

Malden Youth Soccer Association

Player Placement & Development Policy

1 General

The Malden Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) Program is open to all children of Malden and surrounding cities and follows the rules of the Middlesex Youth Soccer League (MYSL) for its rosters [*“for a roster to be approved by the league, at least 75% of that team’s roster must comprise of players who live in the town, with the exception that players on a team from a town that does not have a Mass Youth Soccer sanctioned youth program do not count against the 75%.” Middlesex Youth Soccer 2012/2013 Coaches Handbook p 16., Administrative Rules of the Middlesex Youth Soccer League, Rule 5 Rosters and Transfers, Paragraph b) ii)] as well as the rules of the city of Malden.*

Objective and Philosophy (from the MYSA Constitution): “The objective of the MYSA is to inform, cultivate, and to encourage the playing of the sport of soccer for the youth and families of the city of Malden, Massachusetts. MYSA shall aid in the development of young people by giving them the opportunity to play soccer. MYSA will offer training for the development of individual skills, fitness, teamwork and fair play in soccer. No child or adult shall be denied the opportunity to play or instruct soccer in the MYSA based solely on sex, race, ethnicity and/or nationality.”

All children will be placed in an age-appropriate group dictated by their birth date in accordance with Massachusetts and Middlesex Youth Soccer League rules. Final decision for a child to “play up” is at the discretion of the appropriate Malden Age Coordinator in consultation with the Placement Committee, again, in accordance with MYSL Rules. [*“Players who are eligible to play in the 2nd year of MYSL’s U10 and U12 age groups can play in the next higher age group. That is, a 2nd year U10 player may “play up” in U12, and a 2nd year U12 player may “play up” in U14. If such a player chooses to play in the next higher age group in the Fall Season, that player must play in the same age group in the following Spring season.” Middlesex Youth Soccer 2012/2013 Coaches Handbook p. 18, Administrative Rules of the Middlesex Youth Soccer League, Rule 8 Age Groups, Paragraph d)]*

All coaches are volunteers. All coaches must be licensed within the first year that they start coaching with MYSA, and have a minimum of a G license for In-City and a minimum of an F license for Travel soccer. If it is a coach’s first year coaching, he/she must have the appropriate license by the second season (there are 3 seasons: Fall, Winter, Spring) she/he is coaching. All coaches are required to be screened by CORI.

All coaches, parents, and players are responsible for having read the MYSL rules of conduct.

The application of “U” with age group designations means “under the age of”, and is in reference to the player’s age in relation to the cut off date of August 1st of any particular year. Any player whose birth date is prior to August 1st plays in the older age group. Each age group is 2 years long. For example, in the 2012/2013 soccer year, a U-12 player has a birth date between August 1, 2000 and July 31, 2002.

2 In-City Soccer Program

All In-City teams are co-ed.

U-6: 4 and 5 year olds. For any child whose age is 4 years old before August 1st. Players younger than 4 years old by August 1st, but are 4 years old by the 1st day of each session (Fall, Winter, Spring), may play U-6 at the discretion of the U-6 Coordinator and provided there is space available. Goals: To learn basic soccer skills and rules through fun, games, activities, and scrimmages; and, to begin to learn the concept of teamwork. All U-6 teams will practice different weekly skills set by the Development Coordinator and the U-6 Coordinator.

U-9: 6, 7 and 8 year olds. Goals: To continue to learn basic soccer skills through skills-based activities and scrimmaging. Focus is also on the rules of the game and preparing players to play on travel teams by the time they are 8 years old. All U-9 teams will practice different weekly skills set by the Development Coordinator and the U-9 Coordinator.

Players may join the In-City Program at any time, as long as there is space on a team. In-City Age Coordinators keep a waiting list on a first come, first serve basis and utilize this list as players sometimes drop out or move out of town. In-City players register for individual seasons (Fall, Winter, or Spring).

Players who begin to play at either U-6 or U-9 are expected to stay in that age group through the soccer year of Fall, Winter and Spring. If a child appears to be in an inappropriate age group, that player can only change age group at the discretion of the respective Age Coordinators. MYSL discourages players from “playing up”.

U-6 & U-9 Age Coordinators try to fulfill requests when asked to have friends play together, if they are in the same age group.

3 Travel Team Program

MYSA is a member of MYSL. Each age group is divided into a minimum of 4 divisions representing different levels of competitive play. U-10, U-12, U-14 play league soccer on Saturdays in the Fall and Spring; U-16, U-18, and U-19 play league soccer on Sundays in the Spring only due to conflicts with Fall high school soccer. MYSA, depending on the number of players at each age group, places teams in one or more divisions of each age group. *[For further understanding of the MYSL Team Placement, please see Middlesex Youth Soccer 2012/2013 Coaches Handbook p 19, Administrative Rules of the Middlesex Youth Soccer League, Rule 10 Team Placements.]*

Travel teams play in the MYSL against other town teams. Players are placed on MYSA teams determined by age, gender, and skill level. Starting at U-10, players are separated by gender per American Federation of Soccer guidelines. Each player is placed on a team that best matches his/her skill level with individual player development being the primary goal.

The Fall travel season is primarily a “developmental” season which prepares the players and teams for the more competitive Spring travel season.

3.1 Placement Procedure for Travel Players

“Placements” refers to the process of allocating registered players to a particular team’s roster. They are facilitated by a Placement Committee (PC) comprised of the MYSA Development Coordinator and Assistant Development Coordinators, the Travel Coordinator and at least one other member of the board. This final position will be filled by a vote during the January board meeting. If no volunteers present themselves or an election is not held, then the Vice President will fill the role. The PC will be supported by the coaches of each age group.

In accordance with the objective and philosophy of the MYSA Constitution, MYSA wants every child to have the chance to develop as players and to have fun playing soccer. Therefore, first and foremost, MYSA has its commitment to the players. Malden Youth Soccer may choose to place players on teams with or without Formal Placements. “Formal Placements” refer to scheduled scrimmage and skill evaluation where PC and Travel Coaches may observe all players in action. MYSA prefers to keep teams together for both the Fall and the Spring seasons. Upon the conclusion of each Spring season, the placement of all players will be re-evaluated by the PC. All travel coaches shall be required to attend the placement meeting to be arranged by the PC. Coaches moving from one age division to another shall attend meetings for both age groups unless all players on their teams are also moving with the coach to a new age division.

A placement process ensures that each player is placed at an appropriate level of play, including children of the coaches.

If Formal Placements are held, then all players are required to attend. At the discretion of MYSA, the Formal Placements may be held for new players in each age group only. Any player who misses Formal Placements will be placed on the team determined by the PC – likely the lowest-division team for new players.

PC and the respective age/gender group coaches will decide on the placement of each player. If there is a disagreement about the placement of a particular player, a majority vote of the PC will have the final say on the appropriate placement. Any ties will be broken by the Travel Coordinator. Starting each new soccer year, returning players may be moved up or down in division depending on the individual player's ability as determined by the input from coaches and/or direct observation from development team.

After the evaluation of players is complete, new teams are formed according to the ability of the players. The goal is to form teams which will develop in the Fall and prepare for the more competitive Spring season. Teams are intended to remain together for the Fall and Spring seasons, though individual players may be moved either up or down due to inappropriate placement in the Fall, new player Placements necessitating roster changes or an increase or decrease in the number of teams at a particular age/gender group from the Fall to the Spring seasons.

The Placement of newly registered players not involved in Fall MYSL play shall be done by PC. If the evaluation of the player is to be performed, it shall be done by a member of the development team or the coach of the highest division team in that age/gender group. PC will have the final decision on Placement of each player. The MYSA will try to accommodate players' wishes, however all coaches and parents should encourage their children to play in the appropriate division for their skill level to aid in the player development.

Coaches should not actively recruit players for their individual team. At the end of the Fall season, the PC will meet with the coaches of each age / gender group. At this time, there will be discussion of whether or not to move any players under conditions discussed above. Once again, the goal is to provide all teams with the talent appropriate for their division while keeping the teams largely intact from Fall to Spring.

If parents request reassignment of a particular player to a higher or lower division team, the following procedure shall apply without exception. The current coach shall be notified of the

request for team change by the PC. The current coach shall provide a written evaluation of the player and forward said evaluation to the Development Coordinator. The Development Coordinator will then schedule an additional evaluation of the player and provide his findings to the PC. Based on the determined skill level and availability of space on the team in the proper division, the PC will decide on the final player placement. The requests for team reassignment for any other reason (friends on other teams, transportation, likes / does not like coach) shall be decided on by the Travel Coordinator at his discretion; however the current coach shall again be notified and provide player evaluation to aid in the placement decision.

MYSA requests that coaches let the PC know if a player on her/his team has been inappropriately placed, particularly if a player has been placed in a Division where his skills are clearly superior to the rest of the team and the competition, to help make sure players can develop at their appropriate level. This means the first responsibility of coaches is to help insure that players' needs come before the teams' needs.

MYSL sets the minimum and maximum number of players allowed per team which varies depending on the age group [*U-10: 8-12 players; U-12: 11-15 players; U-14 Div 1 and 2: 14-18 players; U14 Div 3 - 5: 14-20 players, U16+: 14-22 players; Middlesex Youth Soccer 2012/2013 Coaches Handbook p 23., Administrative Rules of the Middlesex Youth Soccer League, Rule 15 Number of Players on a Roster*] We place every child on a team as long as there is a team available at each player's skill level.

MYSA may accommodate additional non-roster players if the teams at particular age / skill level are full or if a player specifically requests a non-roster status provided that a coach in said age group accepts an additional practice player. Registration of such players shall be addressed separately from standard registration process and a nominal fee will be applied to cover insurance and any equipment.

3.2 Player Availability – Travel Teams

Travel players register for and commit to being on a team for a full year. Soccer games for U-10 through U-14 are on every Saturday for nine consecutive weeks in the Fall usually starting the Saturday after Labor Day and ending before Thanksgiving. In the Spring, soccer games are on every Saturday for nine or ten consecutive weeks, depending on what MYSL decides, starting in mid-April and going through early June. Playoffs are scheduled the week following the end of the Spring season. Note: MYSL does not skip vacation week in the Spring (please see below). Therefore,

vacation week is not a reason to be absent, and players are expected to be with their respective teams. As for U-16 through U-19, the Spring schedule is run differently by MYSL, and games occur on seven Sundays.

Parents are required to notify their coaches ahead of time if their child cannot make a game. This is very important because a team that does not have a minimum number of players will be forced to forfeit. A forfeit means a fine of at least \$100 against MYSA. The MYSL rules stipulate:

“A coach should know his/her players’ availability for the whole season; ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse [to reschedule a game]. Legitimate reasons may include, but not limited to: graduation, sanctioned invitational tournament, school trip, or religious activity. Lack of players due to a vacation is not a legitimate reason to reschedule a game. Notification of the need to reschedule must be given to the Age Director and the opposing coach at least two weeks prior to the scheduled game date...” [*Middlesex Youth Soccer 2012/2013 Coaches Handbook p 20, Administrative Rules of the Middlesex Youth Soccer League, Rule 11 Rescheduling Games*]

Players are expected to come to all practices (times are set at the discretion of the coaches and field availability) and games (as noted above) unless an agreement is made ahead of time by the respective coach and player’s family.

4 Winter Soccer

The Winter soccer program is indoors. It is highly recommended for players to participate in Winter soccer as it is a skills development program and it helps keep the players in shape during the off-season.

For questions, please contact the Development Coordinator:

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