

Dear SCYSL-Bellport Families,

In an ever-evolving youth soccer landscape, we are once again closing a Spring season with an exciting opportunity to freshen up both our travel and intramural programs as we conform to the new, nationally mandated rules and regulations that have been put in place by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF).

There are three important areas that, after many hours of research, debate, and discussion with the various governing bodies, we would like to keep you all updated on as we move into the next stage of our club's growth.

USSF Rules on age eligibility

In 2016, it was mandated that all teams playing travel soccer no matter the level, must be made up primarily of players born in a specific calendar year.

This has caused our club and its coaches many headaches as we were forced to play many of our players 'up' an age group rather than simply have players join new teams. In hindsight, this has created more problems than it has solved and we will be using our tryouts in 2017 to rectify this.

Listed below is the criteria that we will follow for all club teams at all ages throughout the 2017 tryout process and the 2017/18 season.

1. Tryouts will be held during the week of June 12th – June 16th at Bellport Middle School.
2. Teams will be listed by birth year rather than by team name.
3. Players will be invited to attend tryouts based purely on the year that they were born.
4. Players may try out for an older team up to one year above their appropriate age (for example a 2007 player can try out for the 2006 team but not a 2005).
5. Players may not try out for a younger team (for example a 2007 player cannot try out for a 2008 team).
6. Any player that wishes to play up will only be selected on an older team if they meet the following criteria
 1. They are considered in the top 5 of the team that they are trying out for
 2. They are the difference in an older team forming or not forming
 3. After all other options have been explored and there is no opportunity to play age appropriate
7. The top three players in each team will also be listed as a guest player that can play one year up should scheduling allow. The decision to play up will be made by the team trainer on a weekly basis with the approval of the Director of Coaching.
8. Any player starting the 2017/18 school year as a high school freshman may play up at any age
9. When signing in for tryouts, parents will be given a choice to try out for an A or a B team based on their commitment and desired level of play.
10. All tryouts will be conducted by Colonial Sports Group and no parents or parent coaches will be allowed on the field during tryouts.

It is important to note that we will also be amending our intramural program to ensure that players are grouped by calendar year to allow for a smooth transition into travel soccer.

USSF Rules on Intramural Soccer and Small Sided Games

In another exciting, yet slightly challenging change, youth clubs nationwide are also being encouraged to create an intramural environment that puts more focus on player development as opposed to wins, losses, and teams at the younger ages.

To do this, the Small Sided Games Mandate (SSG) was introduced by our friends at the USSF.

SSG is focused on shrinking everything that we do to allow our players more exposure with a soccer ball and whether we agree with it or not, research shows that it is in the best interests of our player's growth and development.

Starting in the Fall, you will see that the D1 and D2 fields will be dramatically smaller than we are used too and less players will be allowed on the field at any time, thus meaning rosters will also be slightly smaller. There will also be changes to the rules regarding throws, corner kicks, and goal kicks.

For sure, It will take some time to get used to, but as we look to how this can benefit our club, the days of little Johnny sitting back in his own box waiting 10 minutes to touch the ball will be long gone which can only be a good thing.

LIJSL Player Development Initiative (PDI) – Pre Travel Soccer Academy

As many of you are no doubt aware, for the past 3 years we have been working to create a group of pre-travel players who can attend additional practices aimed at preparing teams for LIJSL travel soccer.

Traditionally we have attended various tournaments each season with the results far from developmentally appropriate, and have therefore been actively looking for alternative opportunities to better prepare our players.

With that in mind, LIJSL has created PDI and invited a select group of clubs (of which we are one) to participate in a no scores and no standing league that we believe will bridge the gap between intramural and travel soccer.

We are delighted to confirm that we will be joining PDI starting in the Fall 2017 and will be holding open tryouts in June. We will attempt to register one boys team and one girls team, both in the 2009 age group.

The teams will practice once per week with a trainer who will also take them to all PDI games on a Saturday. As a supplementary program, players will also be encouraged to practice during the week with their intramural teams and participate in games on a Sunday.

This is an incredibly good opportunity for the club to push in a positive direction and we are delighted to become part of the PDI program.

Hopefully all of the above makes sense. These are exciting changes that will go a long way to creating a positive learning environment that puts our entire focus on player development and club growth.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at coachtwilliamson@gmail.com.

Sincerely

Tom Williamson

SCYSL Director of Coaching.