

# **Travel Soccer: What's it all about?**

## **Parents / FAQ**

### **Why is it called “travel” soccer?**

Unlike Intramural Soccer where all games are played at a Hunter SC facility and players are placed on a new team each year, Travel Soccer teams are all competitively selected through a tryout process and games are played throughout the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area.

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### **How are Travel Teams different from Intramural Teams?**

In Intramural Soccer, players are generally placed on a new team each year based on their age group. Travel Soccer teams are selected each year via a competitive tryout. While there may be some turnover of players on an annual basis, for the most part the team will stay together from U9 when teams form through U17 and the high school years. This continuity leads to significant player development, and a much stronger group identity and true “team” environment. Many Hunter Soccer Club travel teams remain active nearly year round by playing the Fall Season, Winter Indoor Soccer and Spring Soccer.

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### **Who can tryout for a Hunter Soccer Club travel team?**

The travel teams of Hunter Soccer Club are not strictly limited to the communities served directly by Hunter Soccer Club which are primarily Abington & Cheltenham townships although most players are from those areas. Players from other areas may tryout and Hunter SC currently has players from Springfield Twp, Philadelphia, Fox Chase, Upper Moreland, Lower Moreland, Huntingdon Valley, Upper Dublin and other communities in the region. Tryouts are held annually in the spring for the next fall season. All players must tryout annually.

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### **Against whom do these travel teams play?**

Hunter SC travel teams compete primarily in the Inter-County Soccer League and the majority of games are played in Montgomery and Bucks Counties against area and regional teams sponsored by other local soccer clubs within the Inter-County Soccer League (ICSL) and the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association. Several Hunter SC teams compete in additional leagues such as Delco, PAGS & MAPPS.

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### **What sort of commitment is required for parents and players of a travel soccer travel team?**

Everyone involved in travel soccer recognizes that serious commitment for young players is difficult. However, being on a travel soccer team requires that both the player and the parent understand that this activity is a commitment. Neither the player nor the team can

develop to their full potential without that commitment. A team is reliant on the individual commitment of players.

For most players on a travel team, soccer is the primary sports commitment in the fall and in general only religious and school commitments take precedence over team practices and games. Winter and spring seasons are more informal and during those seasons some children may choose to participate in other sports. Those players who continue to participate in the winter and spring are more likely to improve their skills and therefore are more likely to do well at annual tryouts. Parents are asked to be available for team volunteer positions or committees. Travel soccer teams that play only the fall season may have less stringent requirements but nonetheless rely on player commitment to the team in order for the team to be at its best.

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### **How much soccer are we really talking about?**

Tryouts are generally held in May for the fall season. After tryouts many teams break until getting together for summer pre-season practices which typically begin in early August. During the summer players are strongly encouraged to attend clinics and/or a camp to further develop personal soccer skills.

Most teams will conduct two practice sessions per week throughout the season and play one game per weekend. The Fall Season is generally 10 games. Travel games in the fall are typically played on Saturday, but rescheduled games (usually due to field conditions) may be any day of the week although typically on a weekend.

In addition, most teams may compete in a pre-season (August or Labor Day) tournament, the Hunter Jack Walsh Columbus Day Tournament and perhaps a post-season tournament to wrap up the Fall season. Winter soccer may include indoor practices and/or participation in an Indoor Soccer League around the Delaware Valley. During the Spring teams are encouraged to participate in State Cup level tournaments and many teams also play in a Spring Soccer League

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### **Is travel “too much” soccer?**

Travel Soccer is a much bigger commitment than Intramural Soccer and for that reason travel soccer may not be for every player or every family - but what players and families who make the commitment find is that they dramatically improve their skills and confidence, they make new friends and they definitely have a lot of fun. While winning is always a focus of travel soccer the ultimate goal of the travel program is player development. However, players and families alike enjoy the feeling of accomplishment that comes from dedication and commitment to the game and the camaraderie of being with the same team year after year.

Parents need to consider whether their child is ready for the experience and commitment of travel soccer. If the answer is yes, the player will learn that hard work breeds success

and that there are lessons to be learned from commitment, winning and losing alike. These are common life-lessons and travel soccer is a good way to learn them.

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### **How far do we have to travel?**

The Inter-County Soccer League consists of teams throughout the Delaware Valley region. Teams will generally play half of their games at home fields and the other half as away matches. The league does make every effort to minimize travel for the younger age groups. Most games will be within 30 to 40 minutes of your home field. As teams advance and play in more competitive divisions within the league, more travel may be necessary.

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### **Who runs the travel teams?**

Hunter Soccer Club is run exclusively through volunteers and we are lucky enough to have dozens of devoted friends who help our club run. Hunter SC assists the teams in their formation and instructs the coach on what is necessary for the team to compete successfully in the ICSL and through EPYSA. Hunter Soccer Club selects qualified coaches who not only teach skills, but also run every aspect of the travel team.

The most successful teams have parent involvement and the coach may select a volunteer manager to handle the administrative aspects of the team. The manager is responsible for coordinating weekly game travel instructions, assisting with registering the team with leagues and doing other administrative activities. Some teams may also select a treasurer to help manage team funds. Other parent roles or committees may include fundraising, field prep or clean-up or coordinating rides for players.

The coach, with the assistance of the manger, runs the team on a day-to-day basis and works with the Hunter Soccer Club Travel Committee to ensure the team is following and meeting expectations of the club.

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### **What are the costs to be on a travel soccer team?**

Costs for travel soccer are certainly higher than intramurals and can vary based on the activity level of the team. While costs are significant Hunter Soccer Club continues to be more affordable than many other clubs. While other soccer clubs have paid coaching staff for many of their travel teams, Hunter Soccer Club is fortunate to have experienced coaches who volunteer an enormous amount of time to train and manage teams.

Fees to play travel soccer are separated into two components: Hunter Soccer Club registration fee and team fees. Below is a more detailed breakdown of what each player receives for their registration and team fees.

The fall season registration is done through Hunter Soccer Club online and includes all fees and insurance associated with the team participating in the Inter-County Soccer League. The registration fee also includes uniform kit fee and new travel uniforms are

supplied on a bi-annual basis. For teams that compete in the State Cup Tournament, Hunter Soccer Club covers those fees as well. The cost for tournaments, winter and spring leagues are the sole responsibility of the team.

- Registration fee: fee to cover Hunter SC expenses, including facilities, ICSL league fees and uniform kit is \$130 for the 2009-10 year payable once per year during registration for Travel soccer
- Team fees: Players may be expected to pay additional fees based on team activities. These activities may include registration for Winter Indoor League, Spring Soccer, several tournaments a year and team camp with outside instructors. Generally, fees over the course of a year may range between \$400-\$600 depending on the level of training, amount of play and the number of tournaments. Team fees are managed by, and paid to, the team treasurer, not by Hunter Soccer Club.

Some idea of team expenditures and/or player fees experienced by teams this year:

- Fall season / Hunter Soccer Club registration fee \$130 per player
- Winter league \$50 per player (paid through the team)
- Spring league \$50 per player (paid through the team)
- Three outdoor tournaments costs about \$30 each per player (paid through the team)
- Team camp with an outside instructor, approximately \$250 per player (paid through the team)
- Equipment – soccer shoes, shin guards and/or team gear \$100 per player

Taking these costs into consideration, it is anticipated that participating on a competitive travel soccer team will cost about \$500 - \$600 over the course of the year. These costs vary greatly by team and many teams actively engage in fundraising activities to defray the cost of participation.

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#### **Are grants / scholarships available?**

Hunter Soccer Club is sensitive to individual financial situations and will always take action in the best interest of the player. Financial hardships are handled on an individual basis and are kept as confidential as possible.

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#### **Whom do I contact for more information?**

For more information on the Travel Soccer program, or if you have questions, please contact the coach of the team for which you are interested or the Director of Hunter Soccer Club Travel program.

For a first-hand account of the value and quality of our Travel soccer program and how much the players enjoy the hard work and challenging play, please be sure to ask any parents of current travel players or the players themselves.

Finally, please come watch a game to better understand the level of play within travel soccer and to see if your child might have the skills and commitment needed to successfully tryout for a team.