



# Scarborough Soccer Club

## Parent's Handbook

Version 1.2

May 1, 2006

The purpose of this document is to help orient parents and players new to the Scarborough Soccer Club. While we will attempt to keep this document current, the Board of Directors of the Scarborough Soccer Club reserves the right to implement policy changes which may make portions of this document obsolete. For the most current version of this document, please visit the Scarborough Soccer Club web site at:

<http://www.eteamz.com/ssc>

## Revision History

Summary of Changes:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Revision</b>
9/20/2004	1.0	Board	Initial version approved by Board of Directors
4/12/2005	1.1	Board	Minor corrections of errata and clarification of certain policies as adopted at March 2005 Board meeting
5/1/2006	1.2	Board	Updated to reflect changes in Soccer Maine structure, including the elimination of districts in favor of league based structures, removed references to MLS Player Development Officer, removed coach initiated playing up clause, and added player registration fee payment information

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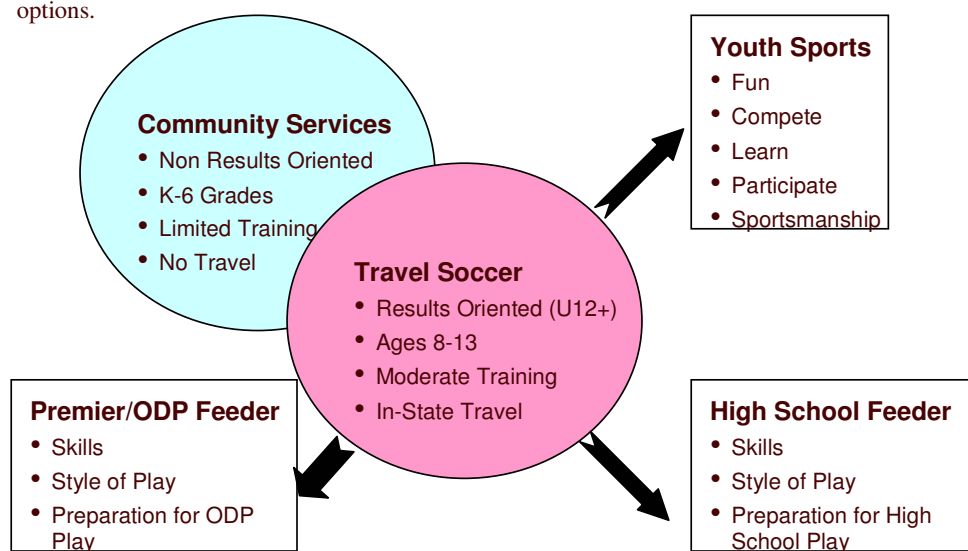
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## Philosophy and Mission

The Scarborough Soccer Club (SSC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a competitive and fun soccer playing experience for the youth of Scarborough. The SSC plays what is commonly referred to as “travel soccer.” The SSC is a member of Soccer Maine, the state governing body for all of travel soccer in Maine. Soccer Maine in turn is affiliated with U.S. Youth Soccer, the national organization responsible for overseeing youth soccer development across the country. As a member of Soccer Maine and U.S. Youth Soccer, we are bound to abide by their bylaws and policy decisions.

Our mission is to provide a fun and competitive youth soccer playing experience, focused on player development, competing against other clubs in the state of Maine and New England. We are committed to making the experience fun for the players, but the expectations of our players, coaches, and parents are higher than other soccer programs.

The SSC provides a youth soccer playing experience that can be viewed in a continuum of possible youth soccer development options. The following diagram depicts some of these options.



- Scarborough Community Services – can generally be characterized as non-results oriented at all ages, more limited time commitments, no substantial travel commitments, varied soccer experience among coaches, and focused on fun and skills development. This program is ideal for younger kids, and for that reason we strongly encourage participation in this program, and not travel soccer, for any age groups younger than our minimum. This program is also appropriate for those families that don’t want to commit to attendance at all practices, games outside of Scarborough, or a more competitive (results-oriented) playing experience.
- Travel Soccer – provides a more competitive soccer playing experience for children aged 8 (U9) to 13 (U14), has declared state champions at certain age groups, entails travel and perhaps even overnight stays on occasion, and puts a higher focus on skills development.

We view our program as a feeder system into three additional levels of playing experience.

- Premier Soccer & Olympic Development Programs (ODP) – generally premier team play begins at age 11 (U12) and continues up through age 17 (U18). Premier teams play year round outside of the fall travel season, frequently have paid coaching staffs, and frequently travel to tournaments out of state. Based upon the merit of play, individuals may try out for regional teams and the Olympic Development Team, which plays at a national level.
- Middle Schools and High Schools – by focusing on skills development, our objective is to supply a deep pool of highly-capable soccer players for the appropriate school teams, regardless of the school chosen by the student. In particular, since the SSC and Scarborough Middle School seasons overlap, we work hard to provide an experience that augments and enhances the Middle School season for those players in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Adult Recreational Soccer – while it is unfortunate, not every SSC player will get the opportunity to play “varsity soccer” at the high school level. However, we also have the objective to teach a life-long love of the game, and allowing every player to continue to knowledgeable and skillfully play the sport, at a recreational level, is consistent with our objectives.

The SSC is not affiliated with any premier teams, the school system teams, or the adult soccer leagues. Playing soccer for the SSC is not a prerequisite for playing in any of these other programs. However, it is our expectation that players wishing to improve their soccer skills in a more competitive environment naturally tend to move to travel soccer, and also tend to be the committed athletes that form the majority of premier, ODP, and high school teams. Any member of the SSC Board of Directors or coaching staff would be happy to address any questions about these programs, or will direct you to the organizations that do sponsor these teams.

While the SSC is not affiliated with any premier programs, it is the stated policy of the Board of Directors to encourage talented players in the U12 and older age brackets to explore the training and competition that premier programs can offer. Playing premier will create a more talented soccer player, and in turn strengthen our program.

## SSC Board of Directors

The Scarborough Soccer Club is governed by an elected Board of Directors. The Board of Directors operates within the by-laws governing the club. These by-laws specify the election process, positions, terms, and fundamental operation of the club. The Board of Directors is responsible for establishing club policy, the financial operation of the club, appointment of coaches, representing Scarborough in district and state-wide meetings, submission of tournament registration forms, overseeing the tryout and team selection processes, and approving the final team rosters. Consistent with US Youth Soccer and Soccer Maine mandates, the Board of Directors has final authority over all aspects of the SSC.

The Board of Directors is comprised of the following positions:

- **President** – responsible for overseeing all aspects of the club
- **Vice-President** – responsible for assisting the President with key focus areas
- **Treasurer** – responsible for the fiscal operation of the club
- **Secretary** – responsible for documenting the club activities
- **Registrar** – responsible for registering and rostering players and teams with Soccer Maine
- **Coaching Director** – responsible for appointing coaches and overseeing player development
- **Lobster Classic Chair** – responsible for organizing the annual Scarborough tournament

The Board of Directors can also appoint non-voting positions to coordinate certain operations of the club, such as a director of referees, web master, and a community relations director. Current members of the Board of Directors can be found online at the SSC web site, <http://www.eteamz.com/ssc>.

Meetings are held monthly at a time and location determined by the Board. This information is posted to the SSC web site. Meetings are generally open to coaches and parents, but space is often limited. Portions of meetings that deal with sensitive and confidential information, such as disciplinary decisions, may be held with only the Board voting positions present (executive session).

Elections are held annually in January **for a two year term**. Anyone interested in serving on the Board of Directors should contact a current Board member for more information.

## Age and Team Designations

Age designations are uniform throughout US Youth Soccer. For purposes of establishing a player's age, a cut off date of August 1<sup>st</sup> is used annually. The Scarborough Soccer Club provides playing experiences for children that are at least 8 years old as of August 1<sup>st</sup> of the same year, but not more than 13 years old as of August 1<sup>st</sup> of the same year.

Further, US Youth Soccer uses an "under" designation. Under US Youth Soccer rules, younger players may play in older age groups. However, under no circumstances may older players "play down" into a younger age group. The Scarborough Soccer Club strongly favors "age appropriate" play, and has a very strict "playing up" policy described later in this document.

For the fall soccer season, the following are the age designations used consistently throughout US Youth Soccer affiliated leagues.

Age	Meaning	Description
U9	Under 9	Not more than 8 years old as of August 1 <sup>st</sup> of the same year
U10	Under 10	Not more than 9 years old as of August 1 <sup>st</sup> of the same year
U11	Under 11	Not more than 10 years old as of August 1 <sup>st</sup> of the same year
U12	Under 12	Not more than 11 years old as of August 1 <sup>st</sup> of the same year
U13	Under 13	Not more than 12 years old as of August 1 <sup>st</sup> of the same year
U14	Under 14	Not more than 13 years old as of August 1 <sup>st</sup> of the same year

Teams are designated based upon age and gender. The age designation of a team is equal to the age designation of the oldest player on the team roster. For example, if the oldest player on the team is considered U12, then the entire team is U12 no matter how young some of the other players might be. Likewise, teams are designated by gender. If a team has both boys and girls on the roster, it is considered to be a boy's team for purposes of scheduling.

## Eligibility

The Scarborough Soccer Club fields boys and girls teams in the U9 to U14 age groups. Players that are not at least 8 years old as of August 1<sup>st</sup> are not accepted into the SSC, as per a new policy adopted by Soccer Maine in 2004. Players too young to play for the Scarborough Soccer Club are strongly encouraged to participate in Scarborough Community Services soccer programs until they are of sufficient age.

The Scarborough Soccer Club does not field teams older than U14 for the fall travel season. Players older than U14 are not permitted to play consistent with US Youth Soccer rules. Opportunities for players older than U14 to play soccer include various school and premier teams.

All players must be legal residents of the Town of Scarborough. Scarborough residents may not play travel soccer for any other club than the SSC without a waiver form signed by the SSC President. Waivers are only granted in situations where the opportunity for the resident to play for an SSC team is not possible or where the player attends school in another town and wishes to play in that town with his or her classmates.

Players outside of Scarborough may play for the SSC if space exists on an age-appropriate team and they qualify under the town waiver rules established by Soccer Maine. However, no Scarborough resident may be cut in order to make space for a player from outside of Scarborough, regardless of talent level.

## **Non-Results Oriented Age Groups**

Travel Soccer is highly competitive soccer at all age groups. The SSC is seeking players that enjoy competition, and we expect the majority of our players will “keep score” of all games.

Soccer Maine has declared that the U9, U10, and U11 age groups are “not results oriented.” This designation means that no state champion is declared in these age groups, and league standings are not kept. Accordingly, while the players will be keeping score and trying their hardest, the SSC and coaches in these age groups will not place undue emphasis on winning games.

For these age groups, the general expectation should be that all players try different positions on the field, regardless of their aptitude for those positions. At the most advanced levels for soccer, defenders know how to attack and attackers know how to defend. Parents are asked to be patient if a relatively inexperienced player makes mistakes that cost the team a victory at this age group. Players learn from mistakes, and our coaches will work with all the players to improve the overall play of the team over time.

## **Results Oriented Age Groups**

The U12, U13, and U14 age groups are “results oriented” at the state level. There are state champions declared in both the boys and girls brackets for each of these age groups. Records are kept at the district level for purposes of seeding for playoffs. Based upon extensive US Youth Soccer research, the general expectation is that players this age are ready to handle the “pressure” of competing for championships. Likewise, the tournaments played in over Labor Day and Columbus Day often will declare a champion in these age groups.

Our coaches will accordingly place more emphasis on winning, but do so within the context of player development. Players may be directed more towards particular positions where their aptitude demonstrates they are more likely to excel. The coaches also have the latitude to put stronger players on the field at critical junctures of the game.

Soccer Maine maintains two divisions of play.

1. Challenge Cup is the top level of competition within the State, appropriate for teams from towns with a significant number of players in their program and where the “best” players are on the same team.
2. Anthem Cup is a level of competition slightly below Challenge Cup, appropriate for teams with relatively few players to draw from or a team formed from the less developed players from a larger program.

The size of the Scarborough Soccer Club is such that we normally send teams to compete in both the Challenge and Anthem Cup levels. The SSC has won state championships at several age groups in the past, and we continue to be well represented in the state semifinals and finals every year.

## Coaches

Coaches are at the forefront of player development, which is our core mission. It's therefore very important to the SSC to attract, train, retain, and leverage the best soccer coaches we can find in support of our objectives.

All coaching positions within the SSC are volunteer positions. There are no paid coaches within the SSC. Whenever possible, we seek head coaches that have had significant soccer playing experience (e.g. college experience), have youth coaching experience (e.g. Community Services soccer), have an even temperament and philosophy consistent with the SSC, and can live up to the time commitments to benefit our players. We also seek assistant coaches that have as many of these same qualifications as possible. Most coaches also have children in the club. Because of the time commitments involved, it is SSC policy to allow the coach's son or daughter automatically play on the same team that their parent is coaching, consistent with other policies contained in this document concerning team selection and playing up in age.

The Scarborough Soccer Club and Soccer Maine both expect all head coaches to be appropriately licensed. Further, the SSC attempts to license as many assistant coaches as possible. For U9 and U10 teams, completion of the U10 "Youth Module" course is required. This is a four-hour course focusing on the most basic of soccer skills. For U11 on up to U14, successful completion of a US Youth Soccer "E-license" course is required. This is a sixteen-hour course and teaches more advanced skills and beginning tactics. Finally, for our strongest coaches, the SSC will provide opportunities to complete the US Youth Soccer "D-license". The course is a very intense training session in advanced techniques, advanced tactics, and significant soccer situational analysis. While a D-license is not required at the age groups supported by the SSC, it represents an investment in quality coaching which leads to quality player development.

Coaches are appointed to teams at the recommendation of the Coaching Director, with final approval by the Board of Directors if necessary. Team appointments will be done in a manner that will best help the SSC achieve our overall objectives.

Parents should keep the following points in mind:

1. Requests to place your child with a specific coach are generally not permitted. We invest in our coaches to ensure a consistent training experience for all players in the club.
2. Players may play for different coaches as they progress through various age groups. No commitments are made to keep all players with the same coach.
3. The coaches are volunteers who give a substantial amount of time for the benefit of all the players. Please recognize that in some instances the coaches are learning new coaching skills as well.
4. If you have questions pertaining to soccer in general or the operation of the team, the coach should be your first point of contact. If there is a particular issue that cannot be addressed with the coach, the Coaching Director is your next point of contact.

If you are interested in learning more about coaching for the SSC, please contact the Coaching Director. See <http://www.eteamz.com/ssc> for more information.

## Time and Travel Commitments

Travel soccer is for committed players and parents. While in the fall season, it is our expectation that soccer is the primary sport activity, and games and practice will take precedent over other activities.

## Seasons

The Scarborough Soccer Club officially fields teams for the fall season only. This season runs from August until late October or early November. The SSC begins practices and clinics in early August. Our annual tournament, the Lobster Classic 4v4 Tournament, is also in August. In general each team can expect to play in a tournament over Labor Day and Columbus Day weekends, and to play between two and four games each weekend until late October. By the end of the season, each team should play between 16 and 24 games. The U12, U13, and U14 seasons extend slightly longer with the Challenge and Anthem Cup championships, if the teams continue to win and advance.

Many SSC teams continue to play in various indoor leagues during the winter and in Soccer Maine sponsored spring leagues. In all instances, these are “coach sponsored” programs and the SSC only provides nominal logistical support, such as securing field space and assigning referees for games. Playing during these seasons is completely voluntary, and in no way impacts fall tryout evaluations or team selection. Please note that continual play and development might enable a player to progress in skills and ability faster than a player who only practices and plays during the fall season.

As these leagues are not SSC sponsored, the SSC has no control over who is invited to play for a team, if a team is fielded at all, or any of the playing philosophies such as playing time and positions. Parents are encouraged to speak directly to your coach if you have questions about playing beyond the fall season.

## Practices

Practice times and amounts vary by age group. General expectations for training time are:

Age	Practices Per Week	Combined Duration	Comments
U9	1 or 2	2 to 2.5 Hours	Most often 2 practices of roughly an hour
U10	2	2 to 3 Hours	Usually 2 practices between 60 and 90 minutes
U11	2	2.5 to 3.5 Hours	Usually 2 practices of roughly 90 minutes
U12	2	3 to 4 Hours	Usually 2 practices between 90 minutes and 2 hours
U13	2	4 Hours	Usually 2 practices of 2 hours
	1	2 Hours	Reduced to 1 practice weekly once SMS soccer begins
U14	2	4 Hours	Usually 2 practices of 2 hours
	1	2 Hours	Reduced to 1 practice weekly once SMS soccer begins

Particular nights that practices are held are selected by the coach, within the constraints of field availability. Practices and games are most often held at Springbrook Field (U9 and U10) or

Peterson Field (U11 and above). Other fields around town are used based upon availability. Practice schedules often need to change based upon field availability. School sports teams and Community Services have priority for field space and times.

## League Play

Beginning in 2006, Soccer Maine has restructured away from “districts” which assigned towns and their teams to a given district based upon geography. While the new structure takes geography into consideration, four leagues will be formed each year for a given age group such that it divides all the teams competing into equal numbers per league. In some exceptional situations, more or fewer than four leagues will be formed. It is impossible to determine in advance which towns and teams will form a league. For planning purposes, we ask our parents and players to realize a league game may mean travel as far south as Kittery and Eliot, as far north as Waterville and Bangor, as far east as Rockland, or as far west as Farmington. As a general rule, younger age groups have many teams, so leagues are formed from groupings that are generally closer to Scarborough. At some age groups such as U13, there may only be a handful of teams playing in Maine so the league may stretch as far as the teams involved may be based.

Leagues will not be known until all the clubs declare and commit teams. Soccer Maine will then organize these teams into leagues and appoint a league commissioner to perform scheduling and league oversight activities. Leagues will not be published along with schedules until mid to late August. The league commissioner will set the league schedule, and the host club will secure fields and determine the time and order of games to played. The SSC will not have any control over league opponents, dates games are played, or the location for the game.

League games will be played on Sunday, with Saturday reserved for “open” scheduling by your team’s coach. Normally you will play either one game, or three teams will play each other in a “round robin” format. Most clubs attempt to schedule games late enough on Sunday afternoon, but there will be instances of games being played on Sunday morning which may conflict with some religious observations. For additional games, your coach will arrange those with other teams directly based upon mutually open Saturday dates. Teams should not play more than two games in a single day, except in the rarest of circumstances. Game schedules are generally not firm until the end of August, and are subject to change during the season based upon a variety of factors outside the control of the SSC. Your coach or team administrator will keep you informed of these changes.

Because of the short season, travel soccer games are usually played in rain or shine. Games will be delayed, postponed or cancelled when weather or field conditions are deemed dangerous by the coaches, such as when lightning is present. For tournaments, the tournament director will make the determination to play a game or not. For league play, the home coach will make the determination to play a game or not.

At the U9 and U10 age groups, all tournaments will be played in Maine and should not require overnight travel. At U11 and higher age groups, we allow coaches to select certain tournaments outside of Maine. These tournaments may involve meals, hotel stays, and other incidental expenses that are in addition to the club fees. The head coach determines which tournaments a given team will play.

For U9 through U11 age groups, the fall season ends with a state-sponsored “festival” tournament in late October. For U12 through U14 age groups, the fall season ends with competition in the state-sponsored championship playoffs, usually the first weekend in November.

Directions to all fields will be posted to the SSC web site under “Locations” as soon as they are available.

## Registration Process

All players must be registered to play soccer for the SSC. The registration process is done annually, and all players, including returning players, must complete the necessary forms.

Registration is done prior to tryouts, usually in the month of May. Registration information will be posted to the SSC web site. The SSC will normally also advertise the registration information in local newspapers such as *The Current* and *The Leader*. We have also mailed and/or e-mailed past players, and placed information in the “red folders” through the Scarborough school system.

Players must complete a registration form, and provide a photocopy of their birth certificate as proof of age. Please make sure to give us a photocopy of the birth certificate, as this must be retained by the SSC and is not returned at the end of the season. Additional paperwork, such as uniform sizing information, may also be needed. All of the forms needed for registration will be available from the Registrar for the SSC, and also from the SSC web site.

Payment of the player registration fee is also required at registration time. The player registration fee is determined annually by the Board of Directors, and will be communicated along with the date, time, and location for the annual registration.

## Tryout Process

All players must tryout to be placed on an SSC team. Tryouts will be held at a time and place communicated by the SSC Board of Directors at the time of registration. This information will also be posted to the SSC web site.

Tryouts serve the primary purpose of allowing an open and fair evaluation of players for placement on a team. The Coaching Director oversees the tryout process. Each player is assigned a unique number within their age group. The players are evaluated upon a number of core soccer skills, including but not limited to shooting, passing, dribbling, defending, field presence, confidence, decision making, and overall athleticism. Players are evaluated within their own age group and gender, against an age-appropriate set of criteria. Evaluators assign an overall score based upon the tryout for each player. The scores are confidential, and are only shared with the Coaching Director, the Registrar, and the SSC President. Scores are not shared with parents or players.

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The evaluators are determined by the Coaching Director. As a general rule, the evaluators are comprised of the SSC coaches assigned to this age group and a selected set of independent evaluators. Independent evaluators must not have a child playing in the age group being evaluated, and are comprised of persons selected by the Coaching Director from:

- High school coaches (Scarborough or other area schools)
- Any D-licensed (advanced license) coaches
- E-licensed coaches in the SSC with 4 or more years of experience
- MLS coaches or other soccer professionals

The tryouts are normally held in early June. The number of days for the tryout, and the specific drills run, will be determined by the SSC Coaching Director collaboratively with the coaches for the specific age group. Players are expected to attend all tryout sessions, unless the date is indicated as a “make-up” tryout session.

## Previous Play Evaluation

Parents of returning players frequently ask if evaluation based upon play from last fall can be used to create a comparison. While this approach has some merits, it has some significant drawbacks as well. Therefore, quality of play outside of the tryout evaluations is generally not considered as input to the team selection process. The primary reasons for this approach are:

- Previous play doesn't allow new players to the club an “equal” and fair evaluation
- Previous play doesn't reward players to continue play during winter and spring seasons, and commit fully to improve their skills
- A single coach is involved in evaluating previous play, limiting the benefits of multiple objective evaluators judging skill

The approach of conducting a tryout is consistent with the experience used extensively in youth sports, and prepares our players for future tryouts that are done at Middle School, High School, and other competitive soccer levels.

## Excused Absence from Tryouts

As stated previously, all players must tryout. In very limited instances, the Coaching Director or SSC President may waive participation in a tryout. Normally, this is only done for an existing player in the club when their ability can be objectively judged based upon past play by several coaches. Examples when an excused absence may be granted include:

- Temporary medical situation preventing tryouts, such as broken limb, with a note from a medical doctor indicating a restriction on physical activity
- Prolonged absence or inability to attend tryouts due to unique travel circumstances

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It is important to receive permission to be excused from the tryouts prior to the tryouts occurring. The SSC Web Site lists the Coaching Director and President including contact information to make a formal request. The SSC is under no obligation to excuse players from a tryout if the request is received after the tryout date, even if the reason is valid.

Excused absences may impact a player's placement on a team. As the player was unable to attend the objective evaluation process, the player's placement on a team is at the sole discretion of the appropriate age group coaches in conjunction with the Coaching Director.

## Team Selection Process

The SSC strives to complete the process of placing players on particular teams (team selection) within two weeks after of the last tryout date. Team selection is conducted by the coaches within a given age group, the SSC Coaching Director, and facilitated by appropriate SSC Board of Director members. Facilitation will be structured so that should a Board member have a son or daughter in that particular age group, a different Board member without a conflict of interest will be appointed to facilitate.

Team selection is a confidential process, and the evaluations and general discussions are not shared with the players or the parents. Parents concerned about the process may broadly discuss the process and philosophy, and the associated evaluation of their particular son or daughter.

Team selections need to be approved by the SSC Coaching Director, and must pass a Board of Directors vote at the next scheduled meeting. The Board of Directors will normally intervene in team selection only if the philosophy or policies of the SSC have not been properly followed.

The team selection process is at the sole discretion of the Scarborough Soccer Club, and all decisions are final. Requests to change teams, once selections are made, are normally not granted. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the coaches involved, the SSC Coaching Director, and the SSC President.

## Selection Philosophy

Team selection is never a simple process, and greatly depends upon the overall number of players, the grouping of players by age and gender, the depth of talent within the age group, the distribution of coaches, and several other factors.

Team selection is guided by the following direction from the Board of Directors.

- Team selection should be done in such a manner as to avoid cuts as much as is reasonable. As a result, some teams may be comprised of players from more than one age group as necessary.
- Teams should first try to be formed from within their own age and gender to the greatest degree possible, short of requiring a substantial number of cuts.
- The SSC will strive to field at least one Challenge Cup team in the U12, U13, and U14 age groups for both boys and girls brackets.
- At the U9, U10, and U11 age groups, multiple teams of the same age and gender will be selected to make them approximately “even” based upon tryout evaluation scores.
- At the U12, U13, and U14 age groups, multiple teams of the same age and gender will be generally selected based upon ability as determined by the tryout evaluation scores. The SSC reserves the right to form balanced teams, or multiple Challenge Cup teams, if the number of players and overall talent warrant doing so. This decision will be made by the SSC Coaching Director with input from the age group coaches and SSC Board of Directors as appropriate.

While it’s normal to expect players and coaches develop a bond, the SSC makes no commitments to keep players together beyond the current season. In particular, at the transition from the last

“non-results oriented” age bracket at U11, and the first “results oriented” age bracket at U12, many players will change coaches. This can often be a difficult situation for some players and parents to deal with, depending upon the situation. The reasons for shifting formats are grounded in research done by US Youth Soccer, consistency with Soccer Maine and many clubs of similar size to Scarborough, the ability to schedule equally talented opponents, and consistency with the Middle School team selection processes. By grouping players of like talent, coaches may focus practice time on more advanced skills and soccer tactics for the stronger players, and focus on fundamentals and intermediate skills for less advanced players.

Team selection is committed for the fall season only, and players must tryout again every fall and repeat the team selection process. It is expected that certain players will progress more quickly, and accordingly be evaluated higher the following year. Likewise, certain players appear strong at U10 but fail to progress quickly, and accordingly may be regrouped in future years based upon evaluations. This approach rewards the competitive player that wishes to progress and improve their skills, while allowing most players the opportunity to play a challenging set of opponents with teammates of roughly equal capabilities.

## Coach’s Child

In instances where the SSC selected head coach and one assistant coach have a child in the age group they are coaching, that child **may be** placed with the coach regardless of tryout score. In the case the SSC asks the coach to “coach-up” one age group, their child is automatically placed up one age group as well. **All coaches children are expected to try out and compete for spots on teams to the greatest extent possible. The SSC reserves the right to place coach’s kids on teams regardless of score to achieve the overall objective of the best possible soccer instruction for the greatest number of players.**

## Cuts

The SSC strives to avoid cuts where possible, but unfortunately we cannot avoid cuts in all instances.

The SSC has been fortunate to be able to avoid cuts of qualified players at the U9, U10, and U11 age groups for the past few years. It is the Scarborough Soccer Club’s strong desire to place all committed players at this age group on a team. Many of these players have the potential to develop into quality soccer players, and choosing the future “stronger” and “weaker” players at this young an age has proven to be a flawed exercise.

While in an ideal situation no cuts would occur, we have had to make some very difficult choices in the past at U12, U13, and U14 age groups. The SSC has defined four situations when cuts may need to occur.

1. **Numbers:** The number of players in a given age group and gender exceed the Soccer Maine maximums for a team, but are too few to field an additional team. Further, the additional players cannot be reasonably combined with excess players at an adjacent age group to field a mixed-age team. For your reference, the following are the current recommended and maximum team roster sizes dictated by Soccer Maine.

Age	Players On Field	Recommended Roster Size	Maximum Roster Size
U9	6	10	12
U10	6	10	12
U11	8	12	14
U12	11	16	18
U13	11	16	18
U14	11	16	18

2. **Coaches and Resources:** The SSC is unable to appoint an appropriate licensed coach, and no acceptable candidates willing to become licensed step forward to coach a team. Similarly, if the SSC grows and becomes constrained by factors other than coaches, such as field space to practice upon and host home games or financial considerations, then the number of teams may need to be limited and cuts may have to be applied.
3. **Behavior:** A given player demonstrates behavioral, attendance, or commitment problems such that including the player becomes a detriment to the other players on the team. If the player actions diminish the experience for the other players in the program, then the player may be cut regardless of talent level. A player whose behavior requires constant discipline from a coach, or is constantly late or absent (unexcused) from practices and games hurts the other committed players on the team. A cut for this reason needs to be approved by the Coaching Director and be based upon specific evidence offered by the appropriate age group coaches.
4. **Risk:** If playing travel soccer represents a credible and significant risk of injury to themselves or other players, that player may be cut. Despite many notions to the contrary, soccer is a contact sport, and safety is a paramount concern of all SSC coaches. If the coach cannot reasonably feel certain he can consistently and safely play a given player, they may be best served by soccer opportunities outside of the SSC. A cut for this reason needs to be approved by the Coaching Director and be based upon specific evidence offered by the appropriate age group coaches.

If cuts are required, the priority order to determine the players cut shall be:

1. Individual players that are cut for reasons #3 (Behavior) and #4 (Risk) above. These are the first cuts to be made.
2. Any players from outside of Scarborough in the age group that cuts would apply. Preference will be given to Scarborough kids regardless of talent. The exception to this rule shall be the situation where a player from outside of Scarborough has played for the SSC for three or more years consecutively. In this situation, they will be treated as if they are a Scarborough resident.
3. The tryout evaluation for that age group. Those players scoring the lowest (weakest) in the tryout evaluations will be cut. Previous involvement and participation with the club shall not be a factor in determining who is cut.

Please note that if cuts are required in an age group, then absolutely no “playing-up” requests will be allowed regardless of talent level.

## Special Requests

Frequently parents will make “special requests” to have their son or daughter play with another child, with a particular coach, or grouped for car pooling reasons. These requests are flatly declined. Parents who are making commitments to travel soccer based upon the expectation that

such requests will be honored are likely to be disappointed at some point in the team selection process. We have established criteria for team selection as described previously, and these special requests create undue complications. As a result, any such requests are not considered during team selection.

Parents who have multiple children of the same gender in an age group may request to have the siblings play together. In the instance where team selection is based upon ability, the siblings will be placed on the team of the lower evaluated sibling at tryouts.

## Playing Up in Age

It is the Scarborough Soccer Club's policy to place players in their appropriate age group as much as possible. As a club, we recognize special situations will exist. There are two instances when a player may play outside of their appropriate age group. One instance is when the SSC Board of Directors requires it to implement our policies, and the other instance is a very limited situation when parents of a player may request it. Playing up outside of these situations is prohibited.

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### Board of Directors Initiated Play-Up

As noted previously, it is club policy to avoid cuts where reasonable. The primary means to accomplish this is to form teams from multiple age groups when the number of players trying out is too great for a given number of teams, but too few for an additional team. In this instance, some SSC players will be offered a spot on an older age group team. This will be determined by the age group coaches, the SSC Coaching Director, and approved by the Board of Directors as described previously.

In the situation where players are asked to play-up to help avoid incremental cuts, there are several situations to consider.

- At U12 and U13 age groups, the players that are asked to play up (to U13 and U14 respectively) shall be:
  - If forming the most competitive team at the older age group, the first players to move up would be those players that are “grade-appropriate” in the younger age group. Grade-appropriate players will usually have first order of preference. If additional players need to be moved up, the SSC Coaching Director shall work with the coaches in each age group to move players such that both age groups can field competitive teams.
  - If a competitive team already exists at the older age group, the players that move up shall be the players that would otherwise have been cut from the program. This allows the SSC to group players of approximately like ability, consistent with the player development philosophy.
- At U9, U10, and U11 age groups, the players that are asked to play up (to U10, U11, and U12 respectively) shall be:
  - First priority to players who are “grade-appropriate.”
  - Second priority to players recommended by the coaching staff, based upon a variety of factors including tryout evaluation score, athleticism and physical size, emotional ability to play in older age group, and consistency with player development philosophy.

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In general, the SSC strives to group teams such that U13 and U14 are grouped together, U11 and U12 are grouped together, and U9 and U10 are grouped together. This is desirable for consistency with other clubs, limiting conflicts with the Middle School soccer season, ability to find suitable opponents for matches, and adherence to Soccer Maine recommendations. However, the overriding consideration is the number of players that register and tryout, which the SSC cannot directly control.

Playing-up based upon team selection is committed for the current season only. Where possible, players will be placed back into age-appropriate play if numbers permit.

The other situation where the Board of Directors may initiate a play-up situation is to support coaching assignments that will best serve the club overall. For example, if the SSC has excess coaching talent in one age group, and could better use some of that coaching talent at an older age group, the Board of Directors may appoint one of the coaches, and the coach's son or daughter, to play-up. This is consistent with the player development mission and our objectives to apply the best coaching talent we can find in the club.

## Parent Initiated Play-Up

There are two situations where parents may directly request the opportunity to play-up one age group. As with all play-up requests, these will only be granted if roster space exists and accommodating the request will not create additional cuts with the SSC. Also, requests are granted for the current season only, and are re-evaluated every year. These requests must be identified at the time of player registration, or risks forfeiting the request.

**Deleted:** Finally, the player involved needs to attend both tryout sessions (current age and play-up age).

- **Grade-Appropriate Exception:** In certain instances, a younger classmate of other players may have a birth date after August 1<sup>st</sup> but be in the same grade as the vast majority of players in the older age group. If this is the case, the parents may request their son or daughter play-up one age group if that places the player "in grade". This must be noted as a special request on the registration form. Requests to play-up received after tryouts are held will not be honored.

Grade-appropriate exceptions will be granted, if roster space permits, automatically. This exception is supported by the evidence that friendships are very important in youth sports, the development of soccer skills appropriate by grade, and the avoidance of school conflicts such as Middle School soccer, school concerts, and other grade specific functions.

**Deleted:** These exceptions are granted regardless of evaluation tryout score.

Team selection of grade-appropriate exceptions will be based upon the evaluation score from the age group they will be placed in for the coming season. Grade-appropriate players are subject to the team placement, cut, and other policies as may apply to the group they are trying out in. Players who are cut will not be placed back down on teams in younger age groups unless doing so does not impact those players trying out in that age group.

- **Multiple Players in Family Exception:** Travel soccer has significant time commitments, and places some hardships on families which have multiple players in the club, especially when there are three or more children involved. Where two siblings are of the same gender and are playing one age group apart, the parents may request the younger sibling play-up with the older sibling. This must be noted as a special request on the registration form. Requests to pair siblings received after tryouts are held will not be honored.

Sibling exceptions will be granted, if roster space permits, with the approval of the coach involved and the SSC Coaching Director. These exceptions are influenced by tryout evaluation score. This exception is supported by the hardship families with multiple children have in making the commitments to multiple teams, and might not otherwise participate in the SSC.

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Sibling exceptions are limited to playing up in the U10, and U11 age groups, and are not permitted at the U12, U13, and U14 age groups when many other considerations come into play.

**Deleted:** Generally s

**Deleted:** more easily granted at

**Deleted:** U9,

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Please note that these are the only two situations where parents may directly request to “play-up”. The SSC Board of Directors reserves the right to limit or deny the ability to play-up in order to achieve our overall objectives.

## Required Equipment & Uniforms

Each club member is responsible to bring his or her equipment to practices and games.

As part of your club fees, the SSC provides:

- Uniform (jersey, shorts, 1 pair of socks, including player last name on uniform), which is the player's to keep after the season is completed.
- Team soccer balls for practices and games (retained by the coach)
- Goalkeeper jersey (retained by the coach)
- Practice and game equipment such as pinnies, cones, corner flags, etc.

Players must provide the following, as a condition for participation in games and practices.

Failure to supply proper equipment may result in inability of your child to practice or play in a game.

- Soccer cleats. Cleats must conform to US Youth Soccer specifications, and cannot be "metal" cleats. Most sporting good stores can guide you to appropriate cleats. Please note that soccer cleats differ from baseball/softball cleats, and for the safety of the players involved only proper soccer cleats are permitted.
- Shin guards
- Water bottle(s)

Further, the SSC highly recommends the following equipment. While we strongly recommend this equipment, none is a condition of playing in practices or games.

- Mouth guard. Soccer is a contact sport and a mouth guard is recommended.
- Soccer ball of age appropriate size for use at home. Age groups U9 through U12 play with a size 4 soccer ball. U13 and U14 play with a size 5 soccer ball. Most sporting good stores can help you locate the appropriate size.
- Sunscreen, best applied 30 minutes prior to the start of the game or practice.
- Bug repellent

The following equipment is optional, but made available by the club as a convenience for our members. Purchase of the following equipment is not required to play or practice.

- Extra socks
- SSC warm-up uniforms
- Goalkeeper gloves
- Soccer bag or backpack

As with all equipment, it is a good idea to ensure your player's name is placed on all items that could get lost or look alike. SSC's lost and found is a specified box located in the SSC shed at Peterson field. If you find an item, please turn in to your coach who will place it in the lost and found box. If you lose an item, please see your coach to get access to look in the lost and found box. SSC is not responsible for lost items.

## Code of Conduct

Parents, coaches, fans and players must abide by the Scarborough Soccer Club “Code of Conduct” as outlined in this handbook. As a member of Soccer Maine, all of the above are bound by the Soccer Maine Zero Tolerance Policy. While the SSC does not require parents and players to sign a Code of Conduct statement, we do expect all who attend SSC functions including but not limited to practices, games, meetings, and functions to abide by the policy.

## Soccer Maine Zero Tolerance Policy

The Soccer Maine Zero Tolerance Policy can be found on the Soccer Maine web site at:

<http://www.soccermaine.com/04zerotolerancepolicy.pdf>

In the event of a conflict between the Soccer Maine policies and the SSC policies, the Soccer Maine policies will prevail. While written in language that directs this to coaches, the policy is broadly adopted for everyone that attends a game.

## SSC Code of Conduct

The SSC exists for the express purpose of providing an opportunity for the youth of Scarborough to experience a high quality program of competitive soccer. Soccer, and all other sports in which children become involved, enable our youth to experience many important lessons which will help throughout their adult lives. The adults involved, whether as spectators or coaches, have a critical role in assuring that these experiences for our youth are positive and appropriate. The adults, knowingly or unknowingly, serve as role models for the children. If the players witness a fan berating a referee over a missed call, they perceive this to be acceptable behavior. It is not.

1. The SSC will not tolerate behavior which brings the club, our teams, or the game of soccer into disrepute. To this end, all must abide by the following minimum standards at all times:
  - a. Be respectful towards teammates, opponents, coaches and referees. Conduct yourself with honor, dignity, and self-control. Expressly forbidden are taunting opponents, hazing teammates, verbal abuse of referees, or any other behavior that demonstrates a lack of sportsmanship.
  - b. Players should play the game for the fun of the game, the challenge, and the chance to show their best. Be gracious when you lose and generous when you win.
  - c. Accept decisions of coaches and referees with class and dignity. Believe in their judgment and honesty. Accept that mistakes are a part of the game, and a learning process for all involved.
2. The SSC expressly forbids the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products at all events. Further, the use of some of these products on school grounds where many of our practices and games are held may be illegal in many instances.
3. Parents have a great impact on the degree of fun for the players. Focus on positive reinforcement of the players’ efforts. Placing undue focus on the short term success of their child undermines the long-term player development focus the SSC has. Applaud

good plays by both teams. Remember, without worthy opponents from other towns, travel soccer would not be the experience it is for your child.

4. Please let the coaches do the coaching. Frenetic screaming of instructions from parents on the sidelines, no matter how well intentioned, only serves to confuse and panic the player most of the time. Our coaches are well trained, and will help the players learn the game at an appropriate pace. Remember that making mistakes and forming good “soccer judgment” are important aspects of player development. Please limit comments from the sidelines to appropriate words of encouragement for both teams.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

Players who violate one or more of these expectations shall be disciplined by game officials, that player’s coach, and, in extreme situations, the Board of Directors. Penalties may include forfeiture of playing time for the remainder of the game, having to sit out the subsequent next game, written apologies, or any other reasonable punishment that demonstrates the behavior cannot be tolerated. Violations severe enough to warrant a “red card” during a game, or two “yellow cards” in the same game, shall have their violations reviewed by the Coaching Director who shall validate the penalty. Players should expect any offense severe enough to warrant ejection will result in sitting out the next SSC game.

Players who are repeat violators of the code of conduct will be brought before an SSC Disciplinary Committee which shall be formed at the discretion of the Board of Directors and shall be chaired by the SSC Director of Coaching. The Disciplinary Committee has the power to impose greater penalties up to and including immediate dismissal from the SSC. Any player dismissed from the SSC forfeits all fees paid, and must sit out at least one full season prior to applying for reinstatement. The Board of Directors, or Disciplinary Committee if convened for this purpose, must approve any application for reinstatement.

Parents who do not abide by these expectations may be disciplined by game officials, the appropriate SSC, and, in extreme situations, the Board of Directors. Parents may be warned by any of the above or may be required to leave the field by the referee, the coach, or any Board member of SSC. In the event the parent is required to leave the field, play is stopped until the parent leaves the premises. Failure to leave the premises results in forfeiture of the game. All situations where parents are required to leave the field must be reported to the SSC Director of Coaching.

Parents who are repeat violators of the code of conduct will be brought before an SSC Disciplinary Committee which shall be formed at the discretion of the Board of Directors and shall be chaired by the SSC Director of Coaching. The Disciplinary Committee has the power to impose greater penalties up to and including probation periods, banishment from all future SSC games and events, or immediate dismissal from the SSC of the associated player. Any player dismissed from the SSC forfeits all fees paid. Parents banished from all SSC events and games must sit out at least one full season prior to applying for reinstatement. The Board of Directors, or Disciplinary Committee if convened for this purpose, must approve any application for reinstatement.

All decisions of Disciplinary Committee are final.

## **Appropriate Behavior**

Many times a parent or player will believe a referee, an opponent, or an opposing parent is not behaving consistently with the rules of the game or the spirit of our Code of Conduct. The proper channel to address these situations is to raise your concern first and foremost with the coach of your team. This can be done prior to the game, during the half-time break if your coach permits it, or after the game. The coach in turn will work with the appropriate Board or Director personnel to address the situation. For example, the Referee Assignors would address concerns with the quality of officiating for all home games. Concerns with opposing coaches would be addressed through the President of the SSC with the corresponding president of the opposing club. In extreme situations where the safety of our players is a legitimate concern of the coaching staff, our coaches have the latitude to stop playing a game and pull the players from the field if that is appropriate.

If the parent or the player has a concern with their coaching staff, then the concern should be brought directly to the attention of the SSC Director of Coaching.

It is not acceptable for players, parents, coaches, or spectators to “take matters into their own hands” in any game situation.

## Scarborough Lobster Classic

Each year in August, the SSC sponsors a unique “4-v-4” tournament, The Lobster Classic. The tournament has been a big success for the club, and accomplishes several objectives. First, it affords the players in our club the opportunity to experience a unique and fun tournament. The Lobster Classic is the only 4v4 tournament in the State of Maine, and it stresses ball possession, passing and shooting accuracy, movement, and foot skills. Second, the Lobster Classic is the primary fundraising opportunity to help offset the expenses for the club. Local businesses become tournament sponsors and tournament shirts and other items are also available for purchase by all attendees. Third, the Lobster Classic helps to prepare our teams for the coming season, and provides an opportunity for our kids to bond with one another and their coaches in a festival atmosphere. Teams come from all over New England to play in this tournament, and the skill level and competition is extremely high setting a bar for competition that prepares us well for the fall season.

Parents of club members are **required** to help support this event by performing an array of duties which may include parking attendants, souvenir or food sales, field setup, etc. This is a firm requirement of the club, and failure to comply can result in removal of the player from the program. As this event considerably defrays the SSC costs for all participants, the parents or guardians of each SSC player must perform a volunteer activity as designated by the coach or team administrator. The team will be assigned a responsibility area, and the coordinator typically will send around a sign-up sheet with required responsibilities and time slots to be filled in. Time slots are normally arranged such that parents of boys in the club have volunteer activities during the girls’ games, and parents of girls in the club have volunteer activities during the boys’ games.

Your coach will provide you with more information about the Lobster Classic as the tournament approaches. More information about the Lobster Classic can be found on the SSC Web Site.

## Tournament & Season Expectations

Every season is different, and the SSC affords our coaches some latitude around practices and scheduling to accommodate their needs. However, the following generalized calendar summary outlines expectations for the fall season.

Month	Age Group	Week	Event	Frequency
August	All	All	Clinics	Twice per week, weekday evenings
	All	Third Week	Team Practices	Twice per week, start date determined by coach
	All	TBD	Lobster Classic	All weekend for one weekend in August
	All	Last	League Games	Two to four games per weekend, as determined by your coach. League play begins last weekend in August.
September	All	Labor Day	Tournament	Labor Day tournament, as chosen by coach for team
	U9-U12	All	Team Practices	Twice per week, time & duration determined by coach
	U13-U14	All	Team Practices	Twice per week, then once per week once Middle School soccer begins
	All	All Weekends	League Games	Two to four games per weekend, as determined by your coach
October	U9-U12	All	Team Practices	Twice per week, time & duration determined by coach
	U13-U14	All	Team Practices	Once per week until Middle School soccer ends, then twice per week
	All	Columbus Day	Tournament	Columbus Day tournament, as chosen by coach for team
	All	Thru Weekend After Columbus Day	League Games	Two to four games per weekend, as determined by your coach
	U9-U11	Late October	State Festival	State tournament signifying the end of the season
	U12-U14	Late October	District Playoffs	Playoffs with other teams in South District to determine which teams advance to States
November	U12-U14	Early November	Challenge & Anthem Cup	State championship weekend, signifying the end of season

While in soccer season, it is expected that the Scarborough Soccer Club is the primary commitment of the player, and every reasonable effort to attend all SSC practices, games, clinics, and events will take precedent over all other non-academic activities.

## Club Fees

The Scarborough Soccer Club is a non-profit organization. Player fees are collected to offset the various costs to operate our program annually. The player fees alone represent approximately two-thirds of the total annual expenses to operate the SSC. The remaining income is derived from operation of the Lobster Classic, hosting of district playoffs and festivals, and the generous donation of corporate sponsors. The finances of the SSC are managed by the Treasurer, and player fees are determined based upon expense expectations to balance the budget. The SSC retains sufficient reserves to maintain operation in the event the 4v4 tournament has to be cancelled or other unexpected events happen.

Club fees are collected at registration. If your child is not offered a spot on a team, you will be refunded in full. The exact fee amount will be determined by the Board of Directors and communicated at registration. Fees must be paid prior to placement on any team or participation in any SSC activity. Scholarships are available for anyone who feels the player registration fee represents a financial burden. It is the SSC's policy to ensure no child is unable to play due solely to financial hardship. Anyone who believes they may require financial assistance to allow their child to play in the SSC should contact any SSC Board member for a confidential financial needs assessment.

The fees help the SSC address our expenses, which include:

- Soccer Maine club and team fees
- Player and coach insurance
- Uniforms
- Soccer balls and associated equipment
- Referee fees
- Tournament fees
- Scarborough Community Services field usage donation
- Field lining and maintenance
- Coaching education and certification courses
- General administrative fees, including mailings, web site fees, etc.
- Soccer clinics and professional coaching assistance
- Advertising, copying, and costs associated with tryouts
- Soccer Maine permits associated with travel out of state
- Participation trophies, awards, and end of season banquet
- Scarborough Soccer Club scholarship award

Anyone interested in becoming an SSC Corporate Sponsor should contact the Treasurer of the SSC.

## Useful Information

### Scarborough Soccer Club

The most useful source of information for parents is the Scarborough Soccer Club web site. The web site will contain the most current information about the season, key contact information, and for most teams the latest game and practice schedules.

Our URL is:

<http://www.eteamz.com/ssc>

The left navigation bar has links to each of the appropriate subcategories for information.

### FIFA

Many parents are new to the rules of soccer, and some of the rules are modified for the younger age groups to support player development objectives. If you have a deep desire to better understand the rules of the game, you may go to Federation Internationale de Football Association, or FIFA, which is the worldwide soccer governing body. The current rules of the game can be found on their web site.

The FIFA URL is:

<http://www.fifa.com/en/index.html>

Rules of the game (2004):

[http://www.fifa.com/fifa/handbook/laws/2004/LOTG2004\\_e.pdf](http://www.fifa.com/fifa/handbook/laws/2004/LOTG2004_e.pdf)

### Soccer Maine

Likewise, the Soccer Maine web site has many useful links for parents, including a link to locate all of the other travel soccer clubs with an online web site and a document that list the “rule modifications” appropriate for U11, U10, and U9 age groups.

The URL for Soccer Maine is:

<http://www.soccermaine.com>

Online club listing:

<http://www.soccermaine.com/pages/01clubsonline.html>

Rule Modifications:

[http://www.soccermaine.com/01fall\\_laws.pdf](http://www.soccermaine.com/01fall_laws.pdf)

### US Youth Soccer

The URL for US Youth Soccer is:

<http://www.usysa.org/>

## Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Term	Meaning
ODP	Acronym for Olympic Development Program
Olympic Development Program (“ODP”)	A highly competitive level of soccer where players are competing at regional and national levels for spots on the US National team, and ultimately professional or US Olympic Team roster spots.
Premier Soccer (“Premier”)	A year-round level of soccer training and playing against other very committed and talented soccer players, usually on a team formed from the top few players from several area clubs. Travel to out of state tournaments and full participation in a spring league are involved.
SSC	Acronym for Scarborough Soccer Club
Travel Soccer (“Travel”)	The soccer league, affiliated with US Youth Soccer, operated by Soccer Maine and to which Scarborough Soccer Club belongs. Travel has implications that we play other teams from all over the State of Maine and possibly beyond, so travel to games is frequently involved.