesday afternoon, I will have made a preliminary cut and will only be looking at returning Varsity players, seniors and some other players under consideration for Varsity. This list will narrow down over the course of the week. The final Varsity team will be picked by the end of Friday.

Seniors not picked for Varsity will not be invited back to week 2 of pre-season. Seniors are NOT guaranteed a spot on varsity. If they do not make varsity, they will not be invited back to week 2 of pre-season. The J.V. will narrow down their roster list and only invite back certain players to week 2. Other players will not be invited back. This group will be determined by Matt Hirst, our Junior Varsity head coach. Freshman not under consideration for the J.V. will not be invited back to week 2, but will be able to play for the 9th grade team. This team will start with a meeting at the end of the first day of school in September.

The Varsity and JV will have a scrimmage on Monday, August 22, 3:00 PM at Interboro and on Wednesday, August 24, 2:00 PM, at home vs. Neshaminy. Both teams will have their first official game on Saturday, August 27, 10:00 AM vs. Upper Merion.

MEDICAL FORM / PARENT PERMISSION FORM

Our state requires each athlete to have a physical exam. This may be done by your family physician. Players may not participate in a fall sport until they have completed this. All players must turn in a PIAA form signed by both a parent and by a physician. This form is available at the athletic office or I can e-mail it to you.

School District Rules prohibit any player from participating until ALL paperwork is completed. This form must be signed by your doctor **on or after June 1st**. Players will not be able to practice until this is completed and the form turned in. Once the paperwork is signed by your physician (it needs several signatures) and by a parent (also needing several signatures) ... **please mail your SIGNED form to Athletic Trainer Jamie Toldero at Harriton.**

Medical Forms are due by August 1. Please get yours in right away. If you hand your form in at school on the first day of pre-season, you will not be able to participate until the following day. Please get them in right away.

WHAT TO BRING TO PRE-SEASON

- size 5 soccer ball (pumped up and in playing condition with name written on it)
- shin guards (mandatory for all contact activities)
- sneakers (required for all conditioning activities on the track)
- cleats
- water bottle. Refills will be readily available on the field but players must have their own water bottle.

The school athletic trainers will be available during pre-season. Players who need to see the trainer during pre-season will need to get to the trainer's room at least 30 minutes before practice.

Players normally do NOT stay on campus for lunch. Please arrange for a ride home and a ride back to school for the afternoon.

OVERVIEW OF TEAM SELECTION

Below is a brief overview of the team selection process, depending on what grade each player will be entering:

SENIORS - Some seniors will be selected for Varsity. The remaining seniors will not be invited back to week 2 of pre-season.

JUNIORS - Some juniors will be selected for Varsity. Some juniors will be selected for Junior Varsity. Players not selected for either of these two teams will not be invited back two week 2 of pre-season.

SOPHOMORES - Some sophomores will be selected for Varsity. Some sophomores will be selected for Junior Varsity. Players not selected for either of these two teams will not be invited back two week 2 of pre-season.

FRESHMAN - Some freshman will be selected for Varsity. Some freshman will be selected for Junior Varsity. Players not selected for Varsity or Junior Varsity will NOT be invited back to week 2 of pre-season. All freshman will be welcome to play on the Freshman team. That team will start their season with the Freshman team coach at the end of the first day of school.

COACHING STAFF

Varsity Head Coach: Biff Sturla – This fall season will be my 21st year as head coach at Harriton, 28th year as high school head coach and 41st year coaching at Lower Merion Soccer Club (President since 1999). I played at Harriton back in the 1940s.

Varsity Assistant Coach: Henry Farr will return as our assistant coach and goalkeeper coach. Henry was a standout player at Trinity College, The Shipley School and the LMSC Magic where he helped the team win two state championships. Henry is a travel team head coach at LMSC and helps run their 4 and 5 year old divisions.

JV Coach: Matt Hirst will return as our JV coach. This will be Matt's second year coaching and teaching at Harriton.

Athletic Director – Shawn Albert is the Athletic Director. His e-mail is alberts@lmsd.org in case you need to communicate with him. Please know that our A.D. will be VERY busy since he oversees all sports and non-academic activities at Harriton.

PRE-SEASON WEEK 1 (AUGUST 15-20)

THIS IS ONLY A TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

MONDAY, AUGUST 15

7:30 AM

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

3:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Mandatory Meeting for all Harriton fall sports team members in the auditorium.

On the track, in sneakers for fitness test: *Mile Run*.

Seniors and returning varsity players must make the run in **under 5:50**

Freshman must make the run in **under 6:10**

All others must make the run in **under 6:00**

Practice inside the stadium (turf field)

Goalie training on the grass field next to the stadium (goalies stay till 5:30)

Practice on the grass field, next to the stadium

Note: At some point in the day, freshman, juniors and all new students will have to go to the trainer and do the mandatory baseline concussion testing. Players who did the test last year will not have to do the test this year. A consent form will need to be signed by a parent prior to doing this. If the form is not signed, the player will not be able to participate in the soccer program.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

3:30 PM - 5:30 PM

On the track, in sneakers for fitness test: *Mile Run In Pairs*

Players grouped in pairs. The first player runs one lap, holding a baton. At the end of the lap, he hands the baton off to his partner who runs one lap and hands the baton back to the first player. This process continues until both players have run one mile.

Practice inside the stadium (turf field)

Goalie training on the grass field next to the stadium (goalies stay till 5:30)

Grass field (next to stadium)

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

3:30 PM – 5:30 PM

On the track, in sneakers, for fitness test: *Mile Run in Groups of Three*

Players paired in groups of 3. Players 1 and 3 start on one side of the track. Player 2 starts on the opposite side of the track. Each group has a baton. Player 1 sprints half a lap to the other side of the track and hands the baton to player 2. Player 2 sprints half a lap, back to the starting line and hands the baton off to player 3 who takes the baton and sprints a half lap to player 1. This continues until all players have sprinted 8 half laps (one mile).

Practice inside the stadium (turf field)

Goalie training on the grass field next to the stadium (goalies stay till 5:30)

Players still under consideration for varsity (including all seniors) will be on the grass field next to the stadium. All other players will be with JV coach Matt Hirst on either field 3 or the outfield of the baseball field.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

3:30 PM – 5:30 PM

On the track, in sneakers for fitness test: Cooper Test

Each player runs as many laps as possible in 12 minutes. Players need to make a minimum of 7 laps during those 12 minutes.

Practice inside the stadium (turf field) for players under consideration for varsity. Players not under consideration will be on one of the grass fields.

Goalie training on the grass field next to the stadium (goalies stay till 5:30)

Players still under consideration for varsity (including all seniors) will be on the grass field next to the stadium. All other players will be with the JV group on field 3 or the outfield of the baseball field.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

3:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Warmup and stretch for 30 minutes.

Practice inside the stadium (turf field) for players under consideration for varsity. Players not under consideration will be on one of the grass fields.

Goalie training on the grass field next to the stadium (goalies stay till 5:30)

Players still under consideration for varsity (including all seniors) will be on the grass field next to the stadium. All other players will be with the JV group on field 3 or the outfield of the baseball field.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20

Time TBD. Light practice for varsity only. Mostly tactical review and walk through. No fitness.