

# FAQ

(Updated March 2016)

## **1. What is the “Travel Soccer Program”?**

The Travel Soccer program for Whitpain creates opportunities for children who desire a more competitive setting than the Whitpain Recreation Association (WRA) Intramural Soccer Program. This Program’s primary season is played during the Fall, however, many teams play during the Winter and some even compete during the Spring. Teams usually compete in 2-3 weekend tournaments runs during the Fall; with some requiring an overnight stay. Players (and families) need to be prepared to make a greater commitment to this Program than the Intramural Soccer Program.

Travel Soccer teams are registered with Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer (EPYSA) and the league in which they participate in addition to WRA. Players are individually registered and must provide proof-of-age and medical waivers before they are allowed to play.

Whitpain (WRA) is an open community club that affords all interested youth an opportunity to play soccer at a competitive level. All Club and team functions are managed by volunteers. All volunteers have been cleared to participate using a multi-level background screening process that includes the recent FBI, Pennsylvania Department of Health and Pennsylvania State Police background checks added through legislation.

## **2. What Age groups Can Play Travel Soccer?**

Whitpain Travel Soccer begins at the “Under 8” age group with a newly established Academy experience. Teams continue as U9 through U19+ as the teams wishes to continue. Many of our middle school and high school age players play both Whitpain club soccer in addition to school soccer. Children are categorized by birth date, NOT GRADE. There are travel teams for both girls and boys, separately.

2016-17 Age Group	Born in....	2016-17 Age Group	Born in....
U-8	2009	U-14	2003
U-9	2008	U-15	2002
U-10	2007	U-16	2001
U-11	2006	U-17	2000
U-12	2005	U-18	1999
U-13	2004	U-19	1998

## **3. How far do the teams travel?**

For league games, most teams do not travel much farther than 30-45 minutes for games. Home games (5 per season) are played at Centre Square Park, Wentz Run Park or other Township facilities. There are some exceptions to the travel distances for tournaments and the coach of the team can give a better answer to these questions so you should ask at tryouts or prior to accepting a spot on one of the teams.

## **4. Who do the Travel Teams play against?**

The Whitpain Travel teams are registered into leagues, such as Inter-County Soccer League, and then divisions within those Leagues to foster healthy competition with comparably-skilled teams and general proximity. Each year, teams are re-evaluated based on their prior season record and assigned to an appropriate division for the current season. Our teams may play other teams from

Montgomery, Bucks, Philadelphia, Delaware, Northampton or Lehigh counties in Pennsylvania as part of routine league play. Most teams are in the Montgomery, Bucks and Philadelphia counties.

### **5. How long is the season?**

Practices (and some pre-season tournaments) usually begin after the July 4th holiday and continue through November. Teams generally practice two nights per week. Each team plays 10 games in the regular season with no playoffs. There are 5 home and 5 away games. Most teams participate in tournaments either before, during or after the official soccer season (typically August/Labor Day, Columbus Day, and pre-Thanksgiving weekends). Some teams elect to play indoor soccer over the winter. A few continue play in a Spring league or tournaments. Please ask each individual coach at try-outs what is expected for your child.

### **6. When should I be registering – how can I get my child involved?**

- Registration for tryouts begins in March – registration is done on the WRA website
- Tryouts begin in April
- Teams are selected in May (yes, for the fall)
- Player/team registration is completed in June in the WRA system and league (fees apply)
- Practices officially start July 1 and go through the end of the season (normally 3rd week of November – later based on rain). Typically 2 per week but can be more.
- Games are normally scheduled on Saturdays with reschedules played on Sundays
- Teams normally compete in tournaments on Labor Day and Columbus Day weekends with additional ones either during the summer or late November
- Most teams will play indoor for at least 1 of the 2 sessions beginning early December (thru March). This is entirely voluntary and when players choose not to participate, the Coaches may add players to the roster for the benefit of those kids who do wish to keep playing.
- Some teams will play in the Spring league starting in March-May. The same roster considerations may be used.

With some exceptions, and following league rules, players can be added to teams after tryouts BUT THIS IS RARE. Any player who attends tryouts and is considered travel-ready, may be invited to join a team after the registration process above is complete if circumstances allow (i.e. injured player, family relocation) AND WITH PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE TRAVEL SOCCER COMMITTEE.

### **7. How often does the team practice?**

Most teams practice twice a week in the evenings using fields in Whitpain and Lower Gwynedd Townships. Please ask the coach at try-outs how often your child is expected to practice.

### **8. How can my child try-out for a team?**

Check the [website](#) in March. Players need to pre-register online to attend the try-out sessions. The Whitpain Travel Soccer Program usually holds try-out sessions during April. Check the website for exact dates, times and locations. A nominal fee is charged for tryouts to pay for independent evaluators, field preparation and equipment.

### **9. How are players evaluated?**

The Whitpain Travel Soccer Try-out process is designed to be objective and fair. Please review the [Travel Soccer Guidelines](#) for detailed guidance.

Each head coach is present as well as independent evaluators who observe the players over a series of 2-3 try-out sessions. Players are evaluated on technical skill, competitiveness, tactical awareness, speed and athletic ability. Most age groups have enough players to create two (2) teams per age

group. WRA will form as many teams of travel-ready players as feasible (considering league divisional structure, qualified coaching volunteers, etc...). Returning players are asked to not wear their travel soccer uniforms during the try-out process to create any unfair advantage, real or perceived.

***10. How are players notified after try-outs?***

Once the try-outs are completed and the evaluations are finalized, the coach of each team will send your child an invitation to participate. You typically have a few days to decide and confirm your child's participation. Once you confirm with the coach, you will be asked to register on-line for the Travel Soccer Program. Payment at this time is required to participate. Be sure to ask whatever questions you have before accepting your spot on the team!

***11. Can my child play Travel Soccer as well as WRA Intramural (IM) Soccer?***

No. Travel Soccer practice, game and tournament schedules can be demanding on the player (and family). US Soccer recommends recovery periods after training and game play. Additionally, playing both Travel and IM may take playing time from another deserving child.

***12. Can my child still play other sports during the soccer season?***

Please ask the coach of your age group about the time commitments when evaluating this decision for your family. WRA and Travel Soccer promote well-rounded children and athletes consistent with US Youth Soccer recommendations. Determining which sport will take precedence in a given season should be discussed with the coach before committing.

***13. Can my child play on more than one Travel or Club Team?***

In most cases, the leagues will not allow players to be on more than one team, although there are instances where a player can be a secondary player on another travel team. Players can also be guest players for another team during most tournaments. Please notify the coaches at try-outs if your child is also trying out for other teams and when the notification processes will be for those teams. Should your child wish to play on multiple teams during a seasonal year, communication with their coach is imperative.

***14. How much does it cost to play on a Whitpain Travel Soccer Team?***

The 2015 Registration fee was \$180 for Whitpain residents covers league fees (entry fee, referees, insurance, player passes) and WRA travel program overhead/administrative costs (field rentals, equipment, safety equipment and other costs necessary to run the program). There are small additional fees for non-resident participants but WRA is an open club. The fee for the coming season will be finalized before tryouts and published to all families. Our coaches are volunteers and are not compensated.

Additional fees include mandatory uniforms (approximately \$75), optional tournament entry fees, 3<sup>rd</sup> party training fees, team gatherings and other costs that may be identified by the coaches to support the team. Teams will select tournaments depending on the desires of the team and the competitiveness of the team. Use of 3<sup>rd</sup> party trainers varies by the team. On average, teams reported the average costs per player to be approximately \$400-600 in the 2014 season all-inclusive.

**Cases of financial hardship can be discreetly considered by the head coach and Club Coordinator. WRA does provide assistance to families that may need it each season.** We do not want the costs of participation to deny any deserving child an opportunity!

***15. What are the qualifications of the Travel Soccer Coaches and Team Officials?***

The Whitpain Travel Soccer Coaches are volunteers who most often live and work within the community. The Club strongly suggests that all Coaches receive their US Soccer National "F" and "E" coaching licenses (offered through EPYSA) and have prior playing experience. Some coaches and

teams elect to hire additional coaches or trainers to help run camps, practices or special training sessions to supplement that Coaches plan.

All Coaches and team officials are required to have a full background check through both WRA and EPYSA before being registered. Coaches will complete other training as specified by EPYSA and the leagues that the club participates in (i.e. concussion awareness)

***17. Can I get involved with the Travel Soccer Program?***

Yes! There are many opportunities for parents and volunteers to participate with the Travel Program. The program needs coaches, assistant coaches, commissioners, field management, tournament committees, fundraising, communications and more. Additionally, each team needs help with registration, planning tournaments, team communication, etc. Please express your interest in volunteering during tryouts or to your child's coach.

***18. What is the US Academy Program?***

New for the 2016-17 season, the Club is organizing an Academy experience for those rising 7-year old players who wish to have more formal training than is offered in the Intramural Program. Academy details will be published shortly but principally will include a practice and game schedule that is similar to the other age groups in the Club. Additionally, it will include games organized against other area Clubs that have Academy programs and tournaments for this age. In this way, it will require more commitment than the typical IM schedule.

The Academy experience is meant to provide parents and families preparation for the future of Travel Soccer. Participating parents may wish to become our future volunteer coaches and this provides an opportunity for them to gain some experience on how to organize practices, prepare for games and ensure the our kids develop skill and HAVE FUN.