

SME Weekly Email - Week of July 21

Thanks to the 55 players and families who have completed the [Player Information Google Form](#). Even if you are already on our email distribution list, please take a moment to fill out the form to help us have an accurate count of players. An accurate count helps us as we are working with uniform vendors and scheduling of tryouts, practices, and matches.

I know that several of you have been out competing in recent weeks including in last weekend's heat. There are several more opportunities to compete in formal tournaments before the season starts. I've included more information later in this message. You can also reach out to teammates to arrange for opportunities to play.

COACHING STAFF

As many of you know, both Coach Hallstrom and Coach Sutton decided to step away from coaching at the end of last season. They have both been fantastic partners in creating opportunities for all of our players. We have been blessed over the years to benefit from knowledgeable and experienced coaches. I'm excited to introduce our assistant coaches for this season.

Coach Jennifer Lowe has been part of our boys' program for the past 3 seasons and will be joining our girls' program this year. Coach Lowe graduated from Blue Valley Northwest where she was a 4-time state medalist - twice in singles and twice in doubles, played college tennis at Case Western Reserve - one of the top NCAA Division 3 programs, and also served as a student assistant at Case Western.

Coach Brian Miller was the head girls' and boys' coach at Kansas City Christian for about a decade. His teams won a combined 6 KSHSAA 321A State Team Championships. KC Christian and Bishop Miege also share Harmon Park with us, so he is very familiar with our program. Coach Miller accepted a teaching position at SM Northwest last fall and was part of our coaching staff with the SME boys' program in the spring.

TRYOUTS

Tryouts for the girls' tennis team begin on Monday, August 18. We'll have at least 2 sessions on Monday. Session 1 will be from 3:00-4:30, and Session 2 will be from 4:30-6:00. Both sessions will start at the upper courts at Harmon Park. The tentative plan is to have 9th and 11th graders in Session 1 and 10th and 12th graders in Session 2.

If we need to add an additional session, we will start groups at 3:00, 4:00, and 5:00. With 3 sessions, each session would last an hour. Whether we have 2 or 3 sessions will depend on the number of players we need to evaluate and the number of available courts. We will communicate the specifics of the tryout plan in our Week of August 11 Email.

While we are a no-cut program, we use the tryout process to evaluate players and sort them into our V/JV group and Blue/White group. You can read more about the way that our program is set up and our sorting process here - <https://smeasttennis.wixsite.com/tennis/tryout-information>

If you have friends who are interested in playing but do not receive my email messages, please forward this message to them. If you are receiving this message and do not plan to play this fall, please let me know, and I will remove you from the email list.

As we approach the beginning of the season, there are several things that you and your families need to do.

PAPERWORK

To tryout, players need to have a completed KSHSAA Physical Form on file with the SME athletic department and Concussion/Head Injury Release Form, and a Transportation Form. You can find a link to those forms here - [KSHSAA Physical Form](#) (the physical needs to have been conducted after May 1, 2025), [Concussion/Head Injury Information and Release Form](#), and [Transportation Form](#). Additionally, the SMSD Athletic Packet Online Verification forms need to be completed in both the student and parent/family Skyward accounts. **All paperwork needs to be completed and submitted by the start of tryouts.** You can either bring completed forms to the SME office - the office reopens on Friday, July 25 - or bring them to one of the Lancer Launch events - August 1 or August 8.

GET OUT AND PLAY

Our tryout process and practices take place outside in the afternoon in August. It is usually quite warm. If you have spent most of the summer inside, you will want to get acclimated to not only being outside and but also playing outside. I know that many of you have been taking lessons, attending clinics or classes, and competing in tournaments. Continue to take advantage of these final days of summer. There are several upcoming events you can still play:

- [USTA Events](#) - There are USTA events each weekend between now and the start of our season.
 - July 25-27 - L6 at Clayview - Registration Deadline - July 21 @ 4:59 p.m.
 - August 1-3 - L6 at Clayview - Registration Deadline - July 28 @ 4:59 p.m.
 - August 1-3 - L5 Mixed Team 14U (you and a male partner) in St. Joseph, MO - Registration Deadline - July 23 @ 4:59 p.m.
 - August 1-3 - L5 Mixed Team 16U and 18U (you and a male partner) in Topeka - Registration Deadline - July 23 @ 4:59 p.m.
 - August 2 - Junior Circuit at Genesis Merriam - Registration Deadline - July 28 @ 4:59 p.m.
 - August 2-3 - L6 at Riverside in Wichita - Registration Deadline - July 30 @ 4:59 p.m.
 - August 8-10 - L7 at Woodside - Registration Deadline - August 4 @ 4:59 p.m.
 - August 9-11 - L5 in St. Louis - Registration Deadline - July 30 @ 4:59 p.m.
 - August 15-17 - L6 at Plaza - Registration Deadline - August 11 @ 4:59 p.m.
- [KC Summer Slam](#) - There is one Summer Slam event remaining: Owl Slam (played at Gardner-Edgerton HS) - July 29-31. You can play both singles and doubles and select your division: Varsity, JV, or Novice. The registration deadline is July 24. The Summer Slam event is \$17/division.
- **Attend a HS Clinic** - Several area clubs offer sessions specifically designed for HS season preparation
- **Get out with your friends and teammates and play.** We are fortunate to have many area courts that you can use. Use them. Let me know if you need help connecting with future teammates.

HIGHER LEVEL (L4/L3 and higher) USTA TOURNAMENT PLAYERS (OUTSIDE COMPETITION)

KSHSAA adjusted their rules for competing in outside events - primarily, USTA tournaments - last spring. You are now allowed to participate in one outside tournament once you have joined the HS team. ***KSHSAA requires that you submit notification to the school at least 30 days prior to that event.*** Last spring, I worked with several of our boys' players, our building administration, and KSHSAA to develop a letter that we can use to provide notification. Under this new rule, you could potentially start the season with the team and use your one outside tournament to compete in a USTA L4 over Labor Day weekend or the USTA L3 events on Sept. 13-15. We can also discuss some other possibilities of how to use this new rule to play your outside event later in the season.

Even if you are still deciding your outside tournament plans, please go ahead and complete your [interest form](#) and get your KSHSAA and SMSD paperwork completed. If you are planning to use this outside event exemption, reach

out to me to discuss your plans - andrewgibbs@smsd.org. I know that each situation is different, and we can work together to figure out how to use this new rule to help you reach both your HS and USTA tennis goals.

KSHSAA REMINDERS

While KSHSAA has modified the outside competition rule, remember that you need to submit your request at least 30 days in advance. Several of KSHSAA's tennis rules remain in place:

- You may take private lessons - you and the instructor - during the season. We ask that you schedule private lessons around the HS practice and match schedule.
- You may take a semi-private doubles lesson with a HS teammate - you, partner, and the instructor - during the season. Again, we ask that you schedule lessons around the HS practice and match schedule. Additionally, please let me know if you do take a doubles lesson so that I can be sure we get you paired together in at least one HS event.
- You **may not** attend tennis classes or academy sessions once you have attended your first HS team practice.