Maroons Soccer Club, based in Ridgewood, NJ, develops competitive soccer players in a fun and enjoyable environment.  The Club is ideal for players who aspire to compete at the highest levels locally, in high school, and at college.

**TRYOUT PROCESS**

As a competitive soccer club, players must tryout and be accepted into the program each year. The tryout process is first designed to select players capable of playing competitive travel soccer. The process is then used to assess each player against core criteria and place each player where they will best be able to maximize their development, confidence, and enjoyment of the game. It is critical that each player is put in the right place, regardless of friendship groups or other factors, to ensure a positive experience that allows each player to gain confidence, skill and intelligence so that they can effectively develop their potential as a player.

The following pages provide an overview of the 8 phases of the Maroons tryout process, involving multiple assessments of players, coach evaluations and comparisons, and additional assessments.

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The following outlines the 8 phases of the Maroons Soccer Club tryout process: Evaluation of current players throughout the season, coach assessment through game analysis, pre-tryout meeting, formal tryout, training invite-backs, player placement & roster finalization, final player & team roster review & approval, player & team selection communication.

1. **Evaluation of current players throughout the season:**

* Timing: throughout fall and winter
* A player’s effort, performance, progress, and participation throughout the season provide guidance to the coaches as they look toward that player’s selection and placement for the upcoming season.
* Players with stronger recent development will gain advantages vs. players who were stronger in the fall and who might not have developed as much over time.
* Each team’s parent coaches and professional coach trainer individually complete the ***PLAYER ASSESSMENT TOOL***. This tool provides a detailed assessment and ranking of each player.
* For players who are significantly underperforming the team, it is important to share this feedback with the player’s parents, and, in some fashion, with the player. By sharing performance during the season, it gives a player the opportunity to improve their game and it also helps manage expectations a player might have going into tryouts.
* Players are evaluated based on 4 core developmental areas: technical, tactical, psychological, and physical.  Here is a brief description of what these areas involve:
  + Technical: By technical, we mean the specific skills involved in soccer – dribbling, passing, receiving, finishing, tackling, etc.  This is THE critical foundation for success in soccer
  + Tactical: By tactical, we mean the players’ ability to understand and gain success in the game, understand positions, apply the various roles of defense, attack, transition, etc.
  + Physical: By physical, we mean the players’ endurance, work rate, agility, , speed, etc.
  + Psychological, Emotional & Social: By psychological, we mean the players’ attitude, desire to excel, training mentality, confidence, commitment, etc.
* The ***PLAYER ASSESSMENT TOOL*** is completed at the end of the fall season by the head coach and, if different, the professional coach trainer. The fall assessment provides a quality snapshot of each player’s progress and performance and guides winter training. The fall assessment forms the starting point for the tryout assessments.
* In late April, each parent coach and professional coach trainer will develop their own assessment. The various player inputs and rankings from each assessment will be collectively reviewed in the pre-tryout meeting.
* If assessment and review is similar across each coach and trainer, then one final player assessment and ranking is completed and submitted to the age group tryout coordinator in advance of the pre-tryout meeting.
* If parent coaches and professional coach trainer have differing assessments, then multiple evaluations will be submitted to the age group tryout coordinator.

1. **Coach Assessment through Game Analysis:**

* Timing: first weeks of spring season
* Given differing levels of game understanding and perspective of our parent coaches and professional coach trainers, it is important for tryout evaluators to form their own, unbiased opinion about the players in an age group. NOTE: it is ok, and common for coaches to have different assessments of players based on different levels of game knowledge.
* To achieve an unbiased opinion, each head coach of each team within an age group (e.g. grey, white, black, red) will attend and observe games for players on the other teams within the same age group.
* Each coach should share a copy of team roster with each coach to assist in observations.
* The head coaches should, at a minimum, make notes on players that excel on each team, as well as for players that seem to perform below their teammates.
* Multiple game analyses are encouraged to get a broad perspective of players, and to ensure notes on each player from each team.

1. **Pre-Tryout Meeting:**

* Timing: about one month before formal tryout; there will be two meetings to ensure all tryout coordinators can attend.
* Tryout coordinators and head coaches from each tryout group will meet with the tryout director to review the tryout process and ensure the player assessment process is proceeding appropriately.
* The tryout director will review the upcoming tryout process. The specific roles of each coach should be clarified (e.g. who will maintain the master list, who will evaluate new players, who will focus on the selection of each team).
* Prior to the Pre-Tryout Meeting, coaches should have reviewed the player assessments for each player and team and discussed player rankings and player qualities.
* Coaches should compare their specific game analysis notes to the player rankings and seek deeper understanding of the players.
* This should be a very open conversation. The primary focus of each coach should be to have an open discussion about an initial grouping of where players best belong.
* The result of the pre-tryout meeting should be an agreed to breakout of players – Solid A, bubble A/B, solid B, bubble B/C, etc., and potential cuts.

1. **Formal Tryout:**

* Timing: usually mid-May to early June
* The official tryout process will be clearly communicated by the director of tryouts and fine-tuned by each age group coordinator. Key to this process is to 1) identify where new players belong, 2) assess bubble players head to head, and 3) final player placement.
* At sign in, each player will be given a summary card that summarizes process, key tryout contact information, player tryout number, and how to get results.
* Formal tryout process will be designed and communicated by the Director of Tryouts and the professional soccer group supporting Maroons. This process typically involves:
  1. Player sign-in and grid & color pinnie assignment
  2. Warm up
  3. Players split up by grids according to player ranking from pre-tryout meeting; U8 tryouts players randomly split among grids
  4. Players play small-sided games, 15 minutes; assessors grade players to MOVE UP, STAY, MOVE DOWN. For U8 tryouts, players are graded A-B-C-D
  5. Following water break, players are regrouped by grid according to ranking
  6. Assessors now evaluate players within their specific grid. Players out performing the group are moved to a higher grid (e.g. if evaluating the C grid, player moves up to B grid) and player underperforming are moved to lower grid.
  7. Assessors continue to fine-tune and evaluate players, moving players up and down
  8. In the last 15 minutes of the tryout, each grid assessor ranks players A to Z to have a confirmed, player ranked grid.
  9. Player notes and rankings from each grid are collated and this provides a final ranked player list for all players attending the tryouts, from A to Z.
* Throughout the tryout assessment process, each evaluator should be capturing notes about players, usually based on technical and tactical abilities
* It is essential to put each player in the right place as this allows the player to gain confidence and ability; placing a player too high might frustrate the player and reduce their confidence, which will impact their ability to develop. Equally, putting a player at too low a level won’t motivate them to play to their ability and maximize their development.
* Each year, on average, 1-2 players are moving up and down in level of teams.
* At the end of each formal tryout session, evaluators should review rankings and ensure agreement, or identify areas that need further review in follow up tryouts.

1. **Training Invite Backs:**

* Timing: May & June
* Following the formal tryout, it is often necessary to invite bubble players to a training session. This is especially important when evaluating 2 players of similar abilities.
* Seeing a player train with a team provides keen insights into ability, balance, and fit. It also provides for a deeper assessment to ensure the right decision is made for each player.

1. **Player Placement & Roster Finalization:**

* Timing: Following formal tryout and into early June
* Coaches should review assessment information about each player.
* The age group coordinator will develop the proposed ranked rosters.
* Each current head coach from each team must approve the final rosters, as follows – approve fully; approve, but with some concerns (specific concerns will be noted); do not approve.
* Two (2) alternates will be identified for each team in case players drop out. This will alleviate some problem areas as it clearly states players have potential to be added to a team. The alternatives will be noted upon final player & team selection communication.
* The cut list will be ordered based on the priority to move up to a team should a position open up.

1. **Final Player & Team Roster Review & Approval:**

* Timing: mid-June.
* Final proposed rosters and player ranking is prepared by the age group coordinator and presented to the Board.
* Player placement and rosters are reviewed by the Board of Trustees. Every question, issue, or concern is reviewed and discussed.
* Final player placement and rosters are approved by the Board.

1. **Player & Team Selection Communication:**

* Timing: late-June
* Final player placement & roster will be reviewed and approved by each age group coordinator.
* Age group coordinator will review and ensure tryout numbers, player names, and player placement is correct for posting to the Maroons website.
* A welcome email will be prepared for each team and will be sent to each player being accepted into the club.
* For current players who will be cut, it is recommended that the player’s coach (if appropriate) or the tryout group leader have a conversation with the cut player’s parents after final tryout decisions are made, but several days before publication of official results. The conversation should focus on helping manage the surprise of the cut and to alleviate potential issues, as well as to provide direction on how the player can continue to be active in soccer should he or she have interest.
* Any current players cut will receive a personal call from the player’s current coach (if appropriate) or the tryout group leader. This personal call will happen just prior to official tryout result publication.

Here are some suggestions for players to incorporate to improve their performance in tryouts.  Sometimes evaluators pick up on various things and one or more of these things might make the difference in player selection.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFULLY TRYOUT**



* Have fun in the game of soccer; show you love of the game.  Smile and laugh.
* Greet the coaches when you arrive.  Introduce yourself if you have the opportunity.
* Give your very best throughout the entire tryout
* Don’t let friends distract you from showcasing your soccer abilities during the tryout
* Don’t just kick the ball away.  Demonstrate your confidence and ability to receive the ball properly; taking a sharp 1st touch into space and away from pressure
* Demonstrate your game intelligence by supporting the ball, good movement, good shape, and decision making on when to pass and when to dribble
* Demonstrate you can dribble and that you can beat a player with the dribble; Show us a skill move, a change of direction, a change of speed
* Be a 1st attacker!  Shoot!  Dribble with the ball and shoot!  Make a great pass to someone who can shoot!
* Hold the ball under pressure, be strong.  Shield and protect the ball, use your body and arms to protect the ball and maintain possession.
* Be patient in defense.  Make a strong tackle to win the ball -- Block tackle, Poke tackle, Body Block. Then transition into attack.
* Work hard, the entire time.  Both physically and mentally.
* Be attentive and listen when coaches talk, jog in when called, don’t be last
* Talk!  Make sure every coach knows you are there!  You can demonstrate you know the game and what to do by talking: “I got ball” “Man on” “Turn” “Switch it” “You have 2nd defender/support” “drop” “mark him up” “ball to feet”
* Use the appropriate foot – left or right, depending on the ball and pressure.  Show us you can use both feet
* Play the beautiful game, beautifully.
* Enjoy and have fun!