

YMS TRY-OUTS: PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES. (Feb. 2011)

Travel tryouts at YMS are open to any age-appropriate child. A common tryout is held in April/May for all players in the appropriate age group. Try-outs for older teams (\geq U16) are typically held in June on dates agreed upon by all of the teams in the respective age group and approved by the Director of Coaching and the respective Travel Director.

It is the coach's responsibility to **fairly** pick his/her team. If this is accomplished by following the criteria and recommendations outlined in this document the "issues" and stress that often accompany the selection of our teams can be minimized. The majority of these "issues" result from poor communication, this must begin well before the tryout season.

1. Age-Group Coaches Meeting (Pre-Spring, Jan-March).

Prior to the spring season the Head Coaches of **all** teams in a given age group must meet to discuss potential movement of players on their teams. The goal is to alert the current coaches to players who could move up or down within the system. It is incumbent on the head coaches to maintain information exchanged at this meeting in strict confidence. Failure to do so is grounds for removal of the coach from YMS. If a coach is uncomfortable discussing specific players at the least they should indicate, based on their observations through the fall, how many players they feel are "on the bubble".

At this meeting the coaches should also designate an "**Age-Group Coordinator**" responsible for administrative oversight of the try-outs (registration, shirt pick-up etc.). This coordinator does not have to be a coach and could be a reliable parent familiar with the responsibilities of the position.

By April 1 each age group *must* confirm with their respective travel director they have met and inform the director of their designated Age-Group Coordinator. **If confirmation of such a meeting is not received, YMS reserves the right to cancel the try-out for that age group.**

2. Player Evaluations (Pre-Spring, Jan-March).

Prior to the start of the spring season we strongly recommend Head Coaches prepare and distribute written evaluations of their current players. These should include a quantitative rating of each player and a brief summary of strengths and suggested areas for improvement. YMS has samples of player evaluation forms if needed. These evaluations can often be condensed to categories involving skill, speed (vision & reaction as well as physical), commitment, determination (physical & mental), and behavior/discipline. Coaches are encouraged to discuss their evaluations with the players and consult with the Director or Assistant Director of Coaching for assistance or guidance.

The evaluations can provide some forewarning for players perceived to be on the bubble. We do not recommend younger players be told they are on the bubble before the completion of try-outs; while there can be pros (motivation), we believe these are outweighed by several cons (apathy, disenchantment). However, such forewarning is appropriate for our more mature players (\geq U15).

3. Coaches Applications (February).

Applications to coach must be submitted (on-line) by the February General Membership meeting. These are to be submitted by *anyone* wishing to head coach or assist in the coaching of a travel or academy team in the upcoming year. **No late applications will be accepted from any current YMS coach or assistant coach.**

4. Coaches Selection (February-April).

(a) Timing.

YMS will place coaches based on their respective child's ability, not on the basis of the coach's ability. The appropriate Travel Director and the Director of Coaching will initiate coaching selections in February/March. The Coaches Selection Committee comprising the Soccer Director, Director of Coaching, Assistant Director of Coaching and the respective Travel Director will approve all coaching assignments.

Wherever possible the Coaches Selection Committee will *try* to appoint team coaches prior to tryouts. For several volunteer coaches it will be necessary to delay this decision until the try-outs have started due to uncertainties in the placement of their child. The goal is to announce all head coach placements prior to the beginning of the second try-out. Beginning this year (2011) the boys and girls try-out will alternate week by week, allowing more time between the try-outs for the assignment of approved coaches.

(b) Criteria.

The YMS Coaches Selection Committee will provide evaluations on the various coaches within the club. They will also try to evaluate the children of those coaches who submitted applications to expedite the travel tryout process. Coaching and playing experience, training, licenses, parent and Director of Coaching evaluations, meeting attendance, performance and overall conduct are the main factors taken into consideration for a coaching position.

The Head Coach of all YMS premier teams will be a paid, non-parent coach selected by the Director and Assistant Director of Coaching. Some non-premier teams also elect to have a paid Head Coach who, in addition to training the team, attends all games and makes the player decisions. The Coaches Selection Committee must approve the appointment of a paid Head Coach for any non-premier team.

(c) Responsibility for Team Selections.

The Head Coach selected for the team has final responsibility for the team selections during try-outs. The selections should be made with input from the team's trainer, the Directors of Coaching and if necessary the respective Travel Director. The Head Coach has responsibility for following the try-out guidelines and ensuring all players attending try-outs are informed of their placement in a timely and appropriate manner (see below). **The Head Coach is personally responsible for notifying any child cut from a team; this obligation cannot be delegated to any other assistant, trainer, manager or parent.**

5. Try-outs: Administrative Issues (April/May).

(a) Player Registration.

All players applying for positions on travel teams must complete the YMS try-out application online (strongly preferred) or complete and submit a hard copy at the tryout. The player application must include email and phone contacts for notification of any changes/cancellations and their final placement. Players requesting placement on a premier team *only* must indicate this on their registration form. These players should be "tagged" as such on the evaluator's assessment sheets.

All players must attend the tryouts to be considered for placement on a team, unless special circumstances arise. All special circumstances must be approved, prior to the tryout, by the respective Travel Director, and accompanied by written notification from the player (or guardian) or coach. Any player that does not attend tryouts, and does not have

approval from the Travel Director to miss the tryouts, will forfeit his/her spot on the team, NO EXCEPTIONS.

(b) Try-out Shirt Pick-up

The Age Group Coordinator is responsible for securing shirts for all the players in their age-group several days before the try-out from the club administrator. Unused shirts should be returned after the second try-out.

(c) Try-out Registration

The Age-group Coordinator is responsible for oversight of the registration process before both of the try-outs. He/she should seek responsible parent volunteers to assist in this process. Duties include: distribution of try-out shirts to all players; collection of payment (*cash only*) from any players who did not register online; distribution of the team information handout (see below) to all parents.

The coordinator must also ensure the evaluators have a complete list of all attendees (designated by their shirt color/number) on their evaluation sheets. They should make sure the color/number of the shirt is added to the registration form for each player.

Try-outs can attract more than 90 players; therefore, the registration table should be set-up at least 40 minutes before the scheduled start time of the first try-out. New players can show up at the second try-out, forms/handouts should also be available at that time though the set-up can be delayed to ~30 minutes before the scheduled start.

(d) Team Information Handouts

The Head Coach of every team must ensure they, their Assistant or Manager, prepare a written description of the team expectations, projected tournaments, showcases, leagues, and anticipated financial obligations for distribution to every attendee. A contact (email/phone) for the head coach must be included.

The handout must include expectations for attendance at practices, league games, state cup/Region 1 games and anticipated travel commitments to specific tournaments or showcases. If these vary from summer to fall to winter to spring this should be specified. The anticipated costs, in addition to the YMS registration fee, must be clearly defined.

Each handout should specify it is **mandatory** that every parent volunteer their time at YMS tournaments (Columbus Weekend for boys, EPIC/Mother's Day weekend for girls) and for their teams to attend the YMS travel team camp in August.

For younger teams it should be recognized participation in other sports can cause conflicts – particularly in the winter and spring - a reasonable policy for dealing with these conflicts should be outlined in the information hand-out.

The Age-group Coordinator is responsible for compiling the information for each team in the age group into a single handout and for making copies for distribution at registration. An estimated date for completion and notification of the selections should be added to the handout; that date should not be before Memorial Weekend.

(e) Addition of Players after Try-outs.

To add an individual player during the soccer year after the tryout dates (e.g., a player moves from outside of area, to replace an injured player, etc), **the coach must notify the Director of Coaching & Travel Director with final approval by the Soccer Director.** If approved, the player must register with YMS, and pay all fees as determined by the Board. Any new players must be evaluated by the first team (second, third, etc.) coach first, before being allowed to join the respective team.

Intra-YMS adjustments must have permission from the Travel and Coaching Director, prior to any changes. We strongly recommend coaches communicate amongst themselves first and then approach the appropriate directors for permission. The Soccer Director will handle any disputes, with his/her decision being final.

6. Evaluation/Selections (April/May)

(a) Evaluation

The tryout will be coordinated and run by the Director and Assistant Director of Coaching and their staff. Each Head Coach is responsible for securing enough qualified adult assistance to give every player a fair assessment. This cannot include parents or siblings of players that are being assessed.

Every evaluator should have an assessment sheet for quantitative ranking of each candidate. The Age-group Coordinator should ensure the evaluator's list includes the shirt numbers (not names) of all the registrants and that the *premier-only* candidates are "tagged"..

Given the hectic nature of a try-out it is impossible to use detailed ranking sub-categories for each player – it is important to keep it simple to allow quantitative ranking of every child. Coaches should consult with the professional trainers and Directors of Coaching who are present at the try-out for input, guidance and suggestions.

Coaches must keep a record of their assessments in the event of a grievance.

(b) Process.

These are open tryouts and include many players new to the club. Because they are usually unknown to the evaluators, we recommend special attention be given to watching these players to ensure they are evaluated reliably. If they are being seriously considered for selection, it is often prudent to invite new players to informal try-outs/practices after the official try-outs are complete to gauge ability, commitment, behavior etc.

We strongly recommend players are **not** separated into distinct ability-based groups at the beginning of the first try-out. This creates the impression the teams are pre-selected. Grouping along the lines of ability is a necessity later in the try-out; during the first try-out this grouping should be as broad as possible while still allowing meaningful assessment. Wherever possible player rotation among different groups is strongly encouraged. Every group should be monitored by at least one evaluator, at **NO** time should a group be scrimmaging without an evaluator being present.

7. Team Selection (May).

(a) "Outside" versus Current Players.

The bottom line for successful selection is fairness, informed stratification according to ability, and good communication between the coaches of the different teams in the age group.

If the abilities of a new player are deemed to be comparable to a current YMS player the current YMS player should be selected. A good rule of thumb for selection of an "outside" player is would they be a "starter", i.e. in the top 11 (11 on 11) or top 8 (8 on 8) players on your new squad. If not we recommend the new player not be selected at the expense of a current member of the squad.

(b) Recommended Squad Size.

We suggest teams carry a minimum of fourteen players for eleven-v-eleven, and twelve players for eight-v-eight. The maximum number is established by the various leagues. All Academy teams (U8 – U10), where numbers allow, are expected to carry twelve to fourteen

players per squad. Teams typically approach the maximum squad size for the older age groups (\geq U15) when injuries become more commonplace.

If you pick them they must play: remember if you select a player they must get fair playing time throughout the year in accordance with the YMS guidelines.

(c) Timing of Selections

YMS is a feeder program; therefore, the first team will select players first.

A list of the first team's selection should be passed on to the second team ***within one week*** after the last tryout; the list can include up to three bubble players if further evaluation is deemed necessary. A final list must be provided to the second team one week later, ***i.e. two weeks after the last try-out.***

A list of the second team's selection should be passed on to the third team ***within two weeks*** after the last tryout; the list can include up to four bubble players if further evaluation is deemed necessary. A final list must be provided to the third team one week later, ***i.e. three weeks after the last try-out.***

Coaches of the third team will receive their list with bubble players from the second team no later than 2 weeks after the try-out, they should complete their selections ***four weeks after the last try-out.***

The appropriate Travel Director must approve any exceptions to the above procedures

8. Player Notification (May/June).

(a) Procedure.

Every player attending the try-outs must be contacted directly, either in person or on the phone, to be given notification of the outcome of their try-out. Email, text or voice mail messages are unacceptable when a child is cut from the team. Any child being cut from a team must receive a clear explanation for the decision **from the Head Coach** (i.e. the person with final responsibility for the decision), it is not acceptable for the cut to be made by an Assistant Coach, Manager, Trainer, or other parent.

It is club policy that a **player can only move down one level** (as opposed to two). Exceptions to this policy can only be made with the specific approval of the Director of Coaching and the Soccer Director.

It is the responsibility of every Head Coach to do all they can to encourage a player not selected or cut from a team, to stay in the YMS system and play for the team at the next level.

(b) Timing.

Notifications of the final selections should be coordinated between the Head Coaches of each team in the age group. It is their responsibility, assisted by the Age-Group Coordinator, to ensure all candidates receive a decision. Wherever possible notifications for a given team should be done on the same day. It is recommended the first team make their calls on day one, the second team on day two, etc. It is also recommended players being cut from a team should be notified first to gauge their interest in staying in the club.

9. Grievance Procedures.

In the case of disputes the coach should be prepared to share their quantitative evaluation data with the child and their parents. In this meeting the coach should **not** discuss or share the relative abilities of **any** other try-out candidate. YMS has guidelines for taking any grievance to a higher level, the next level is the respective Travel Director who will consult and share the information with the Director of Coaching. If this does not result in a resolution the Soccer

Director will consult with the Director of Coaching. The club President will be involved in the case of any conflicts of interest.

10. Academy Try-outs.

The organizational details (selection of a coordinator, registration etc.) of the Academy (U8-U10) try-outs are similar to the travel try-outs described above. However, the philosophy of the program, and therefore the try-outs, is quite different.

The fundamental concept of the Academy is to create a learning environment where children are free to express their creativity without any win-loss pressure. The purpose of the try-out is to identify players with the capability of benefiting from this environment.

At U-8 the goal is to create 3 equal squads of 12 players each. No players are cut from the initial U-8 teams provided they are attending sessions. The main focus of the try-out should be encouragement of the players. At U-8 evaluations are conducted solely with a view to structuring evenly balanced squads.

Because each Academy group can show varying rates of development and differentiation, the Director of Coaching can recommend assignment to “A”, “B”, etc. teams at different times in the Academy Program (e.g. spring U-9, U-10). When streaming takes place players are continually assessed for movement through the different teams based on their development. No child is permanently designated as an “A” or “B” player. When streaming takes place the Director of Coaching has final responsibility for the team selections, he/she will consult with the Academy trainers and coaches. It is the responsibility of the Coaches (not the Director of Coaching) to notify the Academy players of their placement.

Coaches of the Academy teams are selected by the Director of Coaching and approved by the Coaches Selection Committee.