

## **Northfield Soccer Association Traveling Team Formation and Tryout Policy**

Northfield Soccer Association (NSA) is a member of the Southern Minnesota Soccer League (SMSL) and, as such, abides by its policies. Please refer to the [Rules and Protocols section of SMSL's website](#) for more information.

### **Background**

Age groups for team formation are determined by the January-December calendar birth year, based on standards set forth by the United States Soccer Federation. SMSL largely adheres to a two-year age grouping set at even birth years. For example, U10, U12, U14, etc.

SMSL provides for two tiers of competition: Black (higher competition level) and Blue (lower competition level). In some instances where the number of teams in the league registered for a particular age and gender grouping varies, both a Black and Blue level may not be available.

NSA's goal for team formation for U10-U18 ages in the spring/summer traveling season is to allow players to participate at the most competitive level possible, where an emphasis on both individual and team growth is always prioritized. NSA leadership will be solely responsible for determining the number of teams at each age and gender grouping that are appropriate based on the number of registrants. It will also determine level(s) at which its teams will play within those age and gender groupings. This determination is made based on a number of factors, including the prior season level(s) of a majority of the players and their performance at that level(s).

In some cases, SMSL may request reconsideration of NSA's desired level for a team based on prior performance, number of teams, and/or the competition level of teams registered for a level, etc.

### **Tryouts**

NSA conducts tryouts for all registered players in any age group where it is required for the purposes of forming traveling teams for the SMSL summer and fall seasons. The most likely scenario for this is when there are multiple teams at an age and gender grouping, and those teams are playing at a different level of competition (i.e., NSA fields both a Black and a Blue team at U16 boys in a given season). In any instance where there are multiple teams at the same age and gender grouping playing at the same level of competition (i.e., NSA fields two Blue teams at U12 boys in a given season), tryouts will not be required, and team formation will be based on equally dividing players according to their prior season coach's evaluation (where available).

Tryouts and the resulting team formation must be completed prior to the SMSL deadline for its clubs to submit their teams and finalize rosters. Players must be registered with NSA prior to the tryouts in order to participate.

Tryouts are mandatory to be considered for team placement. Exceptions may be granted due to injury, illness, or family emergency. Where possible, a request to be excused from a tryout should be sent to the NSA administrator ([admin@northfieldsoccer.org](mailto:admin@northfieldsoccer.org)) at least 24 hours prior to the event taking place. In any instance where a player is absent from the tryout but is not excused or does not wish to try out and be considered for an upper team, then he/she will be placed on the lowest level team available.

In any instance where a player has an excused absence from the tryout, written coach evaluations from the prior season will form the primary basis for team placement.

The results of the tryout, decisions made by the evaluators, and subsequent team placement should be considered final. In any instance where an appeal is brought forward, the voting members of NSA's board of directors will act as the arbiters, and their decision will be final.

A player's dissatisfaction with the results of team placement is not a circumstance in which a registration refund will be considered.

### **Evaluation and Selection**

A team of no fewer than three independent evaluators will be retained by the NSA board to conduct tryout sessions and subsequent evaluations. The evaluators will not have any ties to the teams being selected as a coach or manager, nor will they rank, rate, or place any player with direct relation to them.

Tryouts will be conducted using activities designed to encompass the full scope of the game: vision, control/dribbling, speed, passing, shooting, and defense. Consideration will also be given to any player who indicates that they would like to be a goalkeeper, although that particular skill/position may not be evaluated in the tryout.

Final rosters will be announced within ten days of the tryouts.

### **Team Player Numbers and Over Rostering**

The rules set forth by the SMSL dictate both how many players may be rostered to a team and how many may compete in a given match. This number varies based on age group, where the number of players allowable on a team increases relative to the age level and size of the field.

NSA endeavors to place all registered players on a team. Preference will be given to filling teams with the maximum number of players allowed versus turning players away when there are insufficient numbers to form more than one complete team at a given age and gender group. In situations where the number on a team exceeds the amount permitted to participate in a match (i.e., 22 on a roster vs. 20 being allowed to participate in a match), the team's coach will create a fair rotation on a game-by-game basis. The voting members of NSA's board of directors and its

director of coaching will resolve any disagreements that arise regarding interpretation of this policy, and their decisions will be final.

If a team is under the roster limit designated by SMSL and/or has insufficient numbers to field a competitive squad after the registration deadline, NSA may continue to permit additional players to register. It may also combine age groups to form one or more teams. Finally, it may roster individual players on an older team as necessary to prevent the players' true age group team from exceeding its SMSL roster limit and/or to prevent the next oldest team from failing to meet its minimum SMSL roster limit.

If a team is at maximum capacity but additional player(s) indicate an interest in joining, they will be offered the opportunity to enroll as a training player. This designation means that they will be permitted to participate with a given team during practice only, and that participation in games will only be granted in situations where a substantial portion of the normally registered players are not able to participate and their participation would not significantly reduce playing time for the normally registered players who are available. The designated training players will be those who were the last to register. Consideration for a player's skill, previous history with the association, etc., **will not** supersede the date by which they registered. Those who choose to not participate as a designated training player will receive a full refund of all current season registration fees paid to NSA when they leave the team. Any fees paid to purchase a uniform are not refundable. Training players will not be required to pay the full fee for a given season and will only be required to pay a nominal amount, covering the administrative expense associated with their registration. Players may neither opt for nor request training player status if a team is not beyond capacity.

### **Playing Up**

Players may petition to try out or be placed with an older age group than the one prescribed by the SMSL birth year guidance. Typically, this involves players wishing to "grade up," meaning a player whose date of birth falls behind the SMSL birth year of the team of their classmates is looking to be on the older team. This does not apply to players wishing to be placed on an upper-level team in the same age group if the results of the tryout do not dictate that placement.

NSA will prioritize true birth year alignment and only consider requests for age group play-ups when it would not have a detrimental impact to the roster size or quality of either a player's true age group team or the desired one. Any requests for play-up must be submitted to the NSA administrator prior to team formation taking place.

While individual players may petition to play up in age group, due to stringency of SMSL regulations, the opposite cannot occur, i.e. a player cannot petition to play down an age group.

Approved by NSA Board of Directors on 4/11/2023