

## **Spring Travel Soccer**

The Spring Travel Soccer program is open to all Freetown & Lakeville residents U8-U16. Our Spring Travel Program is a competitive soccer league and is for the more serious soccer player who is interested in continuing to develop their skills and play competitively in the South Coast Soccer League. Travel soccer is regional in nature. In other words, your player will be representing Freetown/Lakeville playing against other towns in the region. This is like a baseball all-star team with respect to both talent and commitment. Try-outs are required but the league has different divisions and a long history of being able to find spots for nearly all interested players. Travel soccer is more focused on competition.

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## Order of Events

1. Tryouts
2. Player evaluation from coaches
3. Player selection
4. Player exception process
5. Coach selection
6. Team formation and communication to players & parents
7. Coach evaluation process

## Tryouts

Groups are divided by age but players can try out for older groups. There will be no tryout for U7/U8 players. During the early fall there will be a skills evaluation to help establish teams. Spring tryouts are conducted during the last two weeks of June. This date was selected for several reason:

1. Kids are not yet out of school and summer vacations have not yet started. This makes it easier to notify parents through school communication and ensures that we get higher participation by not conflicting with summer vacation.
2. Spring travel has completed, and fields and players are available. During the Fall season, field and player availability on weekends is limited due to our Fall recreational in-town program, fall Travel program and other activities.
3. With the Spring travel season having just ended, player's form and fitness are at their peak.
4. Teams can be formed early allowing coaches to start practices, play in tournaments or enter fall leagues with their Spring Travel team.
5. Ratings can be used to help balance teams during our Fall recreational league.

## Tryout Ratings

Ratings will be based on observations from two main skills & game play. Per request by parent/player we will also include goalie skills. Players will be rated on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being outstanding, 3 good, 2 fair, and 1 poor.

## Skill

There may be “skills based” activities during tryouts but these will be balanced with small sided games where both technical and tactical skills can be evaluated.

## Game play

Observers will rate players on both small and large sided games. Players will be placed in a variety of positions and evaluated based on all aspects of the game. Game play weighted higher for U11-U16 players.

## Tryout Evaluators

Evaluators will be comprised of professional coaches, board members, and other members of the FLSC community with soccer backgrounds with the following exceptions:

1. Coaches cannot evaluate any player they are related to
2. We will seek professional coaches from an outside soccer organization to help provide objectivity.
3. If internal coaches are used:
  - a. We will strive to have boys coaches evaluating girl’s teams and the girls coaches evaluating boys teams.
  - b. Coaches cannot evaluate players in their upcoming age grouping. For example, if a coach is likely to coach a U12 team then she or he cannot evaluate any prospective U12 players.

## Player Evaluation Process

1. Prior season travel coaches must submit a player evaluation (see details below) form prior to team selection date. All existing players must have an up-to-date evaluation form completed by his/her coach to be placed on a team for the following season.
2. The coach evaluation counts for 60% of the overall evaluation score. The other 40% comes from tryout results.
3. If there is no player evaluation for a player who played Travel Soccer in the prior year, a zero will be averaged in for 60% of the player’s overall evaluation. This will significantly impact the player’s ability to qualify for a Division 1 team.
4. If there is no player evaluation for a player who is new to FLSC then we will compare the player’s tryout score to similar scores from those of the same gender and age group and use the average player evaluation.

- If there is no tryout score due to sickness or injury, we will compare the player's coach evaluation to similar scores from those of the same gender and age group and use the average tryout score.

### Player Experience Evaluation from Coach

Player evaluations will be based on observations from four main categories technical, tactical, physical & psychological. Technical will include observing skills such as passing, receiving, dribbling, heading, defending, and attacking. Tactical will be comprised of observations during game play with a focus on understanding position. Physical will include dominant and non-dominant foot skills, speed, aggressiveness, and hustle. Psychological will include leadership, attitude, communication, and practice & game attendance.

Coaches will provide the following information for each player:

- Primary Position
- Secondary Position
- Dominant foot

Ratings 1-4 (4-Outstanding, 3-Good, 2-Fair, 1-Poor):

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Dominant Foot Skill     | 10. Game Attendance  |
| 2. Non-Dominant Foot Skill | 11. Heading          |
| 3. Speed                   | 12. Passing          |
| 4. Game Awareness          | 13. Receiving        |
| 5. Communication           | 14. Shielding        |
| 6. Leadership & Attitude   | 15. Defensive skills |
| 7. Aggressiveness          | 16. Goalie Skills*   |
| 8. Hustle                  | 17. Shooting         |
| 9. Practice Attendance     | 18. Dribbling        |

\*No player is penalized in this process for being specifically a goalie or not having any goalie ratings

### Groupings

Our league (the SCSL) departs slightly from Mass Youth Soccer. Rather than only having even year groups, (U8, U10, U12, U14, U16), they allow odd years. Therefore, we will have the following boys and girls age groups. The FLSC Board must vote on any exceptions to these groupings.

Program	Grade Requirements	AND	Born On or After
Pre-School	Pre-School	AND	1/1/2018
Grade KG	KG Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 6 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 1	1st Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 7 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 2	2nd Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 8 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 3	3rd Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 9 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 4	4th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 10 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year

Grade 5	5th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 11 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 6	6th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 12 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 7	7th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 13 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 8	8th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 14 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 9	9th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 15 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 10	10th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 16 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 11	11th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 17 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
Grade 12	12th Grade or Lower	AND	Turns 18 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year
PG	12th + 1 year or Lower	AND	Turns 20 prior on or prior to 12/31 of the current year

Strong focus will be given to creating competitive teams in the even year age groups per MYSA guidance. These divisions will be made up by combining players of different ages. For example the U10 teams will consist of U9 and U10 players, U12 will have U11 and U12 players and so on.

This will have the following benefits

1. Better align with MYSA guidance
2. Ensure that we have enough players to form competitive teams throughout all divisions
3. Ensure that kids from different grades learn how to play alongside older and younger players from the area. This needs to happen well before walking on to their high school soccer field for the first time.
4. Create better learning opportunities for the younger players playing alongside older players
5. Helps eliminate politics associated with coaches keeping “their” teams for their entire time playing in the Freetown Lakeville Soccer Club. All coaches see the game differently and it is important that kids get different perspectives and learn how to adapt to different coaching and teaching styles. This also needs to happen before they enter high school.

### Target Roster Sizes

- a. U7-U8: 11-13 players
- b. U9-U10: 12-14 players
- c. U11-U12: 13-15 players
- d. U14 +: 18-20 players

### Team Selection Process

2. Once results are finalized, they will be tallied by the director of coaching.

3. The director of coaching will then add the tryout evaluation score for each player to the coach evaluation score to arrive at a total evaluation score. Tryouts count for 40% of the total player score and coach evaluations count for 60%. Exception process below will be used for any player who is either new (and missing a coach evaluation) or has a coach evaluation but missed one or more days of tryouts. Players with no tryout or coach evaluation cannot be considered for a division 1 team without a secondary tryout (see below).
4. Players from each even year age group (U19-U10, U11-U12, U13-U14) will be sorted by their total score.
5. The top 7 players in 7v7 teams (U9+U10), top 9 players in 9v9 teams (U11-U12), and top 11 players in 11v11 teams (U13+) will automatically be assigned to the division 1 team. The coach cannot swap these players. Coaches can then select additional players to fill out the rest of their roster. This affords them the opportunity to pick up players who didn't show particularly at tryouts.
6. **Limited** team top tier changes will be allowed. Division 1 teams will be able to make changes to their roster if they can make a compelling argument using the exception process below as to why a player who scored high enough to be on the division 1 team should not be there. These reasons could be, but are not limited to, team dedication (practice/game attendance), attitude (disruptive nature/bad for team), mis-evaluated based on achievement history, etc. Conversely, a player not rated high enough to place on the division 1 team and thought deserving by the coach may be placed on a Division 1 team using the exception process below. Reasons for this might include one missed tryout day, illness, injury, no coach evaluation, etc.
7. Change requests can be made but must be justified by the coach and approved by the club's Director of Coaching, President, and Vice President. These requests can only be made for players not covered in section 5 above.
8. Player spots are assigned prior to determining who will coach the team. We do not move players up or down because their parent is a coach. This creates some challenges as frequently all the coach's kids are grouped on the same team, and we need to seek additional coaches. It also aligns with our hierarchy:
  - i. What is best for the team
  - ii. What is best for the player
  - iii. What is best for the club
  - iv. What is best for the parents
  - v. What is best for the coach
9. The Division 1 coach will choose their team first, then D2

10. Coaches may decide to field an odd year team. This must be approved by the Director of Coaching, President, and Vice President.
11. Tryout results will not be made available to coaches. Evaluations will be kept confidential. However, the FLSC Director of Coaching, President and Vice President will be able to answer specific questions on rankings/coach ratings to assist coaches with potential changes.
12. Once rosters are formed, coaches will have approximately one week to communicate with parents. Coaches are strongly encouraged to discuss the travel soccer requirements with parents to ensure that the players on their roster can make the commitment. All parents must accept their player's spot on the team. If parents cannot commit to the requirements of a particular coach or division, changes can be made within approximately one week. These changes must also be approved by the Club's Director of Coaching, President, and Vice President. Thereafter, rosters will become permanent.
13. Only temporary hard copies of tryout results and coach evaluations will be made available at the meeting. These will be re collected once the team has been selected and will be treated as confidential by the director of coaching.
14. All exceptions must be presented to the President, Director of Coaching and Vice President who will make final approval. Final rosters must be approved by the head of coaching and director of Spring travel.

### **Tryout Exceptions**

- a. U9-U10 Top 7 players based on evaluations and tryout results must be taken
  - b. U11-U12 Top 9 players based on evaluations and tryout results must be taken
  - c. U14-U18 Top 11 players based on evaluations and tryout results must be taken
  - d. If there is a compelling reason why a top rated player should not be considered for a division 1 team then coaches can present a case to the President, Director of Coaching and Vice President who will make the final decision.
15. Any player with a total rating below a 2.0 will not qualify for travel soccer. We will recommend spending time in our fall recreational and spring development leagues to improve skills and competitiveness.



## Exception Process

The following conditions may occur:

1. **Player was unable to try out but has a coach evaluation.** When this happens, we will use an average of tryout results for players of the same age and gender who had a similar coach evaluation.
2. **Player tried out but has no coach evaluation.** When this happens, we will use an average of player evaluation for players of the same age and gender who had a similar tryout score.
3. **No tryout or coach evaluation** – Player is only eligible for Division 2.
4. **Injured players.** players with a previous history on a Division 1 team but injured during the tryout period can be assigned to the team with the approval of the Director of Coaching, President and Vice President.

Exceptions that qualify must be directed by the coach via email or in person to the Director of Coaching, President, and Vice President for approval.

## Make Up Date & Secondary Tryouts

### Makeup Dates:

The club may or may not offer a make-up tryout depending on availability of players and evaluators. The exception process outlined above does account for unforeseen circumstances that would prevent a player from attending.

**Qualification:** The following is a list of acceptable reasons to excuse a player from tryouts:

1. Play-off game in another sport (this does not include practice)
2. Family vacation that was scheduled prior to tryout dates being announced
3. Illness or bereavement
4. Previously scheduled alternate activities such as baseball playoff game (not practice), dance recital (not rehearsal), religious ceremonies, etc.

**Approval:** Parents and/or coaches with known conflicts must request to have their player evaluated on the makeup date by sending an email to [tryouts@freetownlakevillesoccer.org](mailto:tryouts@freetownlakevillesoccer.org) The director of coaching will approve all player/parent/coach requests to switch to miss the regularly scheduled tryout and attend on the makeup date.

### Rules:

- If needed, the makeup date will be no longer than two weeks from the original date in order to establish teams and rosters as quickly as possible.
- The secondary tryout will follow roughly the same format as the original tryout with small-sided games (large sided also pending sufficient volume of participants).

- NOTE: Due to the nature of a volunteer organization we recognize that there may be limited evaluators available to conduct a make-up date. FLSC will make best efforts to have as many qualified evaluators available for this date as possible.

### Secondary Tryouts

- Upon occasion previously selected and rostered players will decide not to play. When this happens it may leave a team with a gap in their roster that needs to be filled. In this case the coach can request a secondary tryout to evaluate previously unevaluated players or re-evaluate players from a lower division.
- Players new to the area that have no coach evaluation or tryout score and are seeking a spot on a D1 team can be taken but a make-up tryout must be communicated to all for anyone else who may be interested in a D1 spot.

**Qualification:** Players drop off the team due to unforeseen circumstances leaving the team with an insufficient number of players to be competitive. D1 team without enough players at time of team selection.

**Approval:** The coach must send an email to [tryouts@freetownlakevillesoccer.org](mailto:tryouts@freetownlakevillesoccer.org) requesting a secondary tryout. The director of coaching will approve all coach requests to conduct a secondary tryout.

**Rules:** The secondary tryout date and location will be set by the director of coaching. The coach is required to make a reasonable effort to invite all other players in the age group to also attend the secondary tryout. The tryout results will then be re-tallied along with coach/player evaluations to see where these players fall with the previous tryout results. The player chosen for the team will be the one with the highest total result. This may or may not be the player originally considered for the slot. Anything outside this process must go through the exception process with the BOD.

### Coach Evaluation Process

The following process will be used to determine how coaches are assigned a team. Each year we face two dilemmas.

1. The first is that there are more travel players than interested coaches. This condition happens only rarely but requires us to reach out to prospective parents to help coach.
  - a. When interested parents are found, we ask that they take the Mass Youth Soccer [Association grass roots course](#) that coincides with the group they will be coaching (7v7, 9v9, 11v11) These courses provide a solid overall background in coaching youth soccer.
  - b. We also require all coaches to complete the CORI form and other training on the MYSA web site.
2. The second dilemma is that we have more than one interested coach for each available head coaching slot. When this happens we use the evaluation process below to determine who will be the head coach. We don't recommend co-coaching to avoid confusion for both players and parents. Co coaching must be approved by the head of coaching and president of the club.

Coaches are evaluated using a 4-1 ranking system with 4 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. Each category is weighted to emphasize the values and priorities of the club. We use 5 basic criteria to objectively determine the coach. In the event there is a tie, an anonymous vote is taken by the FLSC board.

1. Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association Certification Level
  - a. Rating: 4-1
    - i. 4-US Soccer D + license
    - ii. 3-11v11 Grass Roots License (and 7v7 & 9v9)
    - iii. 2-9v9 Grass Roots License (and 7v7)
    - iv. 1-7v7 Grass Roots License

\*Grass Roots license is the Minimum Certification for travel coaches. There is no minimum level for assistant coaches. However all coaches must complete a CORI on the Mass Youth Soccer Association web site.
  - b. Weighting: We will weigh certification levels higher than other factors.
  - c. Weighting Rationale: To achieve a high level of certification a coach must have completed classroom and on field training by the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association. This training prepares coaches with the latest techniques and teaching methods to best teach and coach emerging soccer players. Higher levels of certification also indicate a coach's commitment to the sport and help the FLSC establish consistent processes and methods across our coaching staff.
2. Results of yearly Coach Evaluation Survey from player parents.
  - a. Rating: 4-1
    - i. 4-All Positive Comments
    - ii. 3-Mostly Positive Comments
    - iii. 2-Mixed Comments
    - iv. 1-Mostly or All Negative Comments
  - b. Weight: Average
  - c. Weighting Rationale: Parents attend many games and practices and are in the best position to gauge the overall happiness of their player. If parents and players are not happy, no matter how successful the team, it reflects poorly on the primary principles of fun and learning that the club was built on. This must also be kept in context as most parents are not certified coaches and many might not fully understand the sport or techniques being leveraged by the coach. One unhappy parent doesn't always indicate a bad coach.
3. Team success in SCSL across all divisions, age groups and genders.
  - a. Rating: 4-1
    - i. 4: Placed #1 in SCSL division multiple times
    - ii. 3: Placed top 3 in SCSL division multiple times
    - iii. 2: Placed top 3 in SCSL division at least once
    - iv. 1: No top 3 finishes or never coached SCSL
  - b. Weight: Average

- c. **Weighting Rationale:** Travel coaches are expected to work hard and win games. Coaches with a proven track record of success have clearly found ways to train players and motivate their teams. This must be kept in context however, especially at U7 & U8 where there is less competitive focus.
- 4. Years of experience as a soccer coach
  - a. **Rating: 4-1**
    - i. 4: >6 years
    - ii. 3: 5-6 years
    - iii. 2: 3-4 years
    - iv. 1: 0-2 years
  - b. **Weight: Average**
  - c. **Weighting Rationale:** It stands to reason that the longer one spends practicing the more accomplished they will become. This rationale is also true for coaching soccer. If coaches have spent years coaching soccer with kids of different ages then they will likely have developed many strategies for communicating with and motivating players. They will be familiar with the laws of the game and can link training strategy to specific deficiencies observed on the field. However, experience is a single data point and more time behind the whistle doesn't always equate to better, happier players, superior teams and a better overall experience. It must be balanced alongside the other criteria above.
- 5. Years of experience coaching non soccer sports
  - a. **Rating: 4-1**
    - i. 4: >6 years
    - ii. 3: 5-6 years
    - iii. 2: 3-4 years
    - iv. 1: 0-2 years
  - b. **Weight: Average**
  - c. **Weighting Rationale:** It stands to reason that the longer one spends practicing the more accomplished they will become. This rationale is also true for coaching. If coaches have spent years coaching kids of different ages, in a multitude of sports then they will likely have developed many strategies for communicating with and motivating players. However, experience is a single data point and more time behind the whistle doesn't always equate to better, happier players, superior teams, and a better overall experience. It must be balanced alongside the other criteria above.

### **Coach Tie Breaker Policy**

If there are two coaches seeking the head coach spot for the same team and there is no material difference in their overall scores after taking the above criteria into consideration. The FLSC Board Of Directors will be required to vote. During this process the director of coaching will provide a verbal summary to the board of all information collected in the evaluation process including certification levels coach evaluations, and experience. The director of coaching may also offer additional information not collected during the evaluation for decision support.