



Travel Soccer Program General Information



Brief Description

The Marlton Travel Soccer Program (the “Program”) is a highly competitive program designed to serve those players who are interested in playing soccer at a higher level than is found in the “in-town” or “recreational” program. The Program offers advanced individual and team training utilizing highly qualified professional trainers who work to develop each player and the team to his/her or its highest potential. The Program operates pursuant to the rules of the New Jersey Youth Soccer Association (“NJYSA”). Most boys teams participate in the South Jersey Soccer League (“SJSL”) and most girls teams participate in the South Jersey Girls Soccer League (“SJGSL”). Highly advanced teams may participate in other leagues, including MAPS and JAGS.

Commitment

The Program requires a substantial commitment of time during a large part of the calendar year. Players must make travel soccer a primary commitment over other sports and activities in the fall season. Additionally, players should be prepared to attend all travel soccer activities during the spring and winter seasons, subject to Marlton’s Sport of Season Rule. It is critically important that parents keep the coaches informed of any schedule conflicts at the earliest possible time. Additionally, it requires significant effort to maintain and continue the success of the Program and we need your assistance. All parents are encouraged and expected to volunteer in various capacities (field set up, field lining, team management, fundraising, tournament participation, etc.) during the course of the year.

Practices & Games

Teams generally have two practices and one game each week during the regular season. Practices are typically an hour and a half each with the younger teams generally practicing from 6 PM – 7:30 PM and the older teams practicing from 7:30 PM – 9 PM. Boys playing in the SJSL play on Sundays and Girls playing in the SJGSL play on Saturdays. The majority of SJSL and SJGSL games are played at 12:30 PM, 2:00 PM or 3:30 PM. Games are occasionally scheduled at other times due to conflicts or as make-up games. MAPS, JAGS and other league games or friendly games can be scheduled on any day of the week (evenings during the week or any time on the weekends).

Teams up to age U15 play a fall season and a spring season. Each season consists of eight to ten games. The fall season starts August 1st and runs through late November. The spring season starts February 1st and runs through late May. Some teams also participate in winter indoor leagues during December and January and in summer tournaments.

In addition to the regularly scheduled league games teams will participate in one or more tournaments. These tournaments, which are generally scheduled over the course of a weekend (often holiday weekends such as Memorial Day, Labor Day and Columbus Day), provide the players an opportunity to play against teams from other leagues in a multiple game per day format. While the type, location and number of tournaments a team participates in will be decided by the coach, most tournaments are within an hour of Marlton. Tournaments provide a great team bonding experience for the players and the parents and provide some of the best memories players will take away from being travel players. Please note that all travel teams in the Program (including all newly formed teams) that are in the U8 – U14 age brackets will participate in the Marlton Soccer Summer Classic over the third weekend of August. Parents are expected to volunteer to assist with this tournament as it benefits all teams in the Program.

Game Locations

Each team generally plays half of its games on one of Marlton’s home fields. Distances to away games vary based on the location of the teams in the division, but generally are within an hour of Marlton. Many are within fifteen minutes of Marlton.

Trainers

Each travel team engages a professional soccer trainer to train the team at least once per week during the fall and spring seasons. Many teams utilize professional trainers twice per week and for a one week team camp during the summer. The coaches and coordinators monitor all trainers to assure that players are receiving top quality instruction and are developing at an appropriate pace. Trainers are required to maintain a minimum of an “F” license from NJYSA, though the vast majority of the Program’s trainers hold much higher licenses. Most trainers played soccer at a high level during college and many of the trainers have even played professional soccer. All costs of the trainers are paid by the team.



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Costs

Each team is self-supporting. Expenses vary widely between teams based upon a number of factors, including the number of training sessions per season, the number and type of tournaments the team participates in and the amount and type of any equipment the team purchases (training aids, goalie equipment, extra soccer balls, etc.).

On an annual basis the total cost per player can range from several hundred dollars to in excess of a thousand dollars. Teams often engage in fundraising efforts to offset these expenses.

Upon being selected to a travel team, each player will need to be registered with the MRC as a TRAVEL SOCCER player. The registration is completed online at www.marltonreccouncil.org. The registration fee will include the fees for the MRC administration (apply to every MRC registrant in every sport), costs associated with field equipment and facilities, general overhead of the Program and the cost of the player's standard uniform. For the fall 2012-spring 2013 season, this registration fee is \$200. All additional costs will be collected by the coach and will be maintained in the team's dedicated escrow account with the MRC.

Playing Time

The focus of the Program is to develop individual skills and help each player reach his or her fullest potential. Most development occurs during team practice and training sessions and through the individual effort of players who take the time to practice skills at home on their own time.

Some players develop faster than others and coaches have discretion to field players based on the coaches' determination of what is best for the team. Parents need to understand that travel players are not guaranteed equal, or in fact, any playing time and need to be supportive of the coach and the other players even when their child is not getting as much playing time as they believe their child should be getting. Parents should reinforce with their children that all players are critical to the success of the team and should encourage their children to continue working hard in practice and on their own time to earn more playing time. In the vast majority of cases, the players understand their role and are comfortable with their playing time and it is not

until they hear negative comments from their parents or others that they become upset about playing time.

Sideline Behavior

Parents, family and friends are encouraged to cheer for the players during the game. Comments should be positive and constructive. Parents, family and friends should refrain from making any negative comments about their own child, family member or friend as well as any other player, coach or referee. Additionally, it is critical that parents, family and friends refrain from offering instructions to the players on the field. This serves only to confuse players and the instructions from sidelines often run directly contrary to what the coaches are instructing the players to do. Moreover, players need to develop their own understanding of the game and learn to make independent decisions on how to handle game situations. Players often learn more from the poor decisions they make on the field than they do from their good field decisions. This is an integral part of a player's development as a soccer player. Any spectator who is disruptive during a game can be removed from the field by request of the coach or the referee.

Age Groups

Players are required to play "age-appropriate" pursuant to the FIFA age determination guidelines (August 1st – July 31st). Pursuant to these guidelines, a player in the U8 age group, for example, must turn eight between August 1st and July 31st of the seasonal year.

Coach Selection

All individuals interested in coaching a travel team as either the head coach or an assistant coach must send the respective travel coordinator a letter of interest (can be completed online at www.marltonsoccer.org). All applications will be reviewed by the coordinator and/or the Travel Committee (including interviews at the discretion of the Coordinator and/or Travel Committee) after which a recommendation will be made by the Travel Committee for approval by the Soccer Committee and MRC Executive Board. All travel coaches must attend the MRC Coaches Certification class, submit to and pass a criminal background check, take an online concussion awareness course and hold a minimum of an "F" license from NJYSA. All applicants need to understand and accept the significant commitment of time necessary to coach and manage a team. The responsibilities include not only



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administration of the individual team, but also broader responsibilities to the Program in general. Coaches are required to comply with all Marlton Soccer Rules and Regulations, regularly attend monthly Program meetings, volunteer and participate in Program administration and activities, Program fundraising (including the Marlton Summer Classic) and generally act as an ambassador of the Program.

Tryouts

Tryouts are held on an annual basis in the spring for the up-coming fall season. Additional tryouts may be held on an as-needed basis if a team requires additional players to fill vacated spots on the roster. All potential players must attend at least one tryout in order to be eligible to participate in the Program.

Players are selected based on several factors including effort, determination, intensity and skill level. One or more teams may be formed per age group, depending on the number of players interested in participating in the Program.

Coaches have the discretion to select players based on the needs of the team and will use the tryout ratings as a guideline in the selection of players. Players who are selected and rostered to a team must play for that team for the entire seasonal year (i.e. fall and spring seasons), unless transferred or released pursuant to the relevant NJYSA and league rules.

It is a privilege to be selected to a team and players are expected to play for the team for which they have been selected, absent exceptional circumstances and approval by the Travel Committee.

Out of Town Players

Newly formed teams in the U8, U9 and U10 categories participating in the Program shall be comprised of 100% Marlton residents. U11 and older teams can include non-Marlton residents, subject to certain limitations.

Roster Size

U8, U9 & U10 teams play an eight vs. eight format (seven field players and one goal keeper) and generally carry a roster of eleven or twelve players with a maximum of fourteen players. U11 and older teams play an eleven vs. eleven format (ten players and one goal keeper) and generally carry a roster of fourteen to

sixteen players with a maximum roster of eighteen players.

Recreational Program

Players who are selected and rostered to a travel team may not participate on a Marlton Soccer recreational team during the fall or spring seasons (other than the spring non-competitive programs for middle school and high school players).

Additional Information

Additional information on the Program, including the MRC Bylaws and the Soccer Program Rules and Regulations, can be found on the Marlton Soccer website at www.marltonsoccer.org.

Key Contacts

Questions regarding the Program should be directed to the Girls Travel Coordinator or Boys Travel Coordinator, as appropriate, or to the Director of Travel. Current contact information for these individuals can be found on the Marlton Soccer website at www.marltonsoccer.org