

Player Participation Policies within Xcel Futbol Club

Player Selection

All REGISTERED players will participate fully in training. Player selection for tournament play will be based on coaching evaluations of the player pool from training session participation, effectiveness, and objective player skill assessments. Player skill assessments may be conducted through a group of coaches or by an individual coach, under all circumstances the team's registered Head Coach has the sole and final authority for selection of players for their tournament team(s). There are many variables that coaches use to evaluate players for the selection on their team.

Playing Time

Xcel Futbol Club (XFC) leaves the ultimate decisions regarding playing time with the team Head Coach. The Head Coach has final authority regarding who plays, and how much, on a game by game basis. The Club has expectations of playtime in order to support player development and safety. There is a lot going on during games, but the Head Coach is expected to make every effort to follow the guideline policies established by the Club regarding playing time.

It is the policy of the Club that all players who regularly attend practices, are selected to attend tournaments, and fulfill other team obligations should receive no less than the following approximate levels of playing time:

- U9 - U12: Approximately 30% playing time
- U13 and above: There are no playing time minimums.

These levels are an average over the course of the tournament. Factors that should be used to determine playing time are attendance, effort, attitude, skill and effectiveness.

Coaches will seek opportunities to offer game experience to developing players as appropriate to their team and a given tournament situation. Players or Parents who have any questions or concerns regarding playing time should please follow the guidelines prescribed under "Handling playtime disputes" in the Conflict Resolution section.

Please note that in order for your child to have the playing time policies apply to them, your child must:

- Arrive to practice and games promptly at the time directed by the Team Coach,
- Attend practice regularly,
- Be committed to the team (make attendance at practices and games a high priority),

- Behave respectfully to all teammates, coaches, opposing players and parents and officials at practices and games, and not be disruptive at practice.

Rationale - some XFC teams are developmental in nature, especially at the younger ages, and players gain valuable developmental opportunities within the game atmosphere. It is expected that players be given every opportunity to continue their development within the playtime structure. However, many XFC teams compete at the highest levels, especially at the older ages, and the coach may need to carefully balance the need for playing time with the competitive requirements presented in a game day situation. The highest levels of youth soccer demand that a team's core players play large sections of the game.

All XFC coaches are asked to use their best judgment and not forget the player's feelings and self-esteem. A team player who is likely to play less than his/her teammates will be far more likely to understand and accept that role if it is explained ahead of time and the player shown that they are indeed important to the team's success. The older players are more aware of their own development relative to their teammates. These players can be especially conscious of their weaknesses during a tight match; prioritizing team success over their own playtime interests. The younger the team the more likely that the coach will need to keep in mind that players need to play to develop. The older the team, the more likely the coach will need to balance the individual player's need for game experience with "team success" considerations. Parents should encourage their child to communicate openly with their coach, and be understanding about the sometimes delicate balance a coach maintains within the dynamics of the team. Coaches recognize the game is the greatest teacher and will seek appropriate opportunities to use games to test player development. XFC takes advantage of games which present appropriate times to 'even out' inequities which may be the result of games played under extreme competition.

All XFC players are given maximum opportunity to earn (re-earn) playing time, developing their personal and technical abilities during training.

Guest Players

XFC coaches may include guest players from the Alliance Clubs on a tournament roster. When Alliance guests are rostered to an XFC team, the Coach will incorporate Alliance athletes into the team as one of our own players; just as our Alliance partners do for our players guesting. Players should expect the Coach to consider the following when developing rosters for travel tournaments.

- 1) Registered XFC players should get at least two travel tournaments to help advance their skills and abilities per season. If a player's level of development does not lead to at least 2 conventional travel opportunities, the coach will work with Club leadership early in the season to find alternative venues for the player to experience appropriate game

opportunities.

2) Players should expect to travel with players from their assigned team roster, sister XFC team registered players, and guest players. Guest players are sought from the Alliance prior to seeking players from other Clubs. When rostering players for a travel event, coaches build competitive squads AND develop players who are ready for competitive experience. The Coach will seek to reward players who use the game of soccer to strive, to test their mastery, and those who show a willingness to work hard and to persevere. Therefore, if a roster cannot be filled using (first) the assigned XFC team roster, (second) a sister XFC teams registered players then (third), the Coach may seek guest players from the Alliance. More than 3 guests on any tournament roster is very unlikely but may occur with Club approval.

Attendance

XFC players are expected to attend their team's training sessions. Coaches are expected to be attentive to each player's attendance and communicate proactively with players who are not meeting their expectation for training participation for the good of the team and club.

Rationale - Playing club soccer with XFC is a commitment. The players and coaches are a team, relying on each other. The players who regularly attend practice must be rewarded for their efforts.

Age and Gender Appropriate Policy

The XFC believes that most players will develop better at their age appropriate level and gender than at an age level above. However, the club recognizes that, although rare, some special personal hardships exist; and some talented players may exist who are physically and psychologically ready to be considered for the next age level within the club's competitive team structure. If an under-age player will displace a promising age appropriate player, the player will not be approved to play on the next age level team. In other words, an age appropriate player that shows promise as a developing soccer player cannot be displaced by an under-age player. In this case, the under-age player will be invited, and required, to play at their age appropriate level. If by playing up in the next age level the player leaves the age appropriate team without sufficient numbers to field a viable team, the under-age player will be invited, and required, to play at their age appropriate level. However, the Club will look at the possibility of 'dual rostering' any player with interest. Dual rostering allows the player to be registered to two teams. It further requires the player to play and practice with the age appropriate team first, but will permit them to play and practice with the next age level team as scheduling permits.

As is the case with age appropriateness, the US Soccer Federation also groups players by gender. Female players are permitted on boys teams without changing the

classification of the team as a male squad. Male players however, change a girls team classification when rostered with female players. To ensure opportunities for both genders, boys will be rostered with boys and girls with girls. Exceptions will be considered as described for age appropriate exceptions below; in short when requested and approved by the Club, or as needed to field players in a particular tournament.

The athlete who wishes to play at the next level or alternative gender may initiate consideration for playing up by contacting the Club President through the player's on-age coach (parents may do this for younger ages). If the request is made to address a personal hardship affecting the player's ability to participate on-age, the President will consult the Board for decision. If the request is made because the player's level of development justifies playing up, the President will arrange for the player to try out with both the next age level team and the age appropriate team. The coaches of both teams will observe the player to determine if he/she is among the prospective starters for the next age level team and one of the strongest players of the age appropriate team. If the player finishes within the top 5 of their age appropriate team and within the starting 8 of the next age level, the player will be considered for playing-up.

Playing up may also occur due to the needs of the Club to round out teams and get groups of players into appropriate levels of play. There are some situations where the club will ask a player or a small group of players to play up if it makes the overall numbers for the teams more favorable. An under-age player may be asked to play up on the next age level team when it is deemed he/she has clearly demonstrated exceptional play on the age appropriate team the previous season. The Club will always attempt to field a team at each age group and keep as many kids playing as possible. In the event there is not a team in a particular age group and a team is formed combining multiple age groups, the younger players are not considered to be "playing up" as described in this policy. Finally, if after try outs, a team is still not full, the team's coaches may consider younger players for their team ONLY if the age appropriate team is full. These players can only be considered with the approval of the President.

Other Activities / Commitments

The XFC does not require that its players play soccer exclusively. We believe that athletes should have the ability to experience other things that they may desire to do, including but not limited to other sports. This entire sports endeavor is a youth development activity in the first place. However, the XFC offers a competitive year-round soccer program with a strong developmental focus, and to get the most out of it, attendance is necessary.

Players/families that wish to participate in other events (such as Olympic Development Program), sports or extra-curricular activities need to properly prioritize and manage their time. While we would not prevent players from enjoying other activities, they are highly encouraged to attend their teams practices. If they have another sport to attend

they should make the head coach aware. The XFC strives to offer the proper flexibility which permits players to enjoy this game. Coaches will want to help athletes manage their commitments. Players and Coaches should be given the space to communicate openly about commitments, priorities, and come to mutual understanding.

It should be understood that the development of both individual skills and cohesive teamwork are best achieved through attendance. If conflicts arise with other activities and attendance becomes an issue, coaches may elect to play less qualified but more committed players in lieu of these players more prominently in game situations. This may also occur where the player may make games even after poor attendance. Please consult with the coach and understand the demands before accepting a position on that team.

Potential Participation with the Alliance

The Football Club Alliance, the Futbol Club Ripley, the Soccer Vision Academy, and the Xcel Futbol Club continue to collaborate for the benefit of the region's competitive soccer players; forming a 1,000+ member regional soccer Alliance. Through the member Clubs and through a regional presence, the Alliance significantly broadens the development and game opportunities for our players; far beyond what can be achieved in each separate Club.

Players can expect to be offered opportunities to play with affiliated Clubs throughout the year. Participation is completely voluntary. XFC Coaches will work with players in support of sister Clubs and teams. We ask parents to work with their Team Head Coach for Alliance opportunities in order to assure XFC team priorities are achieved.

The Alliance offers opportunities for players to join regional squads for tournament play. These opportunities are an excellent way to broaden a player's experience and perspective of the game. However, XFC players should not expect to be assigned to Alliance squads long-term.

Conflict Resolution for Parents of Players

Chain of Command

Parent generated grievances or complaints about team matters should follow the chain of command as described below:

- Team Manager of the Team in question
- Head Coach of the Team in question as directed by the Manager, otherwise,
- XFC Club President
- XFC Board of Directors

All grievances and complaints should be resolved in accordance with Club rules, policies and procedures. If no clearly applicable rules, policies or procedures exist, the XFC Board of Directors will make the final determination.

Approaching Coaches

Never approach a coach in anger. Never approach a coach after a game or at any time when you are emotional. This policy is not negotiable, we expect you to respect it. Please wait until the appropriate time where rational discussion is more possible and lashing out less likely (often a 24-hour rule is appropriate here).

Rationale - Rational dialogue is more useful than lashing out. Immediately after a game or any other time when emotions are high are times that will tend to make less useful the discussion and heighten the possibility of an ugly incident (which XFC will not tolerate).

Handling Playing Time Disputes

Playing time is one of the most volatile issues in recreational and club sports today. And though parents may genuinely believe their child deserves more exposure on the field or court, they do far more harm than good by confronting coaches publicly and demanding playing time. Here are some ideas to forestall and resolve these disputes:

- Heed your child's sense of the matter. Kids generally know who deserves the most playing time. Your player may be perfectly satisfied with his/her experience as a teammate. If they aren't aggravated, you probably shouldn't be either.
- If your child is upset, suggest that she or he speak directly to the coach. It will help your child develop courage and confidence. You can help him or her rehearse the talk. This conversation should begin with "Coach, I'd like more playing time, what can I do to earn more time..."
- If this conversation doesn't help, speak to the coach yourself. But be calm and reasonable, and remember that the coach has final say on this matter.
- Don't argue that the coach should play your child more. Instead, ask how your child can improve and earn more playing time. Listen carefully and follow up.
- Realize that the coach must balance pressures to compete against pressures to play everyone, and that no one ever does so perfectly.
- If these steps have not helped, contact the Club President to discuss what options might be available.
- Understand that your children will not only remember your behavior, but will imitate it.

Parental Behavior Expectations

US Club Soccer and the XFC have formal Parents Code of Conduct that you agree to when registering each year. The key parts of that code bears summarizing here:

- **Let the coaches coach.** This is what they do. You do not go into your child's school and instruct your kids from the side. Please treat it similarly and give the coaches the same respect.
- **Let the players play.** They are trying to execute what they learned at practice. They do not shout instructions at you while you are driving, working in kitchen, or in your endeavors, we should give them the same consideration. We are not concerned with your athlete making mistakes. They will learn from their mistakes as well as their successes on the field. It is unlikely your instructions will match their coach's, which sets up multiple instructions about a specific event; confusion added to the tension of the game. Calling out instructions from the sidelines is distracting and can be counterproductive to the desired goals of the coach. We want the players to be independent thinkers on the field.
- **Let the referee's ref.** Many referees are young and thus prone to error on occasion. Yes they can affect the game, but yelling at them for this does little to change the call and can alienate them. It also sends the wrong message to our players that this behavior towards refs is acceptable. We need to control the things that are under our control, and the referee is not one of those things.
- **Stay positive.** Restrain from negative comments about your child, another teammate, another player, the other team, their parents, the coaches or the referees. Negative comments and attitudes do nothing but destroy the fun atmosphere and kill team chemistry, which is often essential to the youth team success.
- **Find the proper time and place to address the coach.** If you need to discuss something with the coach, make an appointment with him/her at a time convenient for both of you. We prefer the coaches remain apart from parental influence for obvious reasons. That said, the coaches are willing to get feedback, take suggestions, and hear issues that you may have. Parents must respect their independence.
- **Bad behavior has consequences.** We want everyone involved to be proper role models and a good reflection of our program. Soccer is an emotional game, we do not have a zero tolerance policy. People make mistakes. People can be forgiven. However, where bad behavior is not reformed and a parent is acting in contradiction to our stated goals and the guidelines set forth herein, we reserve the right as a Board to reprimand, suspend or expel them from our program.