



Malden Youth Soccer Association Player Placement & Development Policy

The Malden Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) Program is open to all children of Malden and surrounding cities and follows the rules of the Middlesex Youth Soccer League (MYSL) for its rosters [“for a roster to be approved by the league, at least 75% of that team’s roster must comprise of players who live in the town, with the exception that players on a team from a town that does not have a Mass Youth Soccer sanctioned youth program do not count against the 75%.” MYSL Rules and Guidelines, 2009/2010, p.16.] as well as the rules of the city of Malden.

Object and Philosophy (from the MYSA Constitution): “The object of the MYSA is to inform, cultivate, and to encourage the playing of the sport of soccer for the youth and families of the city of Malden, Massachusetts. MYSA shall aid in the development of young people by giving them the opportunity to play soccer. MYSA will offer training for the development of individual skills, fitness, teamwork and fair play in soccer. No child or adult shall be denied the opportunity to play or instruct soccer in the MYSA based solely on sex, race, ethnicity and/or nationality.”

All children will be placed in an age-appropriate group dictated by their birth date in accordance with Massachusetts and Middlesex Youth Soccer League rules. Final decision for a child to “play up” is at the discretion of the appropriate Malden Age Coordinator in consultation with the Placement Committee, again, in accordance with MYSL Rules. [“For age groups Under –14 and lower, players can only play up one age year”, MYSL Rules and Guidelines, 2009/2010, p.18.]

All coaches are volunteers. All coaches are licensed within the first year that they start coaching with MYSA, and have a minimum of a G license for In-City and a minimum of an F license for Travel soccer. If it is a coach’s first year coaching, he/she must have the appropriate license by the second season (there are 3 seasons: Fall, Winter, Spring) she/he is coaching. All coaches are required to be screened by CORI.

All coaches, parents, and players are responsible for having read the MYSL rules of conduct.

The application of “U” with age group designations means “under the age of”, and is in reference to the player’s age in relation to the cut off date of August 1st of any particular year. Any player whose birth date is prior to August 1st plays in the older age group. Each age group is 2 years long. For example, in the 2009/2010 soccer year, a U-12 player has a birth date between August 1, 1997 and July 31, 1999.

In-City Soccer Program

All In-City teams are co-ed.

U-6: 4 and 5 year olds. For any child whose age is 4 years old before August 1st. Players younger than 4 years old by August 1st, but are 4 years old by the 1st day of each session (Fall, Winter, Spring), may play U-6 at the discretion of the U-6 Coordinator and provided there is space available. Goals: To learn basic soccer skills and rules through fun, games, activities, and scrimmages; and, to begin to learn the concept of teamwork. All U-6 teams will practice different weekly skills set by the Player Development Coordinator and the U-6 Coordinator.

U-8: 6 and 7 year olds. Goals: To continue to learn basic soccer skills through skills-based activities and scrimmaging. Focus is also on the rules of the game and preparing players to play on travel teams by the time they are 8 years old. All U-8 teams will practice different weekly skills set by the Player Development Coordinator and the U-8 Coordinator.

Players may join the In-City Program at any time, as long as there is space on a team. We encourage players to register early as both U-6 & U-8 have filled in recent years closing out some players. In-City Age Coordinators keep a waiting list on a first come, first serve basis and utilize this list as players sometimes drop out or move out of town. In-City players register for individual seasons (Fall, Winter, or Spring).

Players who begin to play at either U6 or U8 are expected to stay in that age group through the soccer year of Fall, Winter and Spring. If a child appears to be in an inappropriate age group, that player can only change age group at the discretion of the respective Age Coordinators. MYSL discourages players from “playing up”.

U-6 & U-8 Age Coordinators try to fulfill requests when asked to have friends play together, if they are in the same age group.

Travel Team Program

MYSA is a member of MYSL. Each age group is divided into a minimum of 4 divisions representing different levels of competitive play. U-10, U-12, U-14 play league soccer on Saturdays in the Fall and Spring; U-16, U-18, and U-19 play league soccer on Sundays in the Spring only due to conflicts with Fall high school soccer. MYSA, depending on the number of players at each age group, places teams in one or more divisions of each age group. [For further understanding of the MYSL Team Placement, please see p. 19, MYSL Rules and Guidelines, 2009/2010, www.middlesexsoccer.org.]

Travel teams play in the MYSL against other town teams. Players are placed on MYS teams determined by age, gender, and skill level. Starting at U-10, players are separated by gender per American Federation of Soccer guidelines. Each player is placed on a team that best matches their skill level with individual player development being the primary goal.

The Fall travel season is primarily a “developmental” season which prepares the players and teams for the more competitive Spring travel season.

MYSA does not accept requests to have friends play on the same team in the Travel Program unless they are at the same skill level, as determined by the Placement Committee.

Placements for Travel Players

Placements are facilitated by a 3-person Placement Committee (PC) comprised of the Player Development Coordinator (PDC), the Coaches Development Coordinator (CDC) and the Vice President (VP) who is involved in the overall development of MYSA players, along with the help of the coaches.

In accordance with the object and philosophy of the MYSA Constitution, MYSA wants every child to have the chance to learn, to excel, to get the most benefit from player development, and to have fun playing soccer. Therefore, first and foremost, MYSA has its commitment to individual players. Formal Placements are done once a year, in the Spring, to fulfill this responsibility for both returning and new players at which time players are reviewed for their individual and team skills. At the end of each Spring season, all team rosters are dissolved.

All players are required to go to Placements each Spring for two purposes:

1. to ensure each player is placed at an appropriate level of play, including children of the coaches.
2. to determine which team the player will be on the following year.

Any player who misses Placements will be placed on the lowest division team of his/her age and gender group unless prior arrangements (such as for tournament play) are made with the PC. If there are any exceptions to this policy, the PC will notify the appropriate players/team prior to the time of the Placements.

No new player to MYSA Travel Soccer may miss Placements. All travel coaches are expected to be at the Placements.

The decision for each player’s placement is done by the PC and the respective age/gender group coaches. If there is a disagreement about the placement of a particular player, a majority vote of the PC will have the final say on the appropriate placement for any player. Starting each new soccer year, which coincides with the start of the academic year, returning players may be moved up or down in division play depending on the individual player’s ability determined at Placements and the division of play available.

After Placements are done, new teams are formed according to the ability of the players. The goal is to form teams which will develop in the Fall and prepare them for the more competitive

Spring season. Teams are intended to remain together for the Fall and Spring seasons, though individual players may be moved either up or down due to:

1. inappropriate placement in the Fall.
2. new player Placements necessitating movement of a player(s).
3. an increased or decreased number of teams at a particular age/gender group from the Fall to the Spring seasons.

Within this framework, a goal of the MYSA is to have its top teams in each group representing the city of Malden and to be competitive at the league, regional, and state championships.

The Spring travel season is more competitive. In accordance with this, some players may be moved from one team to another at the discretion of the PC in consultation with the coaches. This may happen at 2 separate times during the soccer year:

1. during the first 3 weeks of the Fall season, players can be moved, as appropriate, for their skill level for the year.
2. players can also be moved between the Fall and Spring seasons, again, as appropriate for their skill level and the teams' needs.

The Placement of newly registered players not involved in Fall MYSL play, who register in the Fall for the following Spring competitive season, are invited to their respective age/gender team practice to help determine the player's skill level and which team will be appropriate for that player. The final decision about Placement will be determined by the PC after consulting with the coaches.

Coaches should not actively recruit players for their individual team. At the end of the Fall season, the PC will meet with the coaches of each group. At this time, as noted above, there will be discussion of whether or not to move any players. Players may be moved because of individual player's needs/growth, the teams' needs, and which division MYSL places teams for Spring season play.

MYSA requests that coaches let the PC know if a player on her/his team has been inappropriately placed, particularly if a player has been placed too low, to help make sure players can develop at their appropriate level. This means the first responsibility of coaches is to help insure that players' needs come before the teams' needs.

MYSL sets the minimum and maximum number of players allowed per team which varies depending on the age group [U-10: 8-12 players; U-12: 11-15 players; U-14+: 14-18 players; MYSL Rules and Guidelines, 2009/2010, p. 22.] We place every child on a team as long as there is a team available at each player's skill level.

Travel players register for and commit to being on a team for a year. Soccer games for U-10 through U-14 are on every Saturday for nine consecutive weeks in the Fall usually starting the Saturday after Labor Day and ending before Thanksgiving. In the Spring, soccer games are on every Saturday for nine or ten consecutive weeks, depending on what MYSL decides, starting in mid-April and going through early June. Note: MYSL does not skip vacation week in the Spring (please see below). Therefore, vacation week is not a reason to be absent, and players are

expected to be with their respective teams. As for U-16 through U-19, the Spring schedule is run differently by MYSL, and games occur on seven Sundays.

Parents are required to notify their coaches ahead of time if their child cannot make a game. This is very important because a team that does not have a minimum number of players will be forced to forfeit. A forfeit means a fine of at least \$100 against MYSA. The MYSL rules stipulate:

“A coach should know his/her players’ availability for the whole season; ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse [to reschedule a game]. Legitimate reasons may include, but not limited to: graduation, sanctioned invitational tournament, school trip, or religious activity. Lack of players due to a vacation is not a legitimate reason to reschedule a game. Notification of the need to reschedule must be given to the Age Director and the opposing coach at least two weeks prior to the scheduled game date...” [MYSL Rules and Guidelines, 2009/2010, p. 20.] As noted above, the Fall season MYSL play is in preparation for the competitive Spring season; each team’s goal is to try to make the playoffs. Playoffs are held the weekend after the Spring season ends.

Players are expected to come to all practices (times are set at the discretion of the coaches and field availability) and games (as noted above) unless an agreement is made ahead of time by the respective coach and player’s family.

The Winter soccer program is indoors. It is highly recommended for players to participate in Winter soccer as it is a skills development program; and, it helps keep the players in shape and have fun.

For questions, please contact the Player Development Coordinator:
playerdev@maldenyouthsoccer.org