



## **Piscataway Soccer Club Player Tryouts, Coach Selections, and Team Selection FAQs**

The following are frequently asked questions about the tryout and team selection process that we have answered. Please see if this helps to answer any questions that you may have. If the answered is not clear or if you need further information then please do not hesitate and send your question/comment to our President, [Mike DeLello](#).

### **❖ *Why do we have tryouts?***

We need to have tryouts for several reasons:

1. In forming teams you need to evaluate talent. This is necessary to try to best match together players of similar skill level. So when teams are finally selected the players should be on a more similar skill level with each other.
2. In order to evaluate new players into an age group, tryouts help provide a relevant gauge into the new player's skill level.
3. Provides an opportunity for players to tryout for another age group or different flighted team.
4. Allows other coaches to objectively evaluate the skill level of all players in that age group.

❖ ***Why is it necessary to have tryouts instead of keeping players together on the same team?***

The reasons for this are similar to the reasons for having tryouts in general. That is, year to year skill level in players can change for various reasons. Additionally, new players are introduced and need to have an opportunity to best match their skill level to other players of similar abilities.

There are valid points with having players play with each other season after season. That is, with the same team remaining with each other. In this case, some players will thrive. However, we feel that more players will develop better when there are changes to the team where player skill levels are more evenly matched.

❖ ***How can evaluators properly evaluate players in a tryout session or two when compared to a coach who has seen players for a whole season?***

For returning players the tryout process is just a portion of the total evaluation analysis (scoring). The previous (current) season coaches will be asked for input from the tryout committee. The coaches input will be the major factor in the overall scoring. The combined input of the coach and assistant coaches will be one input and will weight as a percentage of the total evaluation. The previous coach's input is vital as they have seen the player for an extended period of time and in different game situations.

The evaluation from other coaches during the tryouts for a returning player is also important because other skills those players may possess may be observed. It is possible that a player possesses certain skills but perhaps the current coach did not notice or appreciate them. The tryout process may allow a player with a different audience to take note of these skills.

So for returning players, a percentage (60%) of their scoring is based on input from their previous coach or coaches, and the rest is based on their tryout scores. For new players the tryout score is 100% of the tryout score. Even though absolute scores are kept, the relative

scoring of the new player to existing players will be the key during the player selection process.

❖ ***Is the tryout process objective?***

To the best of our ability the tryout process is objective. We will use USSF licensed coaches as evaluators who do not coach at the same age group and do not have a child in this tryout. We will instruct the evaluators what they should look for at a particular age group. We will use several evaluators with the hope that the averaging of the evaluators' scores provides a fair assessment of the player.

❖ ***How many tryout sessions are there?***

For each age group, there will be only two scheduled tryouts. Certainly, we would like to have more to see more of each player but unfortunately we have limited resources in evaluators' volunteer time and access to field locations.

While we do understand that there will be conflicts that arise, we must be firm about attending tryouts as having a relative understanding of each player's ability/skill is important.

❖ ***Should my child attend all the tryout sessions?***

Yes, this will help your child in case they had a bad day or were under the weather. The higher of the two scores will be used as the tryout score in the team selection.

❖ ***Can I tryout for an older team?***

Yes, you can tryout for an older age group. The club encourages players to play at their own age group but you can tryout for an older team if you wish. As a safety net, you should also tryout at your age level as you may not make the older team.

❖ ***Can my daughter tryout for a boy's team?***

Yes, she can tryout for a boy's team of the same age group or older. The reverse is not true. A boy cannot tryout for a girl's team.

❖ ***Can I tryout for several teams?***

Yes, you can tryout at several different age groups which is essentially saying that you are trying out for several different teams. If you do this, you can choose which team you want to be on. However, during the selection meeting you will probably only be placed on one team and the Tryout Advisory Committee will determine based on needs where you will best fit. Again, the club encourages that players play in their own age group.

❖ ***Can my child be excused from tryouts?***

There are certainly some circumstances that can't be avoided where a potential player cannot make the tryout. While these situations will arise, it is up to the player/parent to contact the tryout committee to let us know of this situation. The hope of having the two tryouts is that you will be able to attend at least one. For returning players that do not attend any tryouts and do not contact the tryout committee before the scheduled tryout date to be excused, will receive a default tryout score that will be lower than the average tryout score. The exception to this is for a goalkeeper tryout where there will not be a score kept.

Because there may be a scheduling conflict where many players of an age group cannot attend and the tryout committee cannot forecast this in advance, then there is a potential that another tryout date will be made. Again, because of limited resources and time, this would only be done by the approval of the tryout advisory committee.

Please note if a player is to be excused that they can only be excused for their own age group and gender. Also, to be excused the player must contact the coordinator for that age group prior to the tryout.

❖ ***How are the evaluators selected for an age group?***

All evaluators are to be USSF Licensed Coaches. The tryout committee will solicit coaches for the tryout evaluation in advance. Each current coach is obligated to send an experienced coach to the tryout that they are assigned for. Some tryout committee members may also assist in the process as well as other board members. The goal is to have at least four evaluators for each age group.

❖ ***What do the evaluators look for at the tryouts?***

The evaluators will be instructed to look for certain qualities in players. The younger the player the more emphasis will be on individual skills. While older players, individual skills is still most important but tactical decisions are also examined.

By individual skills we mean technical skills such as: ball control, receiving a ball, dribbling, passing, shooting, and tackling. The evaluators will look to see if the player's technique is correct in doing this and if they are skilled with both feet.

The evaluators will also look at tactical skills such as positioning without the ball, looking up after receiving the ball, decisions on when and where to pass, decisions on when to dribble, communicating with other players, transitioning correctly, and decisions on defense.

While athletic ability is a wonderful asset, the technical skills will be the main emphasis.

❖ ***How are the tryouts structured?***

The tryouts would be structured by having the players play small-sided games: 3v3, 4v4, or 5v5 this all depends on the number of players at tryouts. The reason why small-sided teams are used for tryouts is because this gives the best view for examining skills in a game like situation. With the small-sided teams there is a better opportunity than in a full-sided game to get more touches on the ball and with a relatively short period of time to evaluate players this is

important to see their skills. Playing in a game-like environment allows more tactical decisions that can be made by the players than if just individual skills were to be done. In this setup, no goalkeepers are used.

So there may be some dynamics missing in playing 8v8 or 11v11 at tryouts. The 4v4 method allows more chances for each player to demonstrate their technical skills and tactical skills.

While playing the short-sided games evaluators will rank or bucket the players in categories. For example, if 24 players for a particular age group are at tryouts during the first tryout date, then there could be three games going on simultaneously where at each game they are playing 4v4. At each of the three games (called: game X, game Y, and game Z) the players are randomly started on a team -- there will be a few evaluators. After 12 - 15 minutes of playing a game, the evaluators at game X will move the three better skilled players (remember this is better all-around skills and should not reflect on how the score of the game resulted) to game Y. The evaluators at game Y will move the three lesser skilled players to game X. Game Y will also trade players with game Z, where the better skilled players from game Y go to game Z and the lesser skilled players from game Z go to game Y. After this movement of players the teams should be reshuffled at each game and play starts again. Each time a player moves to another game it should be marked – this is to use later on for evaluation.

After doing this method several times, the better skilled players gravitate towards game Z and the lesser skilled players gravitate towards game X. This method could also be modified in several different ways. One way is to move four players after the first game is played (instead of three), then move three players after the second game is played, then move only two players after each game is played thereafter.

One last game should be played without any movement. At this point, the evaluators will rank each player in their game from 1 – 8 (where 1 is the better skilled player). This will give relative importance when the second tryout is done and players are missing. At this time, an absolute scoring should be done by one evaluator of all the players in each of the games. By absolute scoring, we mean scores of 1 – 5 in

each of the technical skills areas. The absolute scoring is another tool that can be used to help the overall evaluation of the player.

At the second tryout date, the same procedure would be used. The higher evaluation score will be used for that player when prepared by the Tryout Advisory Committee.

❖ ***Will there be tryouts for goalkeepers only?***

Yes, there will be separate days for goalkeeper tryouts. The scoring for this will be purely on the absolute scale and will have more comments written up on the player's skills. Even if your child wants to play goalkeeper, it is encouraged that they also tryout for the field position especially at the younger age because we want to emphasize that players play a variety of positions to develop completely. Additionally, if the player only tries out for goalkeeper and doesn't make a team then there is no field of reference in judging the player's ability as a field player.

If your child does plan to play goalkeeper but doesn't tryout, then no default goalkeeping score will be kept.

❖ ***Why are the tryout scores not opened to the public?***

The tryout committee will process the tryout scores and will not reveal the scores to any individuals. At the night of the team selection, the coaches will see the tryout scores and will be asked not to reveal the scores. The Vice President of Travel and the Travel Head Coach are two other individuals that will see the tryout scores.

The reason why the scores are not to make public is that there are many individuals that would prefer to not have their child's scores revealed. This could cause bad feelings or lead to much unnecessary scrutiny.

If for some reason the scores are to be revealed then this request must come from the Board of Directors through a vote.

❖ ***What are the Piscataway Soccer Club objectives in forming travel teams?***

The Piscataway Soccer Club's main objective is to: *provide a fun but competitive environment that helps encourage players to develop their skills through challenging games and professional training.*

Additionally, here are other objectives in forming travel teams including:

1. Try to accommodate and get as many registered players as possible onto travel teams and try to form as many teams as possible.
2. Form teams by having players of similar skills together with the idea that the players/team will be able to grow and develop together.
3. Provide flexibility to allow players to play an age group up or allow a girl to play on a boy's team.
4. Allow the coach the ability to make a couple of adjustments to the team.

Sometimes these individual objectives may conflict with each other. The tryout advisory committee, Travel Vice President, and the Board of Directors will try to make sure to the best of our abilities that these objectives are met and have as little conflict as possible.

❖ ***Why is the selection of travel teams done differently based on age groups?***

The tryout process is done differently for U14 and above then it is done below this age level. The reason for this is because many of the players at U14 and above play on the high school team which is quite demanding of their time. Teams tend to struggle to get players because of the high school teams, so the coaches try to work out forming the teams themselves. Thus the coach selected for these age

group teams will control the team tryout process and selection process. They will not fall under the umbrella of the Tryout Advisory Committee. However, the Tryout Advisory Committee will liaison with the team coaches.

❖ ***Why is there not a tryout process between the fall and spring seasons?***

Since the tryout process requires a lot of resources and work, the club just doesn't have the ability to run a tryout between the fall and spring seasons. Additionally, we find that the number of new players that join between fall and spring is minimal and thus the additional churn would be too expensive for the whole club.

The club has also emphasized that after spring tryouts and team selection that the player is committed to that team for one year. Having tryouts in the middle of the year would contradict that emphasis.

❖ ***Who determines the number of players on a travel team?***

The maximum number of players on the team is determined by the state NJYSA. Where 18 players is the maximum for a full-sided (U11 and up) team and 14 players is the maximum for a short-sided (U8 – U10) team. In regards to the selection of players to the team the number is determined by several factors:

1. Number of players registered in that age group during team selection.
2. The Tryout Advisory Committee will recommend a number of players for a specific team.
3. The selected coach can adjust the number of players on the team (either remove or add players). The coach will have two adjustments for short-sided teams and three adjustments for full-sided teams.

❖ ***What does it mean by a “higher flighted team” or “lower flighted team”?***

During team selection there maybe enough players to form two or more teams. Since one of the objectives is to keep players of similar abilities together, the Tryout Advisory Committee will select players for a team starting with the player that has been rated with the top soccer skills and working toward the player that has the lesser soccer skills at this time. Thus the first team created will have the players that in theory have the better skills. This team will be considered the higher flighted team. The next team formed will be the lower flighted team. A flight is a group of teams that you are to play during the season. The higher your flight the more competitive that group of teams from other towns is suppose to be. The higher flighted team will thus be playing in a higher flight during the season against stronger competition.

❖ ***How can I protest my child’s placement on a certain team? And what options do I have?***

There is no official appeal process in regards to tryouts or grading. However, once contacted that your child is placed on a team and you do not wish him/her to be on the team, then you can request not to be on that team. If it is the only team in this age group then your only other option within the club is to join an Instructional Team within the club and you will be reimbursed for the difference in price.

If this is from the higher flighted team then you have the choice of going to the lower flighted team (as long as that coach will accept you).

If this is from the lower flighted team then you will unfortunately not be allowed to join the higher flighted team this season and would have the option of joining an Instructional Team.

❖ *What happens if my child does not make the travel team?*

Someone from the Tryout Advisory Committee will contact you and you will be given the option of full reimbursement or to go to an Instructional Team with partial reimbursement.

❖ *Can I tryout for a team before registering?*

Yes, you can tryout before registering. **However, you must register before the registration period ends.** Failure to register even if you went to all the tryouts will result in you not being able to be selected. Only registered players can be selected during the team selection process.

❖ *When must I register?*

You must register before the end of the registration period. Travel registration is due tentatively on June 15. Again, failure to register on time will mean that you cannot be selected for a team. Plus a late registration fee will be added.

If you register late, then you will not be able to be placed on the higher flighted team.

❖ *How will I be notified if I make the travel team?*

Sometime after the first week of July you should hear back from the coach of the team that you will be on. If you don't make the team, a member of the Tryout Advisory Committee will contact you. If for some reason you do not hear from anyone by July 12<sup>th</sup> then please contact the Tryout Advisory Committee.

❖ *When are the tryouts? When is the registration period? When is the team selection done?*

The tryouts will be announced by the club at the end of April and will be advertised on the club website: [www.piscatawaysoccer.org](http://www.piscatawaysoccer.org). Each age group will have a different schedule so please check accordingly. Typically it will be in the May timeframe but again please check the website for the most up to date information.

The registration forms will be available in May and must be completed by June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Team selection will be completed sometime during the first week of July. After that point, players will start to be notified.

❖ *Why coaches are selected each year?*

After each spring season the club's thought process is that teams are rebuilt from scratch. That is, players don't belong to a team and coaches don't belong to a team. In reality, there are typically only small adjustments that are made to teams from one season to another. Still this process allows the club to make adjustments to teams with the hope that it will benefit the most members.

The Head Coach of Traveling and the Vice President of Traveling should define criteria for the club's team travel coaches. This should include following the Coach's Ethics Handbook. They may decide that a coaching change needs to be made for one reason or another. They would then either recommend or not recommend a person as a coach. The Board of Directors in their June Meeting will then approve of the coaches. Before the Head Coach and Vice President can give their recommendations they should have an idea of how many teams will be formed.

Each spring season travel coach's applications should be available for those who wish to be a head coach for a travel team for the fall season. This should be completed and sent to the Club's Head Coach of Traveling, the Vice President of Traveling, and the Club's Registrar.