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TRAVEL PROGRAM FAQ

General FAQs for All Travel Age Groups

Introduction

This guide was developed to assist parents by answering some of the more common questions concerning travel soccer programs available in Great Falls. Playing on a travel soccer team not only requires that your son or daughter be capable of playing at a more competitive level relative to the rest of their age group, but also involves a substantial commitment of time, energy, and money from both the player and their family.

This Guide attempts to cover the more common questions, but if you have questions that are unanswered here, please take the time to contact one of the travel league representatives, the [GFSC Technical Director](#), the GFSC VP of Travel, or the [GFSC Soccer Administrator](#) with any specifics not covered in this document. This guide has been developed primarily for the families of younger players and for those new to the world of travel soccer. There are a few questions at the end of the document that may pertain more to the older players, and a list of reference sites for more information but in general older players and families have experience on their side and will already be aware of most of the information in this document.



What is travel soccer?

Travel soccer is a sponsored division of Great Falls Soccer, intended for the players that demonstrate both the interest and ability to play at a level in the top bracket of their age group; or demonstrate the potential to play at the top level of their age group. It should be recognized that being a top player at age 8 will not guarantee that a player will be a top player in the teen years; soccer players are born varying levels of talent, but all soccer players must develop their skills and techniques through proper age-appropriate instruction and consistent commitment in training. In the same way, some players may not have the skill to make a travel team at age 9, but might be top players in their teens.

It is the desire of Great Falls soccer to provide the opportunity within Great Falls for players at all levels of ability – and provide a roadmap to assist players in developing technical skills to ensure they can achieve their goals relative to soccer. Travel soccer provides a highly competitive training and playing environment for those players (and their families) that have the interest, athletic ability, soccer skills, commitment, and can meet the other demands placed upon them. Having said this, there is still a very broad range of skill levels and commitment requirements between a top Division team in a premier league, and a lower Division team in a competitive league. An extremely skilled player may decide the right environment is a lower Division team rather than the top Division team, just so that skilled athlete can also play another sport; or play with close friends. Those choices usually come as a player advances in his/her soccer career – not at the earliest age groups.

How does travel soccer differ from the regular house or recreation soccer league?

Travel soccer travel teams are more competitive. There is, however, less emphasis on game results (more emphasis on individual player development) at the earliest age groups (U9 & U10) before true Division structures are implemented, but the travel environment is still more competitive than most House or Recreational soccer programs. Therefore, making the roster, and staying on the roster, must be earned based on the team member's skills, commitment, potential, and developmental progress. In the house or recreation soccer league, all players are placed on

a team roster regardless of playing ability. Recreational soccer also has unique requirements to encourage participation by players of all ability levels – so equal playing time by all players is the mandate. Travel soccer playing time is based on the team's needs as well as the individual's ability to competently display his/her abilities and is at the coach's discretion.

During fall and spring seasons, most GRFL travel teams practice twice a week, and have the opportunity to participate in Academy training on a third night. There is generally a game every weekend; and 2-4 tournaments per year, depending on the decisions made by the team, and on the team's competitive goals. Most travel teams practice 10-12 months a year – winter and summer are often only once a week, but this is beyond the level expected by any recreational team.

Finally, in the House league, most games will be played close to home. Players under 11 will play other teams of Great Falls House players; after that, they will play in the Suburban Friendship League – a league designed for the Recreational player to have a chance to play neighboring teams with similar skill levels. Travel soccer does require more "travel" than a house league. Generally, half the games will be home games – so will be played on local fields. At the younger age groups, it is rare to travel more than 60 minutes to a game, but this depends entirely on the allocation of teams into pre-Division structures. As the age group matures, the competitive levels determine positioning. As a result, a team may travel to Baltimore, Stafford, or Front Royal for a game – but again, this is likely to be only one or two games in a season.

How does the Great Falls travel soccer program work?

Great Falls will sponsor travel teams in each age and gender bracket, beginning at the U9 age group. If the interest and talent level justifies, the opportunity exists to add additional travel teams at older age groups by playing in multiple leagues. At the U9 and U10 age groups, a pool of 22-24 players in each gender group will practice together; they will be formed into team units, but there may be frequent movement between those teams during the first few seasons of play as the mix of players adjusted. The philosophy in an age group is that players belong to the "travel program" rather than to a particular team. For a seasonal year, they will play for a team – but the GFSC Technical Director and team Coach will work together to restructure an age group for the best success of the age group and the players. In the past teams have been regarded as "A" (Blue) or "B" (White) teams, but we are encouraging parents to move away from this form of thinking. At the early travel brackets, prior to Division structures, we will seek to move two teams forward, with flexibility to adjust the team structure between seasons as the teams themselves mature. All travel teams have the same fundamental mission for the players – to create a meaningful, fun and positive experience; to develop soccer skills, and to teach the lessons associated with team play.

As the teams mature, they will generally fall into their own competitive positioning that is right for that team. For the most part, there is likely to be a Premier team, and a second, and even a third team in an age group that might play in lower Divisions. The Coaches of those teams, along with the Travel Team Director, will continue to work together, as in earlier years, to assure appropriate movement of players between the teams, and make adjustments as team placement and mix changes. It is extraordinarily rare for a team to be formed at U9 and stay as a unit all the way to U19 – the average travel team has 3 player changes each year. Historically, GRFL division placements and league participation have varied dramatically by age group. Some age groups have had Division 1 NCSL teams, followed closely by Division 2 teams, with a 3rd team playing in Division 1 of ODSL. Other years GRFL has had one team in Division 3 or 4, and struggled to field a second team. At the current time, we have some age groups without a team and are seeking new teams to fill out our structure.

It also is not necessarily true that all the top players will play on the Premier team – many skilled players do not want the pressure of a Division 1 team and may prefer the fun and neighborhood feel of a lower division team. A developing player may do far better on a Division 3 or 4 team, where they are able to get significant play time and experience, rather than sitting on the bench watching their Division 1 team play. In that environment, they have the opportunity to be a leader and gain often needed self-confidence along with the added play time. Again, the goal of Great Falls soccer is to provide a range of opportunities to keep kids playing on Great Falls teams – from recreational soccer to highly competitive premier teams. A variety of options and alternatives to select from according to skill, interest, development needs, and goals – all which may change over time as the players and teams evolve. The Coaches, the Travel Director, and staff are there to assist families and players in selecting the right team and environment that will mean success for your player.

How does competition affect the travel soccer program?

At the current time, Great Falls Soccer travel teams play in several travel leagues: the National Capital Soccer League (NCSL), the Old Dominion Soccer League, Virginia NPL and EDP - for boys and girls ages U9 through U19. The youngest age groups (U9 & 10) are grouped in a pre-Division structure (colors or letters). These pre-Division structures are changed every season to allow teams to play a variety of teams. Scores are not reported, and teams are encouraged to use these years as developmental years, with more equal play time between players and more movement of players between positions. Play is "small-sided" and on the smaller sized fields. This currently changes at U11, but this may continue to be modified depending upon league decisions regarding the VYSA small-sided play recommendations.

Around U11 (this varies by league) teams are assigned to particular divisions based upon their level of play. Division 1 in each league is the Premier division for that league. There are generally 10 teams in each Division. The number of Divisions in each age group varies substantially by league and by age group. It is best to visit the league websites for more information regarding Division structures if more information on this subject is desired. Each season teams are placed in a higher or lower division based upon their win/loss record. Generally, the top two teams in a division are moved up a division and the bottom two or three are moved down a division. The lowest teams in the bottom division are dropped from league play, and teams from the league wait list are added. For this reason and others, travel soccer play inevitably becomes quite competitive. It is also this structure, and the evolutionary process of the structure, which causes frequent movement of players between teams.

In general, the NCSL is regarded as the more competitive league and the ODSL, while still extremely competitive, might be comprised of fewer premier teams than in their counterpart leagues. However, this is a very subjective and debatable topic, which varies dramatically by age group, by

year, and almost by day. In reality, during tournaments, ODSL teams easily and frequently defeat NCSL teams; and a Division 3 or 4 team might readily defeat a Division 1 or 2 team.

While age alone is not a limitation in making a team, in general, the competitive nature of travel soccer and the necessity of a team's rigorous ongoing training may make it increasingly difficult as players get older to make a team if the player has no previous travel experience. This is particularly important to understand when trying out for teams in NCSL upper division level teams.

It is not skill level alone that is a determining factor in the evolution of a soccer "career" (our hope, of course, is that players will play from U6 to U19 at minimum)! There are many players on Division 3, 4 or 5 teams that are capable of playing on a Division 1 team – but don't want the pressure, the impact on other sports or interests, etc. that playing on a Division 1 team might require.

How old must my player be to play travel soccer?

Early each summer, Great Falls endeavors to form two new boys travel teams and two new girls travel teams. The teams begin play the following fall as U9 teams (generally but not always 3rd grade). The teams play in the National Capital Soccer League (NCSL) or in the Old Dominion Soccer League (ODSL).

[Note: the leagues determine if your child is U-9 if they turn nine years old at any time from January 1 to December 31 during the year which travel soccer begins. For example, if your child turns 9 between January 1 - December 31, they qualify to play U-9 soccer for that season. If they turn 10 at any time between January 1 - December 31, your child qualifies to play U10 soccer.]

Can my player play "up" an age group or "down" an age?

None of the leagues, or VYSA rules, allow a child to play "down" an age group. The age group of the team is determined by the age of the oldest player on the team. In some situations, players may be allowed to play "up". The two top considerations are: Is the player in the same grade level as the other players (in other words a child with an August or September Birthday will often be in 3rd grade with the U9 players that meet the age requirement); AND, is the player able to play at the same competitive level as the other players? Despite this willingness to stretch the guidelines, leagues do restrict the number of players on a U9 team that can play "up" (generally to 2 players). Final approval for any playups will be given by the GFSC Technical Director and the VP of Travel.

How do I get on a travel team?

You must try out as the first step to join a travel team. Great Falls requires all travel teams to have a tryout at least once each year — generally in late May or early June. At the annual tryout, all players currently rostered on a team must also tryout again (though the tryout may be different for current players than for the new players to enable the coach and trainer to clearly see new players). Many teams, however, may have additional tryouts at other times during the year. The tryout may simply consist of inviting a player to play as a guest at a tournament, or to practice with the team (players may not play in league games unless officially rostered to a team). Once a player makes a soccer team, the player is on that team for the "soccer year" which in practice generally runs from the period following June tryouts until tryouts the following year. A player may elect to transfer to another team between fall and spring seasons, but as stated earlier, most movement occurs after end of the spring season. Teams may cut players during the season, but this practice is very rare and controlled tightly by league rules – please see the league web sites for guidelines, or contact the Great Falls travel soccer league representatives if you have questions or concerns.

If my player was invited to participate in a special training program, is he guaranteed a slot on the travel team?

No. There is no training available that will guarantee a slot on a travel team. Union developmental training, winter training and conditioning, spring break and summer camps, extra coaching – all will help a player develop new skills and improve technique. Developmental training is an excellent idea if it is what your player wants to do – and if it is fun and challenging. However, there is not any program offered in which participation will guarantee a slot on a travel team. It is not possible to anticipate what players will come to the tryouts for any travel team. For example, there are a number of players on Great Falls teams playing "up" – if any of them elected to drop down to their own age group, they would likely have the skills to displace some of the top contenders in that bracket. An outstanding player may relocate into our area, and bring tremendous skills. The decision regarding who makes the team will be made at the tryouts. However, selection is not entirely based on seeing players for a few hours over a three day period. Input is received from Coaches, All Star Coaches, watching games during the season, and for older teams, having players participate in tournaments and practices.

When and where are tryouts?

Great Falls requires all its soccer teams to hold open tryouts every year, generally in late May or early June and often during the last few practices of the spring season. Tryouts are held on local fields – the same fields where Great Falls travel and house teams practice and play. Tryouts typically consist of 1-3 or more practice sessions to evaluate your player's athletic ability, skills, and interest. After the tryouts, an offer may or may not be extended to your child. Alternatively, after the first tryout, the coach may ask your child to return for additional tryouts or suggest that the team is not a good fit for your player.

How do I find out about a tryout?

Teams use various methods to publicize their tryouts. All tryouts for Great Falls teams will be posted on the Great Falls soccer website – www.greatfallsoccer.com. Newspaper advertisements, bulletin board notices, word of mouth and asking players to tryout are common methods. Tryout notices are also posted at the League websites, and on the VYSA site. In Great Falls, especially at the younger levels, travel team coaches will watch their respective recreation or house All-Star teams as they play in the season-ending tournaments. Several players from those teams may be asked to tryout for a team. However, even if you are not asked you may still tryout for a team – the tryouts are open to all players, and the team is not preselected or determined prior to the tryout dates. The Technical Director and staff will also ensure that developmental opportunities

are available to assist the recreational player in preparing for increased levels of competitive play. This is especially true at the 8, 9 and 10-year-old age groups.

If your child is interested in trying out for a travel team please check out the respective age group travel team contact information located on the Great Falls website (www.greatfallssoccer.com). While it is our goal to have all Great Falls players play on Great Falls teams, the reality of life is that Great Falls is a smaller community, and some of the larger neighboring communities are able to field three teams at the U9 age group; and some of these clubs will additionally recruit players to join their teams. If you have a young player that tries out for the U9 or U10 teams and does not make it, please work with the Technical Director and staff to explore all options and recommendations. Staying in the house program, playing on All-Stars, participating in the developmental programs may be our preference, but if the right thing for your player is to play on a neighboring team we will work with you to help your player achieve success. Our hope is that in future years, as the team size expands and player mix continues to change, that your player will come back to a Great Falls team.

Are Great Falls residents given priority over players from neighboring communities?

There are no residency requirements for Great Falls travel teams. We encourage players from all communities within Fairfax County to tryout for Great Falls travel teams. The benefit of opening up the pool of players is that we are able to field four teams in each age group (two boys, two girls) when in the past we could only field two teams. Thus there is twice the opportunity for Great Falls players. For our premier teams, there is also a significant advantage to this approach, as Great Falls is too small a community to fill the roster of a premier team year after year, without drawing upon the skills of players in nearby communities. By taking this approach, we are better able to keep top players playing in Great Falls.

Due to the current school boundaries, it is common to find Reston and Herndon addresses attend Great Falls schools and some Great Falls addresses attend a Vienna based school. Typically children follow their friends and we've found that Great Falls players passionate players recruit their Herndon and Vienna friends to GFSC.

What uniforms do travel teams wear?

The vast majority of travel clubs specify a uniform kit which helps to "bond" the Club, both from a look/feel standpoint, and a pride and honor view. All GFSC travel teams are required to adhere to the uniform requirements and vendors specified by the club. The recommended uniform kit includes Home/Away jersey and shorts, a warm-up uniform, and a bag.

Currently, PUMA is the official sponsor and supplier of Great Falls travel uniforms. Our colors are Royal Blue and White.

What type of training is provided?

The GFSC travel teams are trained and coached by experienced individuals who are selected by the Technical Director. A coach with the appropriate experience level will be assigned to each travel team.

Coaches will work with teams twice a week (sometimes more often) during the soccer seasons (fall and spring). A third night of Academy training (Wednesdays) is also provided to younger travel teams (U9 through U12), with emphasis on conditioning and on building technical skills. Participation in the Academy program is included in the annual travel fees and participation is strongly recommended. Participation in a winter indoor league; additional winter training; summer training and a one-week half-day summer soccer camp are often the norm for a travel soccer team, but the team Coach, the parents, and the Technical Director will work together to make recommendations for the right approach for each team.

When do travel soccer teams play their games?

Most Great Falls travel games are held on Sundays but there are some Saturday games. It is not uncommon to play games on both a Saturday and Sunday of the same weekend, especially if there have been weather delays due to closed fields. Occasionally, there may be a game on a weeknight based on weather cancellations at the end of the season. The fall season runs from early September to mid-November. The spring season runs from the end of March or early April until early to mid-June. The winter season (usually two sessions) generally will involve participation on an indoor league (Great Falls generally plays at the Dulles Sportsplex leagues – www.dullessportsplex.com) with games played on a Saturday or Sunday depending on age group.

Most teams also participate in tournaments. Tournaments consist of 3-4 games during a weekend. Generally tournaments are held several weeks before the season begins (i.e. in August and March), after the season (November and June), and during breaks in the season such as the Columbus Day and Memorial Day weekends. Tournaments may be local (i.e. the Washington DC metro area) or elsewhere in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, etc. Top flight teams may travel to prestigious tournaments such as those in Texas, California, Florida, and other locales. A number of Great Falls teams have played in international tournaments. The Technical Director and staff will provide a list of recommended tournaments each season (based on Division level and team goals), and teams may select up to 4 tournaments annually. If a team desires to play in more than four tournaments, they must work with the Technical Director to seek approval. At some of the tournaments our goal will be to have multiple Great Falls teams playing in the tournament – with the teams able to support one another and watch other Great Falls games when they are not playing themselves. If those tournaments are travel destinations (requiring overnight stays) we will work to get discounts at tournament hotels.

Many Great Falls soccer travel teams at the U-12 and older ages also compete in State Cup events. These events may also require out of town travel.

How many players are on a team?

Experienced travel coaches try to keep their rosters small, especially when coaching younger aged teams. The players are training hard and want

to play. Their parents certainly want them to play. If a team is carrying 17 or 18 players on its roster (or 14 on a small-sided roster), there is simply no way that the team will be able to provide adequate playing time for every player. Smaller rosters assume that all players will be at the practices, matches and especially tournaments. Most of our U9/U10 teams will have 11-12 players; most of our older teams will have 15-16 players. However, this is an average, and teams of this size will have mandatory rules about participating in all games and practices. An older team, especially in lower divisions, may add additional players, but give players the flexibility of missing a game when another sport has a conflicting game at the same time slot. These are the things to discuss with a Coach when considering playing for a team.

What volunteer positions are needed to support a team?

Teams organize in a number of different ways, based on a structure that works and is comfortable for that team unit. Generally there is a team manager who is the administrative lead for the team, and often acts as the communication vehicle between the parents and the coach (for issues not specific to one player). On many teams this job is shared between two co-managers, or a manager and game-day manager. The team manager generally handles most of the administrative details of the team such as roster preparation and changes, notices for new players and discussions with interested parents, communicating information and plans from the coach to the parents etc. The team manager position is the most time-consuming job on the team besides the coach. Teams which share the workload seem to be the most successful and stress-free, and there are logical positions to be filled. One of the top jobs (often shared by two families) is being the tournament coordinator to make a final determination on tournaments, and coordinate the tournament application and registration process (including any guest players), and often hotels and food if the team is traveling (especially if it requires permission to travel out of state). Teams must have a treasurer and may have a parent coordinate fund raising. There is an equipment person who initially orders and then brings the team equipment (team bench, tent and flags) to the games. The team will need a uniform coordinator to ensure the uniform kit is ordered, distributed and then to handle replacements etc. Many teams have an "activity" coordinator if the team plans to do a lot of events (DC United games, parties etc). It takes a great deal of time and energy to operate a travel team and requires significant help at times by all player families. Every family should look for a way to contribute to the team, and ensure that jobs are changed frequently to prevent burnout.

What is the player's time commitment?

Most Great Falls travel teams operate throughout the calendar year, including outdoor league play in the fall and spring, indoor play in the winter and camp and tournament play at various times throughout the summer. (High school age travel teams sometimes do not play in the spring when their high school squads are competing.)

Most Great Falls travel teams train twice a week for 1 1/2 hours per session. The majority of teams participate in the third night of cross team training. Including tournaments, most Great Falls travel teams play approximately 15-20 games each spring and fall season (this includes tournaments and scrimmages) and possibly 8-16 games during indoor league play (one session or both).

While most GRFL travel teams, particularly younger teams, encourage their players to participate in other sports, travel teams also expect that team members will give preference to travel team games over conflicts with other sports. If your player is on one of the premier teams, this is absolutely true. Some of the lower Division teams may make an exception to this rule, but it is best to understand the expectations of the Coach and other players before accepting a position on a team.

My child wants to play high school soccer. Will playing travel soccer help?

Possibly, though there is no guarantee that your child will make his/her high school team. The fact that your child is participating in a higher level of play with more practices and games against better skilled competition will improve their game and increase their chances of making their high school team. In the last few years there has been a very positive and active relationship between the Langley Coaches and the high school team, and the Great Falls soccer program. Many of the younger teams act as ball boys/girls during the home high school games, and many of the Coaches/Assistant Coaches at Langley are part of the Great Falls soccer coaching program – especially running camps during the summer months.

Where do travel soccer teams travel to for league play?

Locations for league games are generally within the area bounded by I-81 in western Virginia, Annapolis on the east, Baltimore on the north and Fredericksburg on the south. Locations of games are ultimately determined by the league in which your team plays (ODSL or NCSL) and the makeup of the teams in your division. At times, you may find that a game will be played in a close-by community or one that requires a 90-minute car ride. In general, at least half of your games will be played on your home field.

How much does it cost?

There is no getting around the fact that travel soccer – in any community – is expensive. Great Falls travel soccer travel team participation is expensive – but is well within the range paid in other communities. League and club fees; shoes, uniforms, and other gear; and tournament, travel and lodging costs for out of town tournaments, indoor league fees, paid trainers or coaches, the costs quickly mount up. Travel teams can help defray their team expenses through team fundraising activities (car washes, sales, etc.). However, most travel team parents should expect to pay between \$1,500 and \$1,800 annually, plus additional uniform and team fees. We are working to develop a scholarship program; considering some type of sponsorship program (companies may not put logos on league uniforms or flags) and considering a variety of programs to help with fundraising. All suggestions are welcome.

Travel fees are billed for the year and include the following:

- Coach Compensation
- Fall & Spring Academy and GK Clinic
- Coaching of 4 tournaments (not tournament entry fees or coach's travel/lodging expenses)
- League Membership and Fees

- VYSA Fees
- Risk Management Background Checks
- Technical Staff Support
- Operations Staff Support
- Club Administrative Support
- Off-Season Training (winter and summer Note: costs for indoor winter facilities or leagues are not included.)
- Fairfax County Field Use Fees (Additional Fees apply for out-of-county players)
- Field maintenance and upkeep (mowing, lining, aerating and overseeding) and goal nets
- Club Insurance

Is there any financial assistance available?

Great Falls Travel Soccer Program makes every effort to ensure that all Great Falls children who are accepted onto a travel squad are able to participate without regard to financial considerations. If your son or daughter's participation is jeopardized because of financial considerations, talk to your coach or manager about your situation. You can also talk directly to the Great Falls Technical Director.

What are the advantages of playing for a Great Falls travel team rather than for another club?

The most important objectives of Great Falls Travel Soccer are to:

- 1) Maintain a safe, positive, fun and challenging soccer environment for all players;
- 2) Develop and prepare players for the future – both on and off the field – by teaching soccer skills as well as important “life skills” including leadership, communication, character, teamwork, responsibility, time management, self-discipline, sportsmanship and respect for others.
- 3) Engage high-quality coaches and trainers who provide the highest quality training and who motivate each player to work to his or her highest potential.

How is the coach chosen?

All coaches must apply for a coaching position to the GFSC Technical Director. The factors considered include the coach's experience, temperament, and commitment. The GRFL Technical Director selects all travel team coaches after a careful examination of the coach's credentials.

In addition to meeting all licensing requirements, participating in the Positive Coaching Alliance, all coaches must apply (and pass) the VYSA KIDSafe program, which is designed to ensure Coaches (as well as all volunteers and GFSC Board members) do not have a criminal record that should prevent them from working with youth in our community.

What Can Parents Expect From Travel Coaches?

GFSC travel team coaches must meet high standards for technical competence; knowledge of soccer rules and tactics; ability to work effectively and positively with travel team players; and the ability to interact effectively and positively with travel team parents, other coaches and club league administrators. Travel team coaches are responsible for the selection of travel team members; for team training; for all on-field decisions; and for the overall conduct of the team on and off the soccer field. The travel team coach is the official representative of GFSC in dealing with players, parents, league officials and the public.

Can my child be cut from the team?

Yes, in rare circumstances a coach may decide that a player is no longer suited for a certain team. Skills develop at different rates in different players. The top players on the team this year may not be the best players next year. Additionally, a player's goals and interests may change. Some players burn out easily, especially at younger ages – moving them to a less competitive environment for a season or two may help ensure they play soccer for many more years. The Great Falls Technical Director and Great Falls Coaches are often better than parents at seeing indications of frustration and burnout. As parents, we may be frustrated or disappointed in a shift to a different team, but need to be cautious that that disappointment doesn't lead to more pressure on our player. As a practical matter, this is almost always confined to June as the team's roster is prepared for the upcoming fall and spring seasons and offers to join a team are for a full year (fall and spring seasons). If a team is moving up to a higher Division status, lower performing players may be moved to a less competitive team to add players that can help a team perform well in the higher Division. Likewise, if a team is dropping to a lower Division, it may lose some players to higher Division teams.

There are number of reasons why it becomes necessary to move, or even cut, a player and the discretion belongs entirely to the coach and the Great Falls Technical Director. Experienced travel coaches know, however, that cutting a young person can be one of the most difficult things a player will face. Not surprisingly, parents can become very emotionally involved. The Great Falls Technical Director and the player's coach will work together to give feedback to players regarding areas where improvement is needed. However, sometimes it is not clear what changes will be made until after the season concludes, and the next year's Division structure can be anticipated. At that point, it may depend on what new players come to a team tryout before movement decisions can be finalized. When faced with a cut, the coach, and the GRFL Technical Director, will often try to talk a player, and the player's parents, into moving to another team more correctly positioned for the players skill set. Experience shows that if the parents and child opt to move the player to another team, it frequently results in a very positive experience. Many Great Falls players have left teams, joined other teams where play time could be increased, improved, and rejoined the original team with a dramatic increase in skill level. Both the coach, and the Great Falls travel director believe that it is their responsibility to work with the player and the parents to try to find the player another, more suitable team. It is wise to work with them rather than fighting them on a decision which may benefit your player greatly over the long term.

What is the ODP Program and when does it start?

The Olympic Development Program is a national program that is designed to identify and develop the most talented, committed youth soccer players to represent their state, region and country in soccer competitions. Selected players identified through the Virginia ODP tryout process and scouting system will train for the honor of representing Virginia in Region 1 competitions. ODP players span the U13 to U19 age groups, and are the premier players in the State/Region/Country. ODP Players continue to play on their current teams – the ODP program is an additional training and playing opportunity, as well as an honor for all players. Rather than repeat information in this document, please see www.vysa.com, under the ODP tab. Great Falls supports the ODP program and seeks to have more Great Falls players participate in the future.

What is the State Cup and what teams participate?

The Virginia Youth Soccer Association State Championships (or State Cups) is a state championship competition conducted annually by the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA) for boys and girls teams in the U-12 through U-19 age groups. It is a part of, and a qualifying event for, the US Youth Soccer Region I Championships and National Championships conducted by United States Youth Soccer (USYS). Winners of the VYSA Championships advance to the USYS Region I Championships, and in the U-14 to U-19 age groups, Region I winners advance to the United States Youth Soccer National Championships. The Coach, GRFL Travel Director, and team determine if they will participate in State Cup. If so, league schedules are adjusted to enable play in both State Cup and league games. For details, see www.vysa.com, under the State Cup tab.

Is Great Falls interested in accepting existing teams as transfers?

GFSC's philosophy is to provide as wide a range of travel team opportunities as possible to our community. Therefore, we are interested in discussing transfer opportunities with teams from outside of GRFL, or in sharing a team with another local community when it makes sense to do so. While the criteria for such transfers are being developed, the overriding factors to be considered include:

- The current team(s) in that age group and any resulting impact on them (house and travel).
- The need to fill a gap for a deficient age group and gender.
- The number (if any) of Great Falls players already on the team requesting the transfer.
- The anticipated opportunity for Great Falls players to be added to the team.
- The availability of resources, such as fields for practice and play, that a team may be able to bring with them.
- The past history, if any, of that team with Great Falls

Recommended links for further information:

Great Falls Soccer Club - www.greatfallssoccer.com

US Youth Soccer – www.usyouthsoccer.org

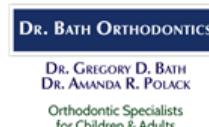
Virginia Youth Soccer Association - www.vysa.com

NCSL - www.ncsl-soccer.com

ODSL - www.odsl.org

Virginia NPL - www.nationalpremierleagues.com/virginia-npl

EDP - www.edpsoccer.com



Morgan Stanley

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