



## **Guidelines & Expectations for Premier Elite Travel Teams**

### **Role of the Head Coach**

Every team will have a professional Head Coach (HC) who will be responsible for all aspects of soccer for the team including coaching and training. The HC will run every team practice, friendly, scrimmage, league game and tournament game.

Volunteer parents are not expected on the field during practices. Volunteer parents should stay on the sideline unless specifically requested by the H to assist on the field. There will be no formal assistant coaches. However, for the younger age groups there should be one volunteer parent on the team side during games. The volunteer's role will be to assist injured players and act solely as an observer unless asked to do otherwise by the HC.

The HC will be selected prior to tryouts by a selection committee formed by the TEC and based upon input from the previous year Team Manager.

The HC will provide a challenging year-round soccer training program designed to develop players to successfully compete in premier leagues and premier tournaments.

The HC will:

- Exhibit proper conduct;
- Attend the Travel Program's coaches meetings;
- Conduct a minimum of two formal team training sessions per week between August 15th and November 15th for the fall season and February 15th and June 15th for the spring season;
- During winter months of December through February, conduct a minimum of one, preferably two sessions a week (Indoor League play is included as a session);
- For U-15 and older teams, lead the effort to market their team's players to college coaches. This will involve working with the Team Manager to prepare and keep current a team and player summary information booklet, contacting college coaches on behalf of interested players, enrolling the team in tournaments and friendly matches that expose the players to college coaches;
- Use their experience to best develop each player by motivating, teaching and constructively criticizing each player's performance;
- Strive to develop players love for the game by providing an enjoyable experience;
- Provide a written coaching evaluation at the end of the Fall season and the Spring season. It should be a simple individual evaluation broken down into technical, tactical, physical and psychological components which is given to the parents.

## Role of the Team Manager

The Team Manager will be a volunteer parent who is responsible for the administrative aspects of the team including finances, collecting player fees, tournament and league registration, rostering, uniform orders, etc.

There should be at least two volunteer parents on the team who have their NJYS 'F' license or higher level license and are thus qualified to be an informal assistant coach and can serve as the team's "head coach for a day" in a last minute emergency situation whereby the professional cannot be present for a practice(s) or a game(s).

The Team Manager ensures league games, tournaments and training are not planned or scheduled on dates where it is known the HC cannot attend and coordinates any communication between the HC and the team, including expectations of players on top level teams, times and locations for all matches and training sessions, etc.

Team Managers have additional responsibilities including as follows:

- In February of each year, they must send out a minimum of twenty (20) personal invitations to Premier level team Head Coaches inviting them to participate in the Sunburst Tournament. The goal being to ensure the top flight is truly a Premier Level flight;
- For U-15 and older teams, assists the Head Coach in the preparation and maintenance of a team and player summary information booklet, contacting college coaches on behalf of interested players, enrolling the team in tournaments and friendly matches that expose the players to college coaches.

Team managers are not expected to:

- solve issues that parents may have related to soccer.
- to coach the team, either at games or practices. However, they can be part of the pool of volunteers who serve as informal assistant coaches.

## Expectations for Players

The following describes a Premier Elite Team Player:

- Recognize the demand for both time and commitment are higher for top level teams than within any other category of team within the travel program.
- Committed to proper preparation for each season including attending pre-season team camps and specialty training sessions.
- Be provided the opportunity to develop the skills required to confidently tryout for Summer Select and ODP programs.
- Has the desire, soccer skills and year round commitment to the sport of soccer to compete within NJYS premier leagues and/or within NJYS affiliated premier leagues within the Mid-Atlantic States.
- Will be given the exposure required to enhance their opportunities to further their development as student athletes at the college level.
- Will play in an environment matched to their abilities and desires.
- Prepared to begin formal training in early/mid August and continue through to mid/end of June.
- Recognizes that when they make a commitment to a team, the HC will be informing other potential players they did not make the team.
- Realizes they are part of a team which is making a serious commitment and when a player(s) is missing from a practice, a game or an activity, it detracts from the team.

- Recognizes training sessions, league games and tournament games are a high priority and players are expected to attend. However, HCs realize conflicts (school, family etc.) occur but are not expect to happen on a regular basis. Soccer never takes priority over academic studies and related activities. In the event a player must miss practice, the HC must be notified as early as possible. The preference is for the player to take responsibility and contact the head coach directly and to not have the parents act as a 'shield' and inform the HC on behalf of the player.
- It is recognized that in addition to soccer, many players have interest in other extracurricular activities. The Team Manager and HC will provide parents at tryouts with a provisional schedule of proposed dates for practices, games and tournaments for August through June of the upcoming season. This permits parents ample time to plan.
- On game day, players must be at the field; dressed and ready to play at least 45 minutes prior to kick-off.
- On practice day, players must be at the field; dressed and ready to play 10 minutes prior to start time.
- Players are not guaranteed a specified amount of playing time. However the philosophy of the HCs is to develop strong, competitive players and teams. To this end, the HCs will make a conscious effort to ensure all players are given a chance to compete, but the HC must be allowed to do what he or she believes is best for the team with regard to substitution during games. In general, the HC will provide players who regularly attend practices and games a minimum of 15 minutes playing time during regular league games. Minimum playing time does not apply to NJYS National Championship, tournament and playoff games. In these instances playing time is at the discretion of the HC.

### Team Formation

Whether a top level team is formed in a particular age group and gender in a given year is determined by two factors:

- the level of interest expressed by players and parents;
- assessment of skill level at the tryouts.

Tryout schedules will be posted online at least two weeks prior to them taking place. The Club will also advertise the tryouts in the local newspaper at least two weeks prior to the first tryout taking place. Every player must complete a tryout registration form in order to try-out. A returning player will not be allowed to try-out if he or she has not completed the tryout registration form or has outstanding debts to the Club or a WWPSA team.

Tryouts are conducted as follows:

- For the U-11 through U-13 age groups, a separate 3rd tryout is conducted in May following the standard 2 tryouts. Participation in the top level team tryout is by invitation only by the HC. Any player interested in trying out for a top level team must attend a minimum of one of the standard tryouts to be eligible for an invitation to the top level tryout.
- For U-14, team will be selected through advertised individual team tryouts which are in May.
- For U-15 and older, team will be selected through advertised individual team tryouts which begin in May and end in the fall.

Typically as teams move from U-11 through to U-18, players are rostered from a broader geographic area. This must be accounted for during the planning stages and on-going operations of all top level teams. Teams will play all league and tournament matches under the WWPSA name.

Head Coaches are responsible for team formation and selection. The HC will make the offer to each player and will be responsible for communicating the final roster to the Travel Executive in a timely manner. In all cases, the Travel Executive shall have the final say in regards to a team's roster.

### Team Activities

The following will be made public and posted on the Club's web site at least two weeks prior to the tryouts for any top level team:

- name and qualifications of the head coach
- an outline of what parents should expect for the team schedule in the upcoming season including dates for practices, league(s) play, tournaments, etc.
- a specific set of objectives and player expectations which are within the parameters set by the Travel Program for all top level teams
- anticipated team fees.

Preseason team preparation is a key element for top level teams. To ensure teams are ready for league play, HCs will schedule a minimum of 25 hours of formal team practices and 4 games (combination of tournament play and friendlies) prior to the fall and spring seasons.

Each team will strive to participate in highly competitive tournaments with a mixture of locations including New Jersey, the mid-Atlantic and the Eastern United States.

Teams are formed for a full year...August to June. The Club and its teams are making a year's commitment for each player. No player may be cut from a team during the seasonal year. The Club and teams expect a commitment from each player for the full year...August to June. The commitment level includes a minimum expectation of player attendance at formal practices, games and tournaments.

Participating with a top level team is very physically and mentally demanding. Teams in the U-11 to U-14 age groups must take two breaks, one during the mid-June to Mid-August period and one during the December to January time periods. Each break must be for a minimum continuous 6 week period. During these breaks there will be no formal practices, games or tournaments. During these periods participation in tournaments, summer select, etc is completely optional and at the discretion of each individual. However, the Travel Program discourages soccer activities during these down periods as all athletes required periodic physical and mental rests to prevent burnout and injury.

There is strong interest and support for our high school soccer programs among our community. Our players desire the opportunity to participate. Therefore, in an effort to accommodate our players' desires, top level teams have adopted a very supportive position of our high school soccer programs. Teams in the U-15 to U-18 age groups cannot hold formal practices, games or tournaments during the high school soccer season (mid-August to late October).

League Play: Top level teams will train and develop with the intent of participating in one of the New Jersey premier leagues: MAPS, Region 1 or JAGS (girls only). Premier leagues typically have a seasonal schedule which varies between 3 and 8 games. The primary role of league play is to prepare teams to compete in premier tournaments and to ensure teams meet the minimum league game requirements for participation in the NJYS National Championship tournament. As a result the scheduling of league games is very flexible and designed to:

- accommodate a team's tournament schedule;
- permit games to be played on Saturday, Sunday and weeknights; and
- allow for mini-festival weekends so a team can go to one location and play multiple leagues games in a single day.

## Tournaments

Top level teams consider tournament play an essential ingredient in team development and promoting awareness and interest in our Club. Tournament match play will be designed to expose teams and players to the best competition from Region 1 and around the country and for the older age groups, to gain appropriate exposure for players that are interested in playing college soccer. Teams will play a number of tournaments during the fall and spring seasons. Following are guidelines for anticipated tournament participation:

### U-11 and U-12

- Fall
- One tournament on or before Labor Day
- NJYS Championship Competition
- One other tournament
- Spring Season
- One tournament prior to April 1st
- Sunburst
- One other tournament

### U-13 and U-14

- Fall
- One tournament on or before Labor Day
- NJYS Championship Competition
- One other tournament
- Spring Season
- One tournament prior to April 1st
- Sunburst
- Two other tournaments

### U-15 and U-16

- Fall
- Two tournaments
- Spring Season
- One tournament prior to April 1st
- Sunburst
- Two other tournaments

### U-17 and U-18

- Fall
- Two tournaments
- Spring Season
- One tournament prior to April 1st
- Two other tournaments

U-11 and U-12 teams will be required to attend a minimum of one out-of-town tournament which will require overnight accommodation. U-13 and older will be required to attend a minimum of two out-of-town tournaments which will require overnight accommodation. U-11 to U-17 teams are required to play in the Sunburst Tournament. Note: All team families must volunteer to help make Sunburst successful. A successful Sunburst tournament helps generate funds for the Travel Program which then helps reduce costs to the parents.

A provisional list of tournaments will be developed by the Premier Elite Head Coaches and Team Managers working in cooperation and will be distributed among Premier Elite teams who should coordinate their efforts. Once the list of tournaments has been prepared, the Head Coach and Team Manager will meet with the team parents to discuss final selections. Once the list is finalized, teams are required to attend the selected tournaments. Attendance at tournaments by multiple top level teams from our Club is encouraged as a means of promoting unity, friendship and camaraderie.

Every team is required to develop and maintain a Team web site that details the team's current schedule, Head Coach's name and qualifications, game results and other items. The team web site must be linked to the WWPSA web site.

### Head Coach Selection

A selection committee will be formed by the TEC and will review and approve the selection of Head Coaches for each Premier Elite team. Preferential consideration will be given to Head Coach candidates who have the following qualifications:

Coaching Certification (one or more of the following):

- NSCAA Advanced National or higher level diploma
- USSF 'B' or higher level license
- Dutch Federation KNVB Advance / International or higher level license
- UEFA 'B' or higher level diploma
- English Football Association FA Level 3 or higher level license
- Brazilian 'B' or higher level license

Playing Experience (one or more of the following):

- two or more years of semi-professional or professional soccer
- four or more years seasons of collegiate play

The Selection Committee will carefully check the references of Head Coach candidates and ensure that before any Head Coach candidate is confirmed, the candidate comes to WWP and conducts a guest session so they can be observed to ensure they like working with youth, have the ability to work with youth players and have an enthusiastic and motivating personality.

The Selection Committee will be committed to providing an excellent coaching staff to fulfill the goals and commitment to each player and family of a team. HCs will be contracted and compensated by each team, based on past success, experience (both playing and coaching), and licensure. Head Coaches are selected prior to tryouts by the selection committee with input from the previous year Team Manager.

## Uniforms

The Travel Program is the most public face of our Club. Within the Travel Program, the top level teams will have the most direct and significant impact regarding how WWPSA is perceived by the greater soccer community including New Jersey, Region 1 and beyond. Image and perception is part of being a team which participates in premier leagues and premier tournaments. Outfitting our top level teams to ensure they have a similar 'look' as other premier league and premier tournament teams will have a positive impact.

The Club's official supplier is PUMA®. All teams are required to purchase their uniforms from Ewing Sports.

All WWPSA teams must have the following club-approved items:

- home jersey
- away jersey
- shorts
- two pairs of socks
- warm-up jacket

In addition, Premier Elite Teams are strongly encouraged to have the following additional items:

- warm-up pants
- windbreaker / rain jacket
- backpack
- active body layer home
- active body layer away

Teams may also carry a third yellow.

Players are expected to arrive at the field on game day with only club-approved uniform items.

## Team Fees

Prior to tryouts, a budget will be developed for each potential Premier Elite team and an anticipated annual team fee will be made available to interested families prior to tryouts.

Anticipated annual team fees should reflect the inclusion of ALL of the following items:

Fees payable to WWPSA:

Currently, \$110 per player per year, the WWPSA registration fee includes:

- League registration fees
- State rostering
- Insurance
- Some team equipment items
- Subsidized specialized player development sessions
- Subsidized winter indoor training space
- Sunburst Tournament registration fees
- Field and facilities usage
- Facilities maintenance
- Administrative support

Fees payable by the Team Account:

- Head Coach fees
- Referee fees
- Tournament registration fees
- NJYS National Championship registration fees
- Indoor training space (winter)
- Outdoor training space (winter)
- Team equipment
- Team social
- Specialized GK training
- GK equipment

Uniforms are required and are additional to WWPSA fees and team fees. Typically, uniforms may be used for as many as two or three years (size permitting) subject to the 3-year uniform cycle of the uniform manufacturers. Our current 3-year cycle ends after the 2009-2010 season at which time all Travel Team players will be required to purchase a new uniform.

Due to the current poor economic climate, Premier Elite Teams are permitted to wear the standard WWPSA Travel Team uniform items but are highly encouraged to participate in the expanded uniform package.