

Niagara Pioneer F.C. Travel Program

INFORMATION PACKET

INTRODUCTION

The NPFC Travel Program Information Packet has been assembled to provide basic information about the travel league to parents, players, and coaches. We urge all parents, coaches, and players to carefully read this packet. If you have any questions, please email travel@npsl.us.

Travel Program Objectives

The goal of the travel program is to promote the following key objectives to all players of all ages that participate in the program.

1. **Development:** To impart soccer knowledge and improve soccer skills through player training and instruction.
2. **Sportsmanship:** To foster a desire in each player to emulate fair play, respect, and sportsmanship on and off the field.
3. **Competitiveness:** To encourage each individual player to perform to their maximum potential at a competitive level.

Note: With any travel sport, the level of competitiveness is set much higher than that of their house league counterpart. Players, parents, and coaches participating in the travel league should be fully aware of this level of competitiveness.

Season Information

The travel program starts November 1st and ends the first week of August. During that time, teams will practice indoor and/or outdoors.

- Every team participates in the BWNYJSL league which starts in May and ends in August.
- Every team participates in the Niagara Pioneer Soccer Tournament.
- At the coach's discretion, teams may participate in a winter league at Sportsplex or/and additional tournaments.

Rules and guidelines regarding the games can be found on www.bwnyjsl.org.

Communications

Email Blast

The best way to stay informed about the travel program is to sign up for our email blast. You must sign up directly on the website's homepage at www.npsl.us. The Travel Coordinator will keep people informed about the travel program through the email blast.

Website

The NPFC website address is www.npsl.us. A calendar will be made available each season with information regarding training camps, tournaments, tryout dates, and league-related meetings. Dates and times for practices and games will still come directly from the coaches.

Contact Info

For any questions regarding the Travel Program, please email the travel coordinator at travel@npsl.us.

Meetings

For updated information about any of the listed meetings, please view the calendar on www.npsl.us. All meetings are open to players, coaches, and parents to attend.

NPSL Board Meetings

Description: Overall information, such as house league, travel, and tournament is discussed at this meeting.

When: 3rd Sunday of each month between 6:00pm to 7:30pm

Where: Red Brick School in Youngstown, NY

Travel Committee Meeting

Description: Travel Program related information is discussed in this meeting.

When: 1st Wednesday of each month between 6:30pm to 8pm

Where: Red Brick School in Youngstown, NY

Yearly Parent and Players Meeting

Description: This yearly meeting is to provide updated information to parents and players regarding the travel program.

When: During the Fall

Where: TBD

Yearly Coaches Meeting

Description: This yearly meeting is a required meeting for all coaches, assistant coaches, and team managers to attend.

When: 1st Wednesday in September during the travel committee meeting – 6:30pm to 8pm

Where: Red Brick School in Youngstown, NY

TRY-OUTS

To participate in the travel program, players need to attend the try-out period. Here is some information on how to tryout and what it involves.

Basic Tryout Information

Where

Tryouts are generally held at the travel fields (Field #:18,17,16,15A,15B) at Fort Niagara State Park.

When

Tryout for 2010 season and on will be set by the first week of August. For the actual time and date, please be sure to view www.npsl.us.

Player Requirements

1. Each player must attend a total of 4 hours of tryouts to be eligible for travel program consideration.
2. **VERY IMPORTANT** – All players must provide at registration a complete and signed registration form, birth certificate, picture, and the full fee for the travel program. If any of this information is missing, a PLAYER CANNOT ATTEND TRYOUTS AND NO SPECIAL CONCESSION WILL BE MADE.

Tryout Policies

1. NPFC encourages all coaches to fill their roster to the maximum dress roster for the respective age group. Here is a list of maximum rostered players per age group:
u10 – 14 players • u12 – 16 players • u14+ - 18 players • u15+ - 22 players (but may only dress 18 per match)
2. After the tryout periods, if players were cut from an age group, the coach must advertise any additional tryout they may hold during the year, and/or no additional players can be added to the roster. Advertising a tryout consists of adding the dates to the website, email blast, and newspaper publication (Lewiston Porter Sentinel).
3. Each coach uses their own standards to choose who makes it on the team and who does not. This is because each age group is different, and each year an age group can vary regarding skills. NPFC urges coaches to explain to parents and players what process they use to choose players on the team prior to tryout.
4. Coaches must decide on a final roster **NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 1st**.
5. Any players that do not make a travel team will get a full refund by November 1st.

PLAYING TIME

A player's playing time is one of the hottest topics for parents, players, and coaches. Because of that we have dedicated this matter its own section. NPFC hopes to clarify many questions regarding playing time for everybody involved in the travel program.

NPFC Travel Program requires that:

1. Any NPFC teams made up of the age group U12 or below are required to follow BWNYJCL mandate that every player must receive at least one half game playing time in each regular league game, unless otherwise prevented due to injury or absence. Exceptions may be made only for lack of attendance at training. Coaches must inform families of their policy regarding training and its impact on playing time.
2. For any NPFC teams above the age group u12, it is up to the coaches' discretion to decide the players' playing time.
3. We ask that all coaches document and communicate to parents and players their team's playing time policy.

A Few Things to Consider:

1. Since we encourage coaches to take a full roster of players, some players may not be ready for travel soccer. For this reason it is up to the coaches' discretion to determine playing time.
2. While some players and parents would like to see equal playing time in all age groups, just as many parents and players feel the opposite, and point to the competitiveness level of travel as the main reason their child plays travel.
3. Teams vary from year to year, and an age group could have multiple teams, one playing competitive at a higher division, and one playing more for player growth at a lower division.

Playing Time Guidelines for Coaches

NPFC suggests that coaches consider the following factors that dictate a player's playing time when instituting their playing time policy. It is left to the coach's discretion the amount of weight that each of this factors have to their playing time policy.

1. **Skill:** Players ability to play the game of soccer.
2. **Intensity:** The player's willingness to perform at their top potential during practice drills and games.
3. **Chemistry:** The level of respect that a player has for his/her teammates, coaches, opponents, referees, and sideline fans.

4. **Practice Attendance:** Their level of commitment to the travel program measured by attendance to practices, team meetings, camps, and tournaments.
5. **Overall Team Strategy:** A player's overall strategic role and contribution according to each specific game situations.

Other Playing Time Policies:

The fee for the travel program includes practices and participation in the BWNYS league. Tournaments and Winter League may carry additional fees, and have different playing time policies.

Winter League:

While it is left to the coach's discretion, we urge each coach to make Winter League a training opportunity for all players to receive playing time in all age groups.

Policies regarding Winter League:

1. Winter league is not mandatory for any of the players. **All fees for winter league will be paid by only the players participating in it.**
2. If approved by the NPSL board, a subsidy will be provided to each team to participate in the winter league.
3. Any guest players that are not rostered under NPFC will have to pay the full amount prior to the subsidy being applied.

Tournaments:

Tournament fees for teams are subsidized completely by Niagara Pioneer Tournament Fund. NPFC will pay for up to 2 additional tournaments in addition to the Niagara Pioneer Tournament.

Policies regarding Tournaments:

1. Coaches must first offer roster spots for tournaments to the NPFC players that make up their team.
2. Any open spots can then be filled with guest players, while still meeting the Tournament rules and regulation on guest players.
3. Playing time is left to the coach's discretion **for any age group**, including u10 and u12.
4. **NO COACH SHALL USE ANOTHER NPFC PLAYER THAT IS ROSTERED WITH ANOTHER NPFC TEAM WITHOUT THE OTHER COACH'S CONSENT.**

COACHES AND COACHING

All NPFC coaches are volunteers, and due to their community service we are able to provide to the community a travel soccer program. The NPFC travel committee was formalized in the fall of 2008, the committee is working to ensure that we meet the following goals in regards to coaching and coaches:

1. Generate a larger pool of people interested in coaching travel.
2. Assist coaches with receiving training and additional certifications.
3. Assist coaches by providing more support, like assistant coaches and team managers, to make practices and communication more effective between the coaches, players and parents.

Coach Selection

In the past, the pool of coaches has been very small, and many parents have stepped up to take this important role. As we move forward, and generate a larger pool of interest in coaching for the travel program, we have instituted the following guidelines for selecting coaches:

1. Prospective head coaches must have served as an assistant coach for a travel team for at least one year or participated as a house league coach for at least two years.
2. Coaches will be selected based on credentials, availability, and their performance as an assistant coach or house league coach.
3. Position offered to travel program assistant coaches or house league coaches.

Since we strongly believe that the success of the House League program is in the best interest of the Travel Program, we urge any individual interested in coaching the travel league program to begin coaching in the house league program.

Coach Certifications

To ensure that we have a pool of trained and certified coaches, the following policies will be instituted on January 1st, 2010.

1. All coaches and assistant coaches must have completed and received a Youth Module license to coach in the travel program.
2. All head coaches must commit to complete the requirements for and receive an E license within two years of coaching travel.

3. NPFC subsidizes fees for license certification, and for this reason, coaches must commit to coach for at least two additional years after their E license certification, or reimburse NPFC retroactively for the fees should they not complete the commitment.
4. Starting January 1st, 2010, all new head coaches must have an E license to be considered as a head coach.

NOTE: While selection and certification process has been established within this document, it can only be enforced if the pool of interested coaches is the same number or more than the total amount of travel teams.

Assistant Coaches and Team Managers

Each travel team must have at least one assistant coach and team manager. Here is a brief description of both:

Assistant Coach: Help run practices and fills in for the head coach at times that the head coach cannot be present.

Team Manager: A liaison between the parents, coaches, and travel committee with regard to team communications. Team managers should represent their team at the travel committee if the head coach or assistant coach cannot make it.

Team Task List

Every year, the coaches and team managers should make sure to complete the following tasks:

- Prepare for tryouts at the end of July and early August (Dates and times will provided by the committee).
- Inform by mail or phone players that have not made the team.
- Select team prior to November 1st & submit Travel Form (Appendix A) to travel committee.
- Inform travel committee by November 1st if team will participate in the Winter League.
- Have passes signed by players prior to December 15th.
- Select tournaments in which the team will participate by February 1st and inform committee.
- IMPORTANT: Review procedures, policies, and coach information provided by BWNYJSL at the www.bwnyjsl.org prior to the beginning of the season.
- Inform the travel committee prior to June 15th if they will be coaching the following season.

Coach Survey

At the end of the year, a coach survey will be made available to the parents and players. The overall goal is for coaches to identify areas for improvement. The survey will focus on the level of development and training that coaches provided to the players.

We encourage parents and players to fill out the survey unbiased from the player's playing time, especially if the coach has met the "playing time" requirements that are described in this document.

GRIEVANCES

The following procedure has been put in place if any player, parents, referee, or other would like to lodge a grievance with a coach, player, or the league.

1. If an issue arises, we encourage people to address it directly with the coach. Please do not address the coach during a game, right after a game, or in front of the other players. This is to ensure that there is no negative impact on players that have nothing to do with the situation.
2. If you would like to escalate the issue **AFTER** you have talked to the coach, please go to <http://npsl.us/contact.shtml> and fill out our grievances form. At that point the president of the league, together with the coordinator of travel, tournament or house will be notified. We will attempt to quickly address the issue on hand.

Please note: Anonymous grievances will not be dealt with. Please be sure to always provide your name and contact information.

Appendix A

NPSL Team Registration

Season		
Age Group	Gender	Team Name Niagara Pioneer FC _____
Coach		Date of Birth
		Do you need a pass?
Address	Home Phone	Email
	Cell	
Assistant Coach		Date of Birth
		Do you need a pass?
Address	Home Phone	Email
	Cell	
Manager		Date of Birth
		Do you need a pass?
Address	Home Phone	Email
	Cell	
Choose Division Requested		
<input type="checkbox"/> Strong Top	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong Middle	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong Bottom
<input type="checkbox"/> Top	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom
<input type="checkbox"/> Weak Top	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak Middle	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak Bottom
Team contact Email (One email address to be given to the league)		