

## Is My Child Ready for Competitive Soccer?

### **How do parents know when their child is ready to move into competitive Academy or Select Soccer?**

- ✓ The player has a high interest level in soccer and practices on their own or with friends.
- ✓ The player is one of the best on his or her team.
- ✓ He or she starts to disengage when at their recreational practices.
- ✓ The player sees higher-level players and wants to be like them.
- ✓ The player is mature enough to commit to more frequent practices and more strenuous training.
- ✓ The player likes competition.

### **Areas to Consider:**

Let your child guide you. Don't push him or her into trying out for a competitive team just because you want it. Some players are ready as young as 6, and some aren't ready to move up until their early teens. Talk to your child and gauge his or her feelings about trying out for a competitive club.

The child should also understand that it is he or she alone who is trying out; in some cases their best friend (also attending the tryout) may not make the team.

### **What can you expect if your child makes the team?**

- *Regular attendance* at all practices and games. If a player cannot attend, they or the parents must notify the coach as soon as possible. Players need to arrive ON TIME. Please review attendance policies. NOTE: Attendance is one of a few factors that affect playing time.
- If playing *multiple sports*, the player should prioritize soccer above other sports when conflicts occur.
- *Proper attire and equipment*. Competitive soccer players should always be in dress code for both practices and games. Additionally, they should have a properly inflated soccer ball, protective gear (shin guards), gloves (goalkeepers), etc.
- *Financial responsibility*. Parents should budget the costs of competitive soccer and prepare to take care of expenses in a timely manner.
- *Maintain standards of behavior*. Players and parents must control their actions and words. The level of play in academy and select becomes more physical as players move through the age groups and skill levels. Players must learn to keep their play and their emotions under control on the field. Parents must resist the urge to instruct and allow the player's coaches to address any issues with both players and referees.
- *Remain flexible when it comes to scheduling*. It is not uncommon for weather to interrupt games, seasons and tournaments. It is imperative that a family and player accommodate for those changes.

IF THESE COMMITMENTS CANNOT BE MET, THE PLAYER MAY NOT BE READY FOR THE COMPETITIVE REALM.