

The Transition from In-House to Traveling Soccer

What you need to know as a soccer parent. In FAQ format.

At what age do I consider traveling soccer for my son or daughter?

With MYSAs, traveling soccer begins at the U9 level. Typically that means that your child is in 3rd Grade when thinking about playing U9 soccer for the spring/summer season. The NSA website has the specific birth date information under the "Traveling" tab and under "Age guidelines." The guidelines are set by the MYSAs (Minnesota Youth Soccer Association). Most kids who play traveling start at either U-9 or U-10 but some do start in U-11 or U-12.

What are the major differences between Traveling and In-House soccer?

Beyond the obvious traveling to some games out of town, versus all in town games, the major differences between the two programs can be broken down into four categories: time, cost, expectation and level of play.

Time: Expect more time to be invested in Traveling soccer. In-House time commitment is basically 1 hour, two times a week. Usually traveling teams have several practices or games per week and one or more tournaments encompassing part of a weekend. Throw in travel time to away games and the time commitment grows significantly. For example, NSA looks for its U-9/10 teams to have 10-12 games from mid-May to the end of June. Games would be on either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday. All Northfield teams below U-14 play in the NSA Jesse James tournament on the last Saturday in June. Generally, the U-9/10 teams also each play one other tournament in May or June which usually consists of a 1 day Saturday tournament that has 3 shortened games. We expect teams at this level to practice once or twice a week for 60-75 minutes so that your child is playing soccer 2 or 3 times per week.

Cost: In-House soccer typically costs around \$100 for registration, which includes a full uniform. The traveling program begins with registration fees at \$210 for U9/10 and goes up from there. A separate uniform fee also applies ever several years. In 2013 the uniform fee was an additional \$35. The total fee for the traveling program compares favorably to surrounding MYSAs clubs.

Expectations: The In-House program is strictly a recreational program. The stated goals of In-House are: to introduce soccer to kids, ensure everyone has fun, and get some good exercise in the sun. The traveling program ramps up the expectations. The goals are to get in depth training in soccer and to gain a deeper understanding of the game, while still having fun. Games are competitive and players are expected to take training seriously and need to be present at nearly all activities.

Level of play: In that the expectations for traveling are competitive play and opponents are expecting competitive play, the level of skill and effort is higher in traveling soccer. Parents and kids alike will notice the jump up in level of play. Coaches are training children for this level of participation as reflected in the higher level of time commitment.

When is the traveling season versus the In-House Season and can my child play both?

The traveling season is typically early May through early July although practice time may begin in late April. In-House starts in early June and runs through the end of July. We have found that kids usually play one season or the other, but there is no reason a child couldn't play both, except that during the overlap period (mostly June) there could be scheduling conflicts.

How do I know if my child is ready for the Traveling program?

As a parent, you need to take your cues from your child. If he or she is excited about the expanded time commitment and the more competitive style of play, the traveling program would be appropriate. As mentioned above, there is a jump up in the level of play, but children with the interest in gaining more knowledge about the game of soccer should be encouraged to participate. Particularly U9/10 level coaches are aware of the transition to the traveling game from In-House and can help guide your children through the adjustment.

Fall Traveling Soccer, give it a try?

The Fall Traveling season begins in late August for U9/10 – 14. Most teams hold practices 1 – 2 times per week, playing 6 weekend games, in September, early October. Registration opens in late July, early August. The fee is typically less than \$100 plus the cost of the uniform. This is a great way to see if your player and family are ready to commit to a Traveling team.

When should I be on the lookout for Traveling Soccer registration?

Watch the NSA website for specific dates. Starting in 2013 we will be holding Evaluations/Registration in the Fall like most other MN clubs. Fall Traveling Registration will open in late July, early August. New beginning with the Summer 2014 Season, registration for Summer Traveling will also open in July. Late registrants will continue to be accepted if space is available.

Are there tryouts and cuts for the Traveling Program?

Please refer to our Team Formation Policy for details. But in general terms, we do our best in placing all eligible players on a team appropriate for their skillset. Unfortunately there are occasions where we have more players interested in playing than space on rosters. Evaluations are used to determine which players are placed on the team and which ones aren't.

What if I have further questions and want to talk with someone?

Please contact the Inhouse or Traveling Coordinators. Contact information can be found on the website under Board Information.