

Harvard Soccer Club
U10 and U12 Tryout Jamboree - May 2006
Frequently Asked Questions

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Why is there a tryout/jamboree?

The tryout/jamboree is used to assist in team formation for the fall season. The key to forming teams is to understand players' skill levels. Two primary forms of evaluation are used to do this: a coaches rating and the tryout/jamboree rating. By evaluating players, we are able to place them appropriately on specific teams in order to create a positive experience for ALL players. (see: **How are teams formed?**).

Why do we have to evaluate players ... why not mix them across teams like we do in other sports or U6/U7/U8?

The Harvard Soccer Club is part of the NVYSL (Nashoba Valley Youth Soccer League). All Harvard teams, U10 and up, play in this league. NVYSL has different divisions based on skill and this requires the club to have some sort of ranking system in order to effectively build and place teams for fair, even competitive play. Most towns within NVYSL have a comparable process for evaluating players and forming teams.

Our goal is to provide the best soccer program possible for ALL children of Harvard. This means meeting the needs of players at all levels of skill—in other words, the competitive as well as the recreational soccer player. We do this while doing our best to enable equal, fair competition where no one player dominates play. All this is kept in perspective with an overall goal of having fun and continuing to develop player's soccer skills.

If it is a tryout, could my child be cut from soccer?

No. All players who register before the deadline will be placed on a team. The tryout/jamboree is only to assist with team formation.

Do all players have to come to the tryout/jamboree?

No, while we would like as many players as possible to come to the tryout/jamboree, there is no requirement to attend. Players who do not try out will be more likely to be placed on a balanced team based on a lack of data. However, if other evaluation data clearly supports a different placement, it may be possible to be placed on a skill based team.

How do you evaluate players for teams?

We evaluate players based on two important inputs. The first is the end-of-season coach evaluations. The coaches observe a player for an entire season and under more conditions than anyone else, so these evaluations are an incredibly valuable tool in assessing players. As valuable as these evaluations are, however, there are gaps. A coach may know how players on his/her team compare to one another; however, they may not know how they compare to players on other teams in the same age group, especially for those players moving up from a younger age group (e.g. U8 moving to U10). For this reason, we use a second input: the tryout/jamboree.

The tryout/jamboree is the one venue where it is possible to compare the skills of players who played on different teams and different age-groups. All players do the same set of drills, thereby allowing for a more consistent comparison of differences between players across the age groups. Players are evaluated by experienced, soccer-playing adults who have no kids in the age-group. The goal is to have objective evaluations by qualified individuals.

After the tryout/jamboree, the assessments for each age group are turned over to the age group coordinators. The age group coordinators will use both the tryout/jamboree data and the coach evaluations to rank and form the teams. Then, the coaches who were involved in the previous season will meet with the coordinators to verify the initial team placements.

What happens at the tryout/jamboree?

Upon arriving at the field, your child will check in at one of the check-in tables. At check in, a volunteer will verify your child's uniform number against the one provided at registration. (Pre-registration is strongly requested as it speeds the check in process. See **How to Pre-register for the Tryout/Jamboree.**) If your child is not wearing a numbered uniform, the volunteer will provide a numbered label to wear.

After check-in, each player is directed to a group. Each group has a parent who has volunteered to act as “Team Captain”. The Team Captain helps move the group through the skills and scrimmage stations, provides encouragement and in general meets the players’ needs during the tryout/jamboree. This group of players remains together through each of 5 stations: 3 skills stations, 1 scrimmage station, and 1 rest/refreshment station. The stations last approximately 18-20 minutes each allowing each player to run through the station at least twice.

The skills stations are dribbling, shooting, and defense. They are intended to allow evaluators to gauge the relative skill and ability of players across age groups (e.g. U8 & U10 or U10 & U12). Each station has a facilitator and an evaluator with the facilitators being coaches who are familiar with the drills. The facilitator demonstrates the drill, and then manages movement of the players through the drill. The evaluator observes the player as s/he does the drill, and enters an assessment on an evaluation sheet.

The scrimmage station is small-sided (6v6) play. The facilitator mixes players up in order to achieve balanced sides and substitutes players to achieve equal play time. Again, the evaluator enters an assessment on an evaluation sheet. The rest/refreshment station provides players with a chance to take a break and replenish their liquids and energy.

All in all, typically over 50 volunteers are involved in planning or carrying out this event for next year’s U10 and U12 players.

Who are the evaluators?

There are a total of roughly twelve evaluators will participate in the evaluations. Six will be assigned to the boys and six to the girls. Of primary consideration in selecting evaluators was their knowledge of soccer. Most evaluators have played at the collegiate level or above and are currently playing in adult leagues. In response to parental concerns, an attempt was made to recruit as many evaluators as possible from outside of Harvard.

How will teams be made?

There is a general consensus among both professional and amateur coaches and players that forming teams with common skill players is the best way to help develop the skills of our soccer players and make it a fun experience for all. Which is our overall goal as a club: to have fun and develop the soccer skills of our kids.

In order to provide evenly matched competitive play within the NVYSL, we form our top teams in a similar manner as most other towns in our league. In addition, we place the players who do not rank on the top skilled teams evenly (skill-wise) across teams to create a set of balanced teams. Each age group has roughly half skill based teams and half balanced teams.

Please read Team Selection Standards on the Harvard Soccer Club web site for more detailed information. This can be found under the programs and policies tab on the top of the main menu and under the policies tab on the left side of the page of that sub-menu.

What if I don’t agree with a player’s placement?

If you do not agree with your child’s placement, you may direct your concerns to the age group coordinator or any member of the HSC Board, a list of which is available at www.harvardsoccer.org. Even with this set process - coaches evaluation, an impartial tryout/jamboree evaluation, age group coordinators rankings and a series of meetings to place players fairly - not everyone will agree with the final placements. No system is foolproof, despite the training, efforts and good intentions of the many volunteers involved. Please keep this in mind.

How do I pre-register for the Tryout/Jamboree?

Go to the soccer club website (www.harvardsoccer.org) and click on the registration tab. Pre-registration is strongly requested. It’s easy and fast and will save lots of time the day of the tryout/jamboree.

Who can I ask for more information?

The primary tryout/jamboree organizer is Janine Bilodeau (barehl1@aol.com) who can answer your questions. Alternatively you can contact any of the HSC Board members, a list of which is available at www.harvardsoccer.org.