

## **Scarborough Soccer Club U12-U14 D1/D2 Policy Change**

Effective March 1, 2023

Scarborough Soccer Club has focused on its role as a developmental club for Scarborough High School over its 20+ in existence, and it will continue to do so. In that time, we have done our best to balance our competitive age groups, U12-U14, to provide the best experience for our players. To continue in that vein, and in light of trends in youth soccer, and in an effort to improve transparency, we are formally moving to a policy of **Tryouts** for our competitive age teams. In the past we have utilized evaluations at U12-U14 to build blended teams, D1 and/or D2 teams, as well as make player cuts, and offer practice player spots. We will still leverage all these options and want to make sure families are aware before they sign up each season.

**Scarborough Soccer Club is a competitive travel soccer club. It is for players who want a more competitive environment than Community Services. It is not meant to be a club for beginners/first time soccer players. As such, once players reach a certain age, skill variety is too wide to give all players a satisfying season with mixed teams anymore. One of our club's goals is to prepare players for their High School careers and we believe these changes will better prepare Scarborough players down the line.**

As such, the default SSC standard shall be, that when players reach the competitive age groups (which is determined by Soccer Maine) of U12+, our club will distribute players and teams be divided into D1 & D2 levels. On occasion, this may not fit and as always, this will be dealt with on a year-by-year basis, but this will now be our starting place for each Fall season.

In order to make this transition work successfully, we are requiring all U12-U14 players to attend two May Tryout dates. If they absolutely cannot attend one of the two pre-scheduled dates, there will be a make-up date for players. Attendance at two Tryout dates is non-negotiable. If a player would like to be considered for a D1 team, they must attend two Tryout sessions. Coach evaluations from previous years will also be taken into consideration when making player/team placements, as they have been the past few years.

In the past we have required a Goalkeeper to evaluate just as highly as any other player who is placed on a D1 team. Now, if someone wants to be evaluated as a GK only, they may do so and will be rated separately from everyone else. There will be two options for this: full-time GK and half-time GK. A full-time GK evaluating will only be evaluated on their GK skills. A player who wants to play GK half the time, and the field half the time will be evaluated on a hybrid scale. No more than two GK will be placed on a D1 team.

### Additional Information:

Soccer Maine limits roster size to double the number of players allowed on the field (18 for U12 and 22 for U13 & U14). Our goal is to not have rosters that large. We want everyone to improve and flourish during their seasons and that requires solid playing time.

-No refunds once teams have been published.

-D1 Teams will have slightly smaller rosters and D2 teams will have slightly bigger rosters. We want all players to have a successful season and that starts with having enough players at games and we have historically had a tougher time with attendance at D2 games.

-D1 players will be asked to sign a document stating they will attend at least 75% of SSC regular season games, tournaments, and play-offs. That does not apply to friendlies. Scarborough Soccer Club needs to

be their Fall soccer priority over premier soccer or other sports. There will be at least two subs at every league, tournament, and play-off game and we are counting on families to respect that.

-The Director of Coaching will take a more active role with the U12:U14 D2 teams.

All U12:U14 teams will be encouraged to have team bonding and social activities.

-Cuts are possible. As are Practice Player spots.

-Expectation Letters will go out from all U12:U14 coaches on expectations for the season in August.

-The Director of Coaching will continue to make player and team placements as they have always done. However, he/she may involve the coaches of the relevant age group or the Club President IF questions arise.

-In closely examining the data and feedback over the past few years, D1 and D2 correct placement makes a difference. Certainly SSC is not only about winning and it never will be. But, being placed with similarly-skilled players makes for a better overall experience for all. There are occasionally cuts at the Middle School level and there are three different team levels once they reach High School. Evaluating and being placed on teams based on skill level is in all of their futures. We believe that putting all of the information out there ahead of time and making this the norm will lead to a more satisfying travel soccer experience for players, coaches, and families. Practices run more smoothly and players who have often done things themselves because of skill differential or, alternatively, always passed the ball to a stronger teammate, truly learn to work more effectively as a TEAM and that only enhances their growth and development and love for the game.

-We truly believe that SSC will be able to put forth incredibly successful teams at both the D1 & D2 levels going forward, starting right with our Fall 2023 season. We are confident this is the right time for this policy change and we appreciate everyone trusting our process.

**May 2023 Evaluation Dates (for Fall 2023 Season, all at Gorham Sports Center)**

Friday, May 5, 2023 4:30-8pm (exact times TBD based on registration numbers)

U14, U12

Saturday, May 6, 2023 4:30-8pm (exact times TBD based on registration numbers)

U11, U10

Sunday, May 7, 2023 4:30-8pm (exact times TBD based on registration numbers)

U13, U9, GK Evaluation

Friday, May 12, 2023 4:30-8pm (exact times TBD based on registration numbers)

U14, U13, U12

Saturday, May 13, 2023 4:30-8pm (exact times TBD based on registration numbers)

U11, U10

Sunday, May 14, 2023 4:30-8pm (exact times TBD based on registration numbers)

U9, GK Evaluation, Make-up