

Winchester United Soccer

Travel Soccer Handbook



Welcome to Winchester United

The Winchester United Travel Soccer Program is a unique player development program, open to players in age groups U10 through U19. Headed by James Carden and his staff of qualified coaches, the program fosters the physical, mental, and emotional growth and development of all participants through the sport of soccer at the travel level. Please use this handbook as your guide to Winchester United travel soccer policies and events. Coach Carden and his staff are available to answer questions and help your family get the most out of your travel soccer experience.

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I History of Winchester United

Winchester United is a travel soccer program whose teams are members of the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA), and the Winchester Youth Soccer Club (WYSC), a division of the Blue Ridge Youth Soccer Association (BRYSA). Recreation and Travel Divisions are co-sponsored by the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department and the Winchester Parks and Recreation Department.

The Winchester United program was founded during the fall of 1999 by local soccer enthusiasts, Dave Marut, Dino Morgoglione, and Jim Spangler. In the spring of 2000, Jim Carden, became Winchester United’s Club Director. Under Coach Carden’s leadership, the program has grown tremendously. Winchester United currently has ten teams with players ranging in age from ten to nineteen years.

II Introduction to Travel Soccer

Recreation – Travel, What’s the Difference?

RECREATION (a.k.a. “Rec”) If you are like most parents, your child’s experience with soccer has been at the recreational level. The Recreational Division of BRYSA sponsors recreational teams in the Winchester area. These teams are formed based on age and demographic location of the player’s residence. There are no try-outs to determine on which team a child will play, costs of participation are low, and while scores are kept each game, the emphasis of the recreational program is non-competitive.

TRAVEL (a.k.a. “Select” or “Club”) Travel soccer is more competitive in nature. Travel teams offer competition and training for players who have the potential, drive and desire to compete at a higher level. The primary focus of the Winchester United Travel Program is player development through quality coaching and high quality competition. Great emphasis is placed on teamwork and sportsmanship. During pre-announced tryout dates, players wishing to earn a position on a Winchester United travel team participate in annual tryouts. State and national associations restrict the number of players on each travel team to eighteen players or less.

Teams in the Winchester United Program can participate in the National Capital Soccer League (NCSL) or the Old Dominion Soccer League (ODSL) or in Washington Area Girls Soccer League (WAGS). All of these leagues consist of teams from the metropolitan Washington D.C. area. League games are scheduled primarily on Sundays, although there may be an occasional Saturday game. Home games will be played on local soccer fields and Away games will be played on fields typically within a one to two hour drive from Winchester. The schedule traditionally consists of 8-10 league games, half of which are played at our home fields and the other half away. The fall season begins the weekend after Labor Day and extends through mid November. The spring season begins in March and extends through June.

In addition to league play, most Winchester United teams play in tournaments each season. Tournaments are typically held Labor Day Weekend, Columbus Day Weekend, a post season November weekend, Memorial Day weekend and a post season June weekend. Our younger teams typically apply to one seasonal tournament while the older age groups may play in as many as three tournaments in a season. Older age groups may also elect to participate in the Virginia Youth Soccer Association’s State Cup. Each player’s amount of playing time during league and tournament games is at the discretion of the team’s coach. Unlike Rec soccer, all players do not receive equal playing time. Each coach continually determines the player’s level of skill and adjusts playing time accordingly. Playing time will be dependant upon performance at practice and at games.

When a player is selected and accepts a position for a Winchester United travel team, that player is expected to fulfill a commitment to play, in league and tournament competitions. U-10 through U14 age groups participate in both the fall and spring seasons while U-15 and above are only required to play a fall schedule (due to the high school season).

Winchester United travel teams practice two or more times a week for approximately one and one-half hours each practice. As with games and tournaments, practices are mandatory, as they are vital for individual player development and also for development and cohesiveness of the team. Punctuality is expected. Players participate in age-specific curriculums each practice session.

A Team Manager conducts the administrative duties for the team and communicates various team activities to the players and parents. This person volunteers their time to keep the team's administrative matters organized and we ask that each player and parent give them their full cooperation. Decisions on each team's tournament and league selection are made through a joint effort between Coach Carden, the team's coach, and the parents of the players on that team.

III Costs to Play Travel Soccer

There are various fees associated with participation in the Winchester United program. These fees include Coaches' Training, League, VYSA, Player Passes, Insurance, WYSC/BRYSA Administration, Uniform, and Tournament Entry Fees. These fees and charges total approximately \$400 per player each Fall and Spring season. In addition to these fees, each player will be responsible for the purchase of his/her own team shorts and socks.

Out-of-town expenses incurred while participating in tournaments are not included in this figure. The largest family expenses for tournament play are lodging and food. Should a team choose to play in a tournament from which they can return home each evening, travel expenses may be substantially reduced by eliminating lodging costs.

Discounts for training fees are applied to siblings, managers and coaches as follows:

- First child (pays 100%), Second child (pays 90%), and Additional children (pay 100%)
- Managers (pay 50% training fees + 100% goalie fee)
- Coaches (pay 0% training fees + 100% goalie fee)

IV Scholarships

Winchester United offers a limited number of scholarships for players who have financial need. The availability of scholarships is determined by the pool of funds available each year in the Scholarship Account. Joint fundraising efforts and donations add to the scholarship fund. Players seeking financial assistance should contact the team manager, who will pass the request to the Treasurer of the WYSC Board of Directors. This request should be made before accepting a position on a team. Scholarship requests remain in strict confidence. All scholarship requests should be made no later than September 30th in the fall season and April 30th in the spring season.

V Travel Tryouts – What to Expect

Winchester United holds open tryouts in late May or early June each year. Tryouts are held on two scheduled days and all players desiring consideration for membership on a team should attempt to attend both of the dates. The posting of the dates of tryouts will be advertised in the *Winchester Star* and posted on the BRYSA website (www.brysa.org).

Even those players previously rostered with a Winchester United team must attend tryouts and be selected in order to earn a spot on the team for the following year (both Fall and Spring season).

Team eligibility is based on two criteria, Age and/or Grade, and will have an age group “U” (meaning “under”) designation. Stated tryout age groups will typically be U10, U11, U12, U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, and U19.

Let's look at an example for eligibility for a U15 team. This is a team of players under the age of 15 years.

Eligibility requirements for this team would be:

- 1) The player is no older than 14 years of age as of August 1 of that tryout year.
 - 2) If the player is younger than 14 years on July 31 of the following year, that player must be entering the corresponding grade for that age group.
- For example, for the 2005-2006 season, a U15 player would require a birth date between August 1, 1990 and July 31, 1991.
 - A player born prior to August 1, 1990 is ineligible (the player is too old for this age group).
 - A player born after July 31, 1991 is eligible **ONLY** if he/she is entering the 9th grade during the 2005-2006 school year.

These eligibility dates and grades will be clearly posted on the tryout announcement and at the registration table during tryout dates.

It may be necessary for newly formed teams to have players of multiple ages selected for the team. All players must meet the maximum allowable age limit as governed by the affiliated leagues and WYSC as outlined above. For example, a newly formed team of U10 players may roster players who are eight, nine, and/or ten years old. This exception to the age/grade eligibility rule is applicable only if there is not an age/grade appropriate team available. During subsequent seasons, returning players of these newly formed teams will try-out for their age/grade appropriate team as soon as such a team is available.

Winchester United is committed to ensuring that all children receive a fair and equitable evaluation during these tryout sessions. Qualified Program coaches will be assessing the individual player's fitness, athleticism, skills and attitude. All players attending tryouts are identified by number rather than name to ensure a fair selection process. Selection of team members is at the discretion of Jim Carden, WYSC Club Director, and his coaching staff. No

player will be discriminated against based on race, religion, or financial ability. You will be notified by phone if your child has or has not been selected for a team.

During the registration process, you will be required to provide a full-face photo of your player and either an original birth certificate or previous player pass. The original birth certificate will be returned to you following registration of your player.

VI Practices, League and Tournament Play

We have already discussed the importance of attendance of practices, league, and tournament games in Section II. Winchester United teams begin practices the second week of August and end in November, when their league play comes to an end.

The first weekend of fall league play is traditionally the weekend following Labor Day. Spring League play begins early March. League schedules are typically not released until a week or two prior to the first league game. Players are expected to be ready to begin practice at their designated dates and times. In addition, players are typically expected to arrive for “home” league games approximately 30 minutes prior to game time, and “away” league and tournament games approximately 45 minutes prior to game time. The coach of your player’s team may indicate arrival times, which may differ from these guidelines.

Tournaments can be a wonderful experience, if you are prepared. There may be a delay between games of several hours, and quite often, field locations are not close to shopping or restaurants, so you will want to plan for your player’s (and your family’s) snacks, meals, and drinks. In addition, most families bring chairs in which to sit on the sidelines (there are seldom bleachers), hats and sunscreen for early fall and late spring, plenty of warm things as the weather turns cooler, and umbrellas for all seasons.

Other Club events that players and parents are expected to participate in are a Kick Off Jamboree held before the start of the Fall season and the Winchester United Banquet held at the end of the Fall season.

VII Players’ Attendance Policy

Participation in Travel soccer is a commitment and players are expected to be at practices, games and tournaments on time. Each player’s amount of playing time during league and tournament games is at the discretion of the team’s coach. **Unlike Rec soccer, all players do not receive equal playing time.** Each coach continually determines the player’s level of skill and adjusts playing time accordingly. **Playing time will be dependant upon performance and attendance at practice and at games.**

VIII Parents' and Players' Code of Conduct

The Program takes pride in the sportsmanship of its players and spectators. While the coaches will help to remind players of their responsibility to maintain composure and exhibit the highest level of sportsmanship, it is of utmost importance that the players' parents and siblings also show the same level of respect and sportsmanship to all players, coaches, and officials. Positive support will help all of the players and the Winchester United Program.

Winchester United supports the following policies for our travel parents:

- Do not, under any circumstances, shout abusively at your child or any other child. Abusive verbal behavior by parents will not be tolerated. Violators may be asked to leave the venue and may be sanctioned.
- Verbal or physical abuse of any coach or referee will not be tolerated and violators may be sanctioned.
- Do not coach your child or other children from the sideline during the game. Please make only positive comments to the players. Our coaches will provide instructional input during games.

Specific Codes of Conduct apply to each league in which the teams participate. These guidelines will be discussed with you during your team's pre-season meeting.

IX Program Miscellaneous

Winchester United's players wear the program's designated uniform. The players' main jersey is orange in color with the alternate jersey in white. Shorts and socks are navy blue. Each team's manager collects the orange and white jerseys at the end of each season. Uniforms are to be clean at the start of each game with jerseys tucked neatly into shorts during play. In addition, all players, boys and girls, must have their hair pulled back during practices and games to ensure that the hair is not in the player's eyes.

X Organization of BRYSA and WYSC

Blue Ridge Youth Soccer Association (BRYSA) had been known for years as Winchester's Recreational Soccer sponsor. This recreational organization was independent for many years from the local travel soccer club, Winchester Youth Soccer Club (WYSC). Late in 2000, these two soccer organizations merged under the name of BRYSA, with two divisions: Recreational and Travel. BRYSA Rec. maintains its BRYSA identity for Recreational Soccer teams and WYSC maintains its name for Travel teams, but both of these divisions are now part of the parent organization known as the Blue Ridge Youth Soccer Association.

As stated in Section I, Winchester United teams are members of WYSC, the Travel division of BRYSA. Policies and Procedures for WYSC and BRYSA can be found on the BRYSA website.

We encourage all parents to take the time to read these policies under which our teams are governed. (www.brysa.org)

A team representative, normally your Team Manager attends regular managers' meetings. These representatives discuss important matters that concern your player's team in the Winchester United Program, and the Winchester Youth Soccer Club. The WYSC Board meets quarterly and discusses matters that concern the Travel Division. Any interested person is a welcomed guest at the manager meeting or WYSC Board meetings, but will not have a vote in agenda items.

XI Fundraisers

Travel soccer holds an annual fundraiser in which all team members and parents are asked to participate. This past season, the fundraiser was a Little Tykes Soccer Academy open to four and five-year-old children. Proceeds from our annual fundraiser go into the WYSC Scholarship Account and are divided equally among teams with scholarship needs. As the revenues generated from fundraising efforts change from year to year, so does the amount allocated to each team for scholarship purposes. Other fundraising activities may be held throughout the year. *Players and parents are expected to participate in fundraising.*

XII Questions and Concerns

Player and parent concerns should be discussed with the Coach. If the problem is not resolved the Coaching Director will get involved. The Director may reply verbally or in writing.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Director's decision, he/she can write to the Board regarding their concern. The Board has up to 14 days to respond the complainant. The Board must respond in writing.

XIII Winchester United Contact Information

Please feel free to contact our Director, Jim Carden, at 247-1942 or the WYSC Chairman of the Board of Directors, Karen Hillyard 869-7503 with your questions regarding the Winchester United Program.