

Understanding the Differences between Recreational Soccer, Academy Soccer & Club Soccer

The following table was put together to highlight the similarities and differences between Recreational Soccer, Academy Soccer and Club Soccer. This table is meant for parents and coaches alike and should be used as a tool by clubs to communicate the differences between the various soccer formats to prospective players in their program.

	Recreational Soccer	Academy Soccer	Club Soccer
Age Groups	U6-U19	U9-U10 ^A	U11-U19 ^A
Main Objective	Recreation/Fun	Player Development	Competitive Play
Brief Description	Recreational Soccer is primarily meant to be a <i>fun recreational outlet</i> for players. Scores and standings are not recorded nor maintained by most leagues (but some leagues do). All players are, generally, required to play at least 50% of each game. The season usually concludes with an in-house or local tournament.	Academy Soccer focuses primarily on <i>individual skill development</i> and prepares players for Club Soccer in later years. Scores are not recorded; standings are not maintained. All players generally play the same amount of time in each game (but this varies from coach to coach). The season usually concludes with a regional Academy Festival. Some teams may also participate in pre-season & post-season tournaments.	Club Soccer is the most competitive format available for young soccer players. The primary objective of club teams is to <i>win games</i> . Individual playing time varies from team to team but players do not usually get equal playing time. Scores and team standings are maintained throughout the season. The Club Soccer season usually concludes with a regional, state or national tournament. Most teams also participate in competitive pre-season & post-season tournaments.
Team Selection Process	Open Registration	Open Registration ^B	Competitive Tryout ^B
Focus on Competition	Low - Above Average	Above Average - High	High - Highest
Regular Season	Oct-Feb	Oct-Feb	U11-U14: Oct-Feb U15-U19: Aug-Oct Feb-May
Amount of Travel	None/Minimal	Minimal/Regional	Regional/Statewide
Relative Cost	\$	\$-\$\$\$	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$
Coach/Trainer Background	Parent Coaches	Experienced/Paid Coaches & Trainers	Experienced/Paid Coaches & Trainers

^A The Academy Soccer format is currently expected to expand to include U11 in 2009-2010 and U12 in 2010-2011.

^B Academy Tryouts differ from Club Tryouts. While Club team tryouts are competitive in nature, whereby players compete for a position on the Club team, selection to an Academy team/program is open to all players meeting age requirements (and any additional requirements set by the club).