



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT TRAVEL SOCCER

What is travel soccer and what are its benefits?

The Arlington Soccer Association (ASA) sponsors a travel (select) soccer club, known as the Arlington Travel Soccer Club (ATSC). The ATSC is a competitive program for players with above average skills and a strong drive to develop their soccer abilities and love of the game. Boys and girls that are ready to play competitive soccer, want to learn new skills, are ready to make the necessary commitment to play travel soccer and are ready to be coached by a professional, licensed coaching staff will benefit from playing for the ATSC.

How will my son or daughter be picked for a team?

The ATSC runs open tryouts in late spring for all age groups (U9 – U19; Boys & Girls) to form teams for the following soccer year (fall and spring). All players are evaluated during these tryouts by the team coaches and additional evaluators. Selected players are placed on appropriate teams by the coaching staff. ATSC teams are re-formed each year through this tryout process.

How do I determine the right age group for my child?

The “magical date” for determining a player’s age group is August 1 (during the year of the tryout). A player that turns 9 before August 1 of this calendar year must try out for U-10 for the upcoming fall and spring seasons. , and must attend the U-10 tryouts in the spring of this year. A player that will turn 9 on or after August 1 of this calendar year, or later, must participate in the U9 tryouts for the upcoming seasons.

Soccer Age Group	Birth date is between:
U9	August 1, 2000 – July 31, 2001
U10	August 1, 1999 – July 31, 2000
U11	August 1, 1998 – July 31, 1999
U12	August 1, 1997 – July 31, 1998
U13	August 1, 1996 – July 31, 1997
U14	August 1, 1995 – July 31, 1996
U15	August 1, 1994 – July 31, 1995
U16	August 1, 1993 – July 31, 1994
U17	August 1, 1992 – July 31, 1993
U18	August 1, 1991 – July 31, 1992
U19	August 1, 1990 – July 31, 1991

Can my child try out in a different age group?

Players cannot tryout or play in an age group for which they are too old. Even if they miss the cutoff by one day, they cannot play 'down' in an age group.

ATSC policy is that a player may try out to "play up" above his/her soccer age-level if the player attends school in the higher grade (e.g., U9 – third grade, U10 – fourth). A player may also try out in an older age group, with the express permission of the Director of Coaching, if in the opinion of the coaching staff, the player's soccer development needs are not being met at his/her natural soccer age-group. For a player to try out in an older age group, that player must also attend at least one tryout session in his/her natural soccer age group.

The club realizes that certain players may wish to tryout and play in an age group that is older than their soccer age group. It acknowledges that, for a select few players, it may be in the best interest of a player's development to 'play up'. Because the mission of ATSC is player development and competitive soccer, the club strongly encourages players to play in the age group that affords them the best opportunity to play on a top level team. When the Club's technical staff believes that a player currently playing in an older age group would be better served by moving to their natural age group, the player's coach and the Director of Coaching will encourage the player and the family to do so.

How many players are selected for each team?

Different age groups in travel soccer play with different game formats – and have different roster sizes. Coaches usually carry fewer players than the maximum allowed—optimizing players' playing time in games. The following are the roster sizes for the different age groups in the ATSC.

Under 9 & Under 10 Teams	7 vs. 7 game format	10 – 12 players on each team
Under 11 & Under 12 Teams	8 vs. 8 game format	11 – 14 players on each team
Under 13 – Under 16 Teams	11 vs. 11 game format	16 – 18 players on each team
Under 17 – Under 19 Teams	11 vs. 11 game format	16 – 22 players on each team

How are players evaluated and selected for travel teams?

Players are evaluated using several criteria. The three most important areas of evaluation are technical ability, speed and character.

1. **Technical** – Can a player handle the ball technically under pressure and in tight spaces?
2. **Speed** –
 - a. Pure Speed – Is the players fast from point A to B?
 - b. Technical Speed – Can the player handle the ball under pressure?
 - c. Tactical Speed – Can the player make fast decisions with and without the ball?
3. **Character** –
 - a. Does the player like to compete?
 - b. Is he/she a positive influence on the group?
 - c. Does the player possess a high work rate?

- d. Does the player bring passion and energy to the game?

Players are evaluated in these and other areas and, if selected, placed on teams that best meet each player's developmental needs. Players that are not selected for the travel soccer program will be provided with information on other Arlington soccer programs and teams.

When and where do travel teams practice?

The travel club is allocated fields throughout Arlington by the Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (DPRCR). These fields are then assigned to travel teams based on team needs and coach preference. Each travel team will have a different practice schedule.

Travel teams generally practice a minimum of twice a week during the season, for 1½ to 2 hours per practice. Other programs for player development are also available to players within the travel club.

Who do ATSC teams play?

There are typically three leagues in which ATSC teams participate during the season. The National Capital Soccer League (NCSL) for boys teams; the Washington Area Girls Soccer League (WAGS) for girl's teams; and the Old Dominion Soccer League (ODSL), who sponsor play for both boys and girls teams. The club will determine placement of each team in the appropriate league. Each league determines participation and divisional standings based on a team's results during each season.

How many teams will the ATSC have in my son's or daughter's age group?

The number of teams formed in an age group depend on the number of players who try out and their ability levels. ATSC generally forms 3 teams per age group, per gender, at the U9 – U13 age groups. In the U14 – U19 age groups the ATSC strives to form 2 teams for each gender. These teams are tiered, according to ability, as an 'A' team and a 'B' team.

Players that are not selected for a U9 - U12 team during tryouts will have the opportunity to join the ASA Academy Program. The Academy Program will provide training and competition for players on recreational teams who want additional soccer development opportunities.

How are teams formed and players selected for each team?

ATSC strives to balance the top two teams in the U9 age group. This means players are equally spread across these teams in the age group. For the U10 and older teams, the ATSC forms teams based on the players' ability levels. These teams are tiered, based on the competitiveness of each team.

How are the coaches selected for each team?

The travel soccer club employs a licensed, professional coaching staff which is under the supervision of the club's Directors of Coaching (DoCs) and the ASA's technical director. All

coaches are hired and paid by the ASA. The coaches work for the club and are placed on teams to benefit the development of each player. The coaching staff is evaluated each year by the DoCs and may be rotated among the teams for maximum player development benefits. The standard term for a coach to remain with a team is two years. A complete list of the club's coaching staff, and credentials, is available on the ATSC website.

How much time commitment is required?

Travel soccer teams play in two sessions or seasons per year. The Fall season lasts about 10 weeks from September to November. The Spring season lasts about 10 weeks from April to June. Teams typically play 8-10 games per season. Most games are played on Sundays, but you should expect at least 1 or 2 Saturday games per season. Teams usually play one or more pre-season scrimmages and 2-4 tournaments per season, depending upon the age group and competitive level of the team. Teams begin practicing 3 or 4 weeks before the start of each season. Practices are from 1½ to 2 hours per session and take place at least twice a week. Travel players are expected to attend all team practices and games.

When are the soccer seasons and when are tournaments held?

Fall Season: August to November.

Spring Season: March to June.

Teams often play pre-season, mid-season or post-season tournaments (3-4 games in a 2 or 3-day weekend). There are no league games on the following holiday weekends—Labor Day, Columbus Day and Memorial Day—so these are popular tournament weekends, along with pre- and post- season weekends. Players are expected to be available to play in tournaments.

The ATSC also conducts a winter player development program for players in all age groups. In addition, ATSC offers summer clinics and other player development opportunities.

How much does travel soccer cost?

Each player pays a 'player fee' to play in the ATSC. This player fee covers club salaries, the club uniform, league and referee fees, the club's administrative expenses, State and National registration fees, player insurance, select tournament application expenses, player development programs and many other expenses. For the 2009 – 2010 year, this player fee is \$1,430 per player, per year. ATSC makes a year long commitment to our professional coaching staff and to our players. We expect ATSC players and families to make the same full year commitment. Additional costs can vary, depending on the number of tournaments entered, personal player equipment and team travel.

The ATSC believes that financial status should not prevent talented players from participating in soccer. The ATSC offers financial assistance for families in need. Many ATSC teams also do fundraising activities to offset the costs.



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