



2025-2026

YEAR-IN-REVIEW

Building a Better Community Through Basketball

SOMA BASKETBALL

SOMA Basketball's mission is to *Build a Better Community Through Basketball - And Ensure Access to All.*

We seek to contribute to the fabric and beauty of our two towns and enhance the impact of our local basketball programs including those organized by South Orange Recreation, Maplewood Recreation, SOMSD Schools & Supporting Groups, The South Mountain YMCA, and any other organizations hosting programs open to all residents in our two towns.

We aim to ensure access and resources for all who seek to participate in basketball regardless of level. We do this by offering financial support in the form of donations, grants, and scholarships and by organizing community-based service, events, and programs for SOMA athletes of all ages.

WHO WE SUPPORTED



OUR YEAR IN ACTION

GROWTH. ACCESS. COMMUNITY.
FOR EVERY CHILD.

This year, we strengthened our foundation, expanded our reach, and deepened our impact. Together, we built more than a basketball program, we built **a community** where every child belongs.



01 EXPANDED ACCESS FOR ALL

Committed to eliminating barriers to play, by introducing the Free Basketball SOMA program, where families can have program, equipment and/or transportation fees completely covered.



02 GROWING OUR TEAMS

Added more teams across every division and grade level, offering more opportunities for players to develop, compete and have fun.



03 BUILDING COMMUNITY

Hosted community events, parent workshops, and volunteer celebrations that bring families together and strengthen connections.



04 INVESTING IN COACHES

Provided coaching education, resources, and recognition through initiatives, celebrating coaches who set the standard of what great coaching looks like - on and off the court.



05 DEVELOPING TEEN LEADERS

Created meaningful leadership opportunities aimed at empowering teens and keeping them connected with the game of basketball.



06 INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN

Continued to grow our inclusive programming, like Buddy Ball, ensuring our programs welcome and support every child. This year we had 40 Buddy Ball volunteers and 25 youth players who participated.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

A growing community built on basketball.

4,000+

SOMA YOUTH IMPACTED



From first-time players to seasoned hoopers, we're proud to provide a place for every kid to play, learn and have fun with basketball.



375+

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to the community volunteers who give their time, energy, and support towards ensuring that our youth have a positive experience with the game of basketball.



120+

TEAMS

From 1st – 12th graders, community gyms are more full than ever with SOMA basketball teams learning and competing.



150+

**TEEN ROLE MODELS
REFEREEING & COACHING**

Teen role models inspiring the next generation through the game of basketball.



51

**YOUTH ACCESSING
FREE BASKETBALL**

Launched Free Basketball program to ensure every child can access the game, regardless of financial circumstances.

EVERY PLAYER BELONGS HERE



55%

OF SOMA SCHOOL-AGED KIDS
REACHED BY SOMA BASKETBALL



BASKETBALL EQUIPMENT FOR SOMSD PE PROGRAMS

Supporting PE programs ensures more students have the equipment and resources they need to learn, play, and thrive.



SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

8 of 9

DISTRICT SCHOOLS ENGAGED

Strengthening community connections and expanding access to basketball opportunities across SOMA schools and neighborhoods.



BUDDY BASKETBALL

65 PARTICIPANTS

In partnership with the South Mountain YMCA, this inclusive basketball experience is designed to ensure children of all abilities can experience the joy, confidence, and connection that come from being part of a team.



FREE BASKETBALL

51 YOUTH SUPPORTED

Providing free registration, transportation, and apparel, to any SOMA family who asks for it.

SOMA Basketball is intentionally building pathways that bring more children into community sports.

This year, we launched new initiatives focused on access, inclusion, mentorship, and leadership, including expanded Buddy Ball programming, Free Basketball Access, Community Scholarships, Sunday Skills led by Columbia High School players, youth mentorship opportunities, and teen volunteer leadership programs.

We also strengthened partnerships with the South Orange & Maplewood School District and the South Mountain YMCA, helping expand opportunities for children and families across the SOMA community.

As a result of this intentional community-building model, SOMA Basketball now **reaches nearly 55% of SOMA school-aged youth** through leagues, camps, clinics, leadership programs, partnerships, and community initiatives.

We believe there is a place in SOMA Basketball for **every child**, and we remain committed to finding new and effective ways to expand participation, inclusion, and connection throughout our community.

MORE THAN BASKETBALL. A COMMUNITY BUILT FOR BELONGING.

2025-2026



THE SPIRIT OF SOMA HOOPS

MORE THAN A LEAGUE. A COMMUNITY BUILT THROUGH BASKETBALL.



45% GROWTH

IN SOMA HOOPS PARTICIPATION

2024-2025

692

PLAYERS

2025-2026

1,007

PLAYERS

Over the past three years, SOMA Hoops has transformed recreational basketball participation across the SOMA community, through intentional culture-building, positive coaching, and inclusive programming.

93%

OF PLAYERS PLAN TO RETURN

Families consistently point to:

- ✓ Positive coaching
- ✓ Inclusive team culture
- ✓ Player development
- ✓ Community connection
- ✓ Fun at the core

HEALTHY RECREATION CREATES HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

This growth did not happen by accident. It happened because SOMA Hoops intentionally designed an experience where every player feels seen, supported, challenged, and excited to return.

260+

VOLUNTEER COACHES

Dedicated volunteers leading with passion and purpose.

80+

TEEN REFEREES & VOLUNTEERS

Teen leaders mentoring and supporting the next generation.

EXPANDED

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Introduced the first Boys and Girls High School Recreation Basketball Division keeping kids connected to the game and community beyond middle school.



BUILDING THE FUTURE OF COLUMBIA BASKETBALL

WHERE SCHOOL PRIDE, MENTORSHIP, AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT COME TOGETHER




200+

CHS STUDENTS PARTICIPATED

...As players, referees, mentors, youth coaches.

3 NEW CHS-LED PROGRAMS



SUNDAY SKILLS

Weekly skill development and mentorship led by players on the CHS boys and girls teams.



SOMA COUGARS GIRLS SUMMER BASKETBALL CAMP

Launching a new pathway for girls to connect with Columbia basketball.



SUMMER WORKOUTS

Bringing middle school and high school players and coaches together through summer training.



2

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Supporting graduating seniors who demonstrated leadership, service, sportsmanship, and a commitment to strengthening the SOMA basketball community.



2

YOUTH SPIRITS NIGHTS

Record turnout for both girls and boys varsity teams. An electric evening of hoops, community, and fun.



57

PIECES OF EQUIPMENT & APPAREL DONATED TO CHS TEAMS

In support of CHS PE Programs, CHS team activities, and athlete development

SOMA Basketball Boosters is proud to partner with Columbia High School to strengthen basketball opportunities from elementary school through varsity athletics.

Together, we create meaningful connections between younger players and student-athletes through clinics, coaching, mentorship, spirit nights, employment opportunities, and community events.

By investing in today's students, we are building the future of Columbia Basketball.

“

For the first time in SOMA history, we found the time and space to spend with this younger generation. Part of our future success will be predicated on us investing the time now.

~ Girls Varsity Coach Aaron Breitman

”



A LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

This year SOMA Basketball Boosters continued to demonstrate the power of what a community can build together.

What began as a shared commitment to creating meaningful basketball opportunities for local kids, has grown into something much bigger: a community-wide effort grounded in access, inclusion, leadership, connection, and belonging.

During the 2025–2026 season, more than 4,000 SOMA youth were impacted through basketball programs, partnerships, camps, clinics, mentorship opportunities, scholarships, and community initiatives. Across gyms throughout South Orange and Maplewood, we watched kids build confidence, form friendships, develop resilience, and experience the joy that comes from moving their bodies and being part of a team.

This year also marked extraordinary growth across the SOMA Basketball community. SOMA Hoops participation increased by 45% growing from 692 to 1,007 players, while volunteer involvement grew 34%, from 280 to 376 community members. This includes more than 60 youth volunteers under 18 years old helping lead programs like Buddy Basketball, Sunday Skills, and peer mentorship initiatives, demonstrating how our sport is developing not only players, but the next generation of leaders.

We also launched several exciting “firsts” this season, including:

- A new High School Recreation League
- Expanded Boys & Girls Midweek Clinics serving more than 100 players
- Sunday Skills, led by 20 Columbia High School girls & boys varsity, junior varsity, and freshman players
- New Sportsmanship and Advocacy Committees
- Expanded leadership and mentorship opportunities for middle and high school students

Through SOMA Basketball Boosters, we also expanded access and inclusion throughout the community. This year, the Free Basketball program provided financial support for fifty-one children and families, helping cover registration fees, transportation, equipment, and other barriers to participation. We strengthened partnerships with organizations like MEND, SOMA Kids Feed Kids, Seton Hall University and the Memorial Park Trash Pandas. We deepened relationships with Columbia High School and the South Mountain YMCA, and expanded the number of community sponsors and donors helping make this work possible.

None of this happens without the incredible dedication of the people who show up for this community week after week. SOMA Basketball is powered by coaches, parents, volunteers, sponsors, student leaders, local businesses and community partners who believe deeply in creating positive experiences and opportunities for young people.

We are incredibly proud of what was built this year, and even more excited about where this momentum will take us. SOMA Basketball continues to grow not only in size, but in impact, connection, and purpose, strengthening access and building bridges across our community.



Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping make SOMA Basketball more than just a sport - but a true community.

Together strong,

Tracy Flanagan
President, SOMA Basketball Boosters

BEYOND THE GAME

Building friendships, traditions,
leadership, and community
connections beyond the court.

**SOMA Basketball is more than a game.
IT IS COMMUNITY.**



HOOPS & SOUP **PARTNERSHIP WITH MEND**

Supporting local families
and strengthening
community partnerships
through service and
giving back.



PROVIDING MEALS **PARTNERSHIP WITH SOMA KIDS FEED KIDS**

Supporting those who face food
insecurity by providing meals to
those in need.



SPIRIT NIGHTS **CHS & SETON HALL**

Connecting younger
players with CHS and
Seton Hall basketball
programs and creating
unforgettable community
experiences.



PARK CLEANUP **PARTNERSHIP WITH TRASH PANDAS**

Volunteering to clean-up trash
from our parks on the weekends.

BUILDING COMMUNITY TOGETHER WITH OUR BUSINESSES

TOGETHER. WE ARE BUILDING SOMETHING BIGGER THAN BASKETBALL.

The growth of SOMA Basketball would not be possible without the incredible support of corporate partners and local businesses.

Their investment helps expand access, strengthen programming, support scholarships, and create meaningful opportunities for kids and families throughout South Orange and Maplewood.

Together, we are building something bigger than basketball.



BASKETBALL BUSINESS BINGO

In 2025-26 SOMA Basketball piloted *Basketball Business Bingo* - a program aimed at bringing SOMA families and sponsors together. Players received SOMA Hoops swag for visiting our local business partners in the month of January.

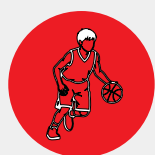
— CORPORATE & BUSINESS SPONSORS —



SPACE FOR GROWTH

IN 2026-2027

Amidst all the good, negative realities of youth sports still persist. Specifically we want to do our part to address two key statistics which are:



70%

of kids quit organized sports by age 13.



GIRLS ARE 2X

more likely to leave sports by age 14.

SOURCES: ASPEN INSTITUTE, WOMEN'S SPORTS FOUNDATION



OUR RESPONSE

EXPANDING GIRLS PROGRAMMING

42% of SOMA Hoops players are girls

GOAL: Continue to invest in 1st - 12th grade girls recreation basketball programs, and insist that "having fun" being the number one goal.

KEEPING TEENS CONNECTED

HS Recreation League launched in 2025-26

GOAL: Double year-over-year participation in our High School recreation basketball programs.

INCREASE FREE PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

More courts and unstructured time

Create safe spaces, in and off season, for kids to play basketball, build confidence and to have fun with their friends.



COMMITMENT TO YOUTH-CENTERED SPORTS

In 2026-2027, SOMA Basketball will formally adopt and align with the Project Play Children's Bill of Rights in Sports, reinforcing our commitment to ensuring every child has access to safe, inclusive, development-focused, and joyful sports experiences.

- Be treated with dignity.
- Play in a safe and healthy environment.
- Have their time to play.
- Receive quality coaching.
- Play for fun.
- Be a kid.

SOMA FAMILY DONORS

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF THESE FAMILIES, SOMA BASKETBALL IS LIVING OUR MISSION AND INSPIRING CHILDREN THROUGHOUT SOMA.

The Albano Family	The Forde Family	The McClernon-Pinches Family	The Weisstuch Family
The Arel Family	The Galea Family	The McLaughlin (Andrew) Family	The Winston Family
The Banker Family	The Gallagher Family	The McLaughlin (Steve) Family	The Wintroub Family
The Barba Family	The Gertmenian Family	The McLean-Company Family	The Wittleder Family
The Basner Family	The Ginsberg Family	The Miller (Eric) Family	The Wolff Family
The Betz Family	The Goodrich (Andrew) Family	The Miller (Kate) Family	The Zia Family
The Bigelow Family	The Goodrich (Thomas) Family	The Miller (Lawrence) Family	
The Boikess Family	The Granito Family	The Mitchell Family	
The Bookbinder Family	The Grant Family	The Mormile Family	
The Bouek Family	The Gray Family	The Naylor Family	
The Bowman Family	The Greenblatt Family	The O'Donnell Family	
The Brown (Leo) Family	The Grunes Family	The Palabrica Family	
The Brown (Steven) Family	The Gurtman Family	The Posner Family	
The Brunkhorst Family	The Haberman Foundation	The Pruzon Family	
The Bruno Family	The Hafif Family	The Radia Family	
The Burach Family	The Hagler Family	The Rasmussen Family	
The Campbell Family	The Henkel-Lorenz Family	The Romano Family	
The Carpenter Family	The Hildebrand Family	The Rosen Family	
The Carter Family	The Hill Family	The Rumley Family	
The Charles Family	The Horwitz Family	The Sagnette Family	
The Clammer Family	The Howard Family	The Salem Family	
The Colby Family	The Ignall-Burke Family	The Santos Family	
The Connolly Family	The Jacobs Family	The Schiaffini Family	
The Connors Family	The Johnson Family	The Schwegman Family	
The Cooper Family	The Kepler Family	The Shaddock Family	
The Cross-Goldenberg Family	The Kholodova Family	The Shapiro Family	
The Cuccinello Family	The Kinahan Family	The Sheldon Family	
The DeMonte Family	The Kinney Family	The Siegel Family	
The Doherty Family	The Kobierski Family	The Singel Family	
The Donohue Family	The Koch Family	The Sladowsky Family	
The Dorfman Family	The Kozlov Family	The Solomon Family	
The Eckert Family	The Kruse-Richard Family	The Spear Family	
The Egal Family	The Krylov Family	The Stein Family	
The Egan Family	The La Marca Family	The Sysel Family	
The Ellis Family	The Levy Family	The Tint Family	
The Esposito (Alex) Family	The Lubetkin Family	The Trombino Family	
The Esposito (Emily) Family	The MacGuire Family	The Trujillo Family	
The Faella Family	The Margelefsky Family	The Umiker Family	
The Finnerty Family	The Marino Family	The Valentine Family	
The Flack Family	The Marlier Family	The Verma Family	
The Flanagan Family	The Mayorga-Breslin Family	The Wall Family	

THANK YOU

Because of this community:
More kids **played**.
More families **connected**.
More young people found **confidence**,
friendship, **leadership**, and **belonging**
through basketball.

Thank you to every player, coach, parent,
volunteer, sponsor, and supporter who made
this season possible.

SOMA Basketball is more than sport.
It is community.



This brochure is provided by **SOMA Basketball Boosters**.

SOMA Basketball Boosters is a 501(c)(3) organization with the mission of Building a Better Community Through Basketball by ensuring access to all. We seek to contribute to the fabric and beauty of our two towns, and enhance the impact of our local basketball programs—including those organized by South Orange Recreation, Maplewood Recreation, SOMSD Schools & Supporting Groups, The South Mountain YMCA and any other organizations hosting programs open to all residents in our two towns. We aim to ensure access and resources for all who seek to participate in basketball —regardless of level. We do this by offering financial support in the form of donations, grants and scholarships —and by organizing community based service, events and programs —for SOMA athletes of all ages.

Visit somabasketball.org or email somabasketballboosters@gmail.com to join us on our journey, get involved, and learn more.