SPRING ACADEMY TEAMS F.A.Q.

Please Read the Below Information Entirely. It is written by M14 Founder Matt Miller and it will answer most of your questions. Any additional questions will be answered at Tryouts or please feel free to contact us via email or phone.

What is the process of getting a player in the Academy Team Program?

All players, no matter how long they have been in our program, do need to attend our tryout. At the beginning of our tryout we will have a mandatory parent meeting to go over additional information and answer any questions parents may have. After all grade level evaluations have concluded, players will be contacted with their status (i.e. accepted or denied). Players are invited into a color level for that grade level. There are 2 color divisions on our team side: Black and Red. The color divisions are how we divide entire grade levels into teams and placement within the color is based on skill, talent and athleticism with Black being our top talent division. Parents and players have always found comfort in knowing that once they are placed in a color class that they will be on a team with players who are equally as talented as they are.

When is the season?

Spring: Mid-March – Mid-June

So when are teams determined?

One day after all tryouts have concluded, our Directors will call each player who made the team. We kindly ask that parents DO NOT come to the facility to find out results, we will not disclose results if parents come up to the facility. On the phone call our Directors will tell that parent who else made that team and parents can ask any questions needed. (We professionally ask that nothing is disclosed to any other families until after a final roster email is sent out. We are not responsible if you tell your player who is on the team and they tell other players.) Parents will need to fully accept their spot that same day. Accepting the spot means their player is fully registered (full payment or non-refundable deposit is put down). If players' spots are not accepted within that time frame, we will look to re-organize the team. **Please note:** Just because it is the last day of phone calls does not indicate your player was last selected or something is wrong. We call every player to let them know and still have normal work to do during the day as well.

24 Hour Rule: If we have not heard back from a parent via email/phone within 24 hours of calling then their players spot can be taken away

I would caution ALL parents interested: Most times our ‘2nd team’ or ‘3rd team’ is as talented as most organizations' 1st team. ”2nd team” here does not indicate “B” players. We draw from players out of 15-20 cities, so our pool of talent is much bigger which makes team selection much more competitive. Everybody will not make a top team here. I prefer the focus within our youth academy to be on development and competition not what team you make. Parents can

ask questions at the time the calls are made however we do ask that the conversations remain professional.

How many players are on each team?

10 (7 players make a team run)

What is the spring academy team program structure?

Our Spring Season is divided into 3 phases.

Phase 1 Practice and games: Practice and weekend games (tournaments/shootouts/league) for 6 weeks.

Phase 2 Battlegrounds: During the BattleGrounds phase, we will practice but will not play outside competition for games; instead we convert 2 weeks of practice (4 total practices) into games played against ourselves. Battlegrounds is where we play controlled scrimmage games to work on in-game weaknesses we saw during phase 1 and also get each grade level curriculum taught. While outside competition is awesome and we love it; it also makes it difficult at times to teach certain in game principles when the objective is winning. (EX. it is hard to teach moving without the ball against man to man when the other team plays a zone).

Phase 3 Practice and games: The last 5 weeks we will finish with normal practice and games. Substance is the word we use for what we want out of a season. We want the season to be filled with development, playing, competing! Our 3 phase format has allowed us to get this done!

Are Parents Allowed To Watch The First Two Weeks Of Practice?

Unfortunately not. I understand parents' excitement to see the team and what is being worked on which we don't have any issue with, however the first two weeks of practice is only open to players and coaches. We believe the first two weeks of practice are a great time for players and coaches to learn from each other and build chemistry. It is also the time our Directors make adjustments within teams and figure out how each team should play in order to be successful. Much like the Chicago Bulls training camp, things are new which means things are not always the 'prettiest.' We have found by having parents re-enter the gym after the first two weeks continues a positive relationship between M14 Families and Staff which makes for a great experience for our players! This is a rule we heavily enforced and professionally ask to be complied with.

Parents ARE allowed to be in the gym for all games!

Do parents have a 'say so' where their player is placed and/or does the level my player played at a different organization matter?

No and no. Parents' opinions do not matter nor does where your player played previously count toward their placement in our program. Previous organizations did their best to evaluate based off of the kids they had in front of them; we will do the same. Respectfully, we ask parents to trust our program and sign up for the right reasons. Please remember; I want what you want,

which is for your player to improve. However, we have a system and all players will follow it. At M14, we will play players at the level that we feel offers the most challenge for them. This will be determined by their individual skill, talent, athleticism versus all the players who are at tryouts. Each season this could change. For example, we may have a 3rd grader who is advanced for his age and the other players at tryouts are beginners. That player will be placed a level up so they can be challenged. This does not mean, however, when that same player is a 4th grader they will be placed up a grade level. Each season we determine what is best for our players and we ensure they all will be challenged.

For Returning Families: It is a tryout; from one season to the next we could have changes to team rosters. Similar to parents having the option to change organizations from season to season, we reserve the right to change rosters from season to season.

What is the M14 system?

The M14 System is our originally designed player development model. The curriculum is divided into two parts: Individual Skill and Team Skill (IQ) and designed to build yearly with the ultimate goal of preparing players for high school basketball. The offense builds yearly as well to add different IQ skills to help players become smarter on the court as well.

Here is how it works:

We have created a list of all the individual skills and team skills a player would need to make the high school team. We also have a list of ancillary player characteristics as well (ex. leadership, hard work, listening skills, etc.). We have ascribed these skills and characteristics to a grade level and the skills build yearly. Each year we focus on what is most important for players at their specific age; it does not put the 'cart before the horse.' (Ex. we will not teach an advanced move to a player who can't do a basic layup). The M14 System is researched, based in fact and has been put together based on years of training 1000's of players; but with that, we are still constantly upgrading it so we stay up to date with the game of basketball and the players who are in front of us.

Also…

The curriculums are grade based not talent based. This means that every player at that grade level will learn the same individual and IQ skills. This does not mean however, we will 'hold players back.' If we have players who already have mastered the skills for that grade level then we continue to teach them individual/IQ skills until we find a level that is challenging for them. This is why we have color divided classes so we can make sure that we manipulate the curriculum so it is appropriate for the players we are training. At our daily coaching meetings, our managers review information from coaches about previous training sessions/games and then they adjust the practice so players stay on track and are correctly being taught. The final approval for every practice plan is ultimately approved by me.

By having a core set of objectives at each grade level it forces our staff to all be great and at a high level. They are trained on how to implement the curriculum by our managers, which allows the messaging our players receive to be consistent. This then allows for a smooth transition as the players continue to grow in our program.

Our High School Curriculum is called “Degree Training.” Please ask about it at tryouts if you are interested. Because it is an original concept we will not be posting information about it online.

What are the main objectives at each grade level?

3rd-5th Grade Objectives

2 L’s

LEARN the game and LOVE the game. These players are at the beginning of a long journey with the game of basketball and they haven’t picked up many bad habits yet. We have the opportunity to instill the correct principles and individual skill at these ages so they start/continue their career correctly. I have found it to be extremely important that their individual game gets started off correctly. We make sure players are learning the proper skill individually but also team skills as well.

We also want to show players how to LOVE the game (not like). Much like a marriage, to love someone most likely means you have spent time and had various experiences with them: It is no different when teaching players how to love the game of basketball. They will have exciting/fun times but they also will learn through adverse situations. They will be challenged but always positively reinforced. Players will be expected to spend time with the game which means practicing on their own and managing their time properly. It is important to us to help instill confidence and self-esteem at this age to make sure they have a positive experience with the game of basketball.

6th-7th Grade Objectives

Figure out who you are

At these ages our curriculum continues to advance. We want players on the court to start to think about and figure out who they are and our staff helps them do this. Players need to start trying to use different moves and challenge themselves to take more risk in the games. For some players it is easy to see “who they are” (i.e. a shooter, defender, scorer) but others it takes time. At these ages we want players to use the skills they have been taught in the game. Battle Ground weekends really help with this process of merging skill into live competition. This gives parents, coaches and most importantly, the player the opportunity to see what works for the player and how to start using that skill(s) at a higher level.

8th Grade Objectives

Accept and Inject

In my experience by 8th grade certain skills start to really manifest themselves and you can see what actually works. In the younger years the athletic gap can be huge (height, speed, strength) which can negatively affect players. What once worked as a 5th grader doesn’t work any more at 8th grade because of puberty; so, by 8th grade we can see what is working and can see how it will work for the rest of their career (with continued development).Though all players follow the M14 System, they are not robots so they will process the information differently. Some take the skills and become shooters, some turn into ball handlers, other defenders. The great thing about our curriculum is even though a certain skill may manifest stronger, all the other skills are still at a high level as well. Now that we are seeing what’s working, we encourage players to accept who they are and start the process of helping them

figure out how to inject themselves in the game at a higher level. For example, a player may have shown shooting as their primary skill, our staff will push this player to learn to move without the ball, use screens and really emphasize shooting for this player. We will do this while still helping them develop secondary skills as well.

Still, there will be some players who are skilled in all aspects of the game but no one skill has really taken the forefront. Since puberty has begun our staff can help this player 'find themselves' in a realistic way that will work for the rest of their career.

High School Objective

Dominate
This does not mean score, score, score. This means dominate the game in the way you can. For some it means scoring, for others it may mean assists or rebounds, energy, or being the hardest worker. Whatever the skill you are the best at; we want them to dominate the game in that manner. Our Degree Training helps players expand their games so they still are able to contribute more as well.

What About Winning?

That is what our outside competition weekends are for. We want to play to win … but … our staff is NEVER allowed to sacrifice development to get a win. We believe that proper execution will lead to the correct result, individually and as a team!

What is the location?

All team practices are held at our facility. 2414 Church Road Aurora Illinois.

What about S.S.A.P. Training?

S.S.A.P. training is available during the winter and spring season but is not included in team fees. It is highly recommended and yes, players do participate during each season. The season offers 24 sessions held on the same night as practice (twice a week). We have a 4,300 sq ft weight room with the best strength coach in the Midwest! S.S.A.P. training is an additional cost. All classes are led by our certified strength and development coach!

Who Will Coach?

Always a great question! Our Staff will coach. Our staff of coaches must go through our staff development and coaching clinics in order to coach a team here no matter what their background is. We have a system and our coaches must coach according to that system. Coaches do not have the freedom to put in their own offense/defense/concepts or ideas and they understand that when accepting a coaching position. Their main focus is to make sure each player accomplished their grade level individual objectives while also ensuring each player had a positive experience. I'm all about winning games, it's basketball – we are not going to take the competitive spirit out of the game, however, we have found a unique way to get both accomplished. We have a 'checks and balance' system in place so our Directors can hold our coaches accountable. Our staff is not perfect, we make mistakes but we have systems in place

to ensure those mistakes are quickly and professionally handled so the focus can remain where it should: ON THE PLAYERS!

Here is the part that may be a ‘shocker’: players will not find out who their coach is until the parent meeting. Our Managers and Directors run practice so teams will continue to progress but I am concerned that we get it ‘right.’ Having a coach is a big deal and we take it very seriously. We like to see the team and make sure the coach we put with them is a great fit. This is not a new concept to Team M-XIV and I am very proud to say we have not had any issues with coaches within our program.

What if my child is not selected for the Academy team; do they automatically get put into the Training Program?

If a player comes to our Academy Team Tryout and does not get a spot, they do not automatically get put in the training program. While an invite into the Training Program is likely, we still do need to make sure that every player is ready for our program in any capacity. We also have to factor in the amount of players who are interested in that program into the equation. The Training Program will be full of players who either play another sport or play for a different team; this means there will be talented players within that program and quality matters to us so we need to make sure every player is qualified to be in our program so we can help them develop.

Where and who will we play?

We will play appropriate competition; we want to play against teams that are equal or better to the teams we have. Who we play will all depend on how our Directors feel about the talent level of our teams. We want to be competitive because it will allow us to see what is and isn’t working from our practices. This does mean some teams may travel out of state to play. Wherever the best competition is, is where we want to be. We are in the Midwest; Chicago is a hotbed of basketball so we should be able to find great competition within a day's drive distance but if we need to go further we will. During the winter, we generally do not travel. All team schedules are not the same either. We do not ‘mass produce.’ We constantly are adjusting the schedules based on how the team is progressing to make sure players have the platform to get better!

Are there high school teams?

Yes! We offer teams through high school.

Are there any additional fees for overnight out of town tournaments?

Yes! If we do play in an out of state tournament that causes our staff to stay overnight, there is a $60 travel fee that covers the coaches stay and transportation (gas). The checks will be due the Thursday before the tournament begins. The fee is expected no matter if your player travels or not.

Can I play for another team besides M-XIV?

During the winter time, we do allow our players to play for their local feeder teams. We support high school basketball and do understand playing with friends is important. We DO NOT allow our players in the Winter or Spring to play for other travel or AAU teams. This rule does stretch to 'off weekends.' We believe players have made a commitment to our program and our program has made a commitment to them; if a team is 'off' for the weekend we want our players to rest and do not want them to risk injury playing with another team.

Who Decides Who Does and Does Not Make a Team?

When you come to our tryout, you will see some coaches with clipboards and some without. Everyone has a job, some of our staff will run the tryout while others are evaluating. When it comes to team selection, our managers & coaches have input and our directors give the semi-final selection and then we enter the 'war-room' where we discuss each player to make a final selection based on what we saw. This allows multiple eyes to see each player so we don't miss anything but ultimately the final decisions come down to the Directors and myself.

Can I Play Another Sport and Participate on a Spring Team?

We do support multi-sport athletes and have no problem with players that do this. Our program for those athletes is our Spring ATP. When committing to our teams we expect players to attend all practices and games. At times we will change practice (adding them in some cases) and we want all team players in attendance. Youth Sports has become very intense from a scheduling standpoint, it is nearly impossible to commit to two travel sports full time during the same season. We kindly ask if you are playing a different sport either make M14 the priority or do not accept a team spot and participate in our Spring ATP program (and summer league!).

The M14 Summer League?

The perfect balance between pick up ball and controlled scrimmages.

Our annual summer league will be held in the month of June (starts after the season concludes). The summer league is a program we developed to give players the platform to try all the skills they learned in real game situations. We mix teams up each session and play 5on5. Our staff coaches and we do have real refs for the games. The purpose of the league is not wins and loses (though we do keep score each game) it is more about translating skills. It is one of our most popular programs.The Summer League is not mandatory and is an additional fee. There is an evaluation for the summer league however players on our teams do not have to attend. The summer league is open to any and all players. It runs the last 3 weeks in June and 1st week of July. The schedule is online. Our suggestion is to schedule vacations after the summer league concludes!

Is There Time Off During the Spring Season?

Yes! We have the following time off:

The week of Mar 30th-Apr 5th: We will not have practice this week. This does mean we also will not have any games the weekend of April 5th & 6th.

Memorial Day: We will not have practice on Memorial Day. We encourage all players to attend our Memorial Day skills clinic held from 9a-12pm. The fee is $40 for the clinic.