There are three (3) types of tryout procedures. Each type has different goals and requirements:

- U-9 to U-14
- U-15 and above
- Premier Elite Teams

There are four (4) main steps in the tryout process:

- Pre-Tryout Information Gathering
- Tryout Evaluation Process
- Coach/Manager and Team Selection
- Team Offers

**Tryout Procedure Philosophy**

Annually conduct advertised tryouts for all returning and new teams, thus allowing youth residing within and outside the township of West Windsor and the township of Plainsboro an opportunity to compete for a position on a travel soccer team. All tryouts must be open, fair, transparent, and without bias, the goal being to form teams based on age and gender with players who have similar skills, athleticism, ability, determination and commitment for the expected competitive level of the team.

**General Ground Rules for Tryouts**

- The Travel Executive Committee (TEC) now includes a position dedicated to the management specifically of the U-9 through U-14 tryouts. This role is Tryout Coordinator (TC).
- Roster Spots for teams are never guaranteed and trainers/team managers should never tell parents that a player will or will not make a team, nor should they comment on other player’s potential to make a team.
- Players should not wear their team uniforms (jerseys) to tryouts.
- Our U-9 to U-14 team tryouts are conducted solely by professional soccer evaluators. No parents are permitted on the field during tryouts, nor are parents permitted to participate in the player evaluation process during tryouts. All volunteer parent team managers and/or volunteer coaches for the upcoming year are chosen after the players for a team are selected.
- Players may be permitted to “play-up” subject to the approval of the Travel Executive Committee (TEC) upon completion of the tryouts. Players who wish to play up are encouraged to try out in both their own age group and the older age group. Special consideration will be given to players who request to “play-up” with their school classmates and are then selected for a team. Approval to play up is not guaranteed.
• Out of town players are permitted to tryout. Team formation will be done from the final rankings list regardless of residency. Players **must** attend a tryout to be considered for a roster spot. The TEC will approve any situations where more than half of an age group is from out of town.

• Small-sided teams ideally will have 11 or 12 players on their roster. Full-sided teams ideally will have 15 or 16 players on their roster.

• Full-time goal keepers will be available for U10 and older teams. U9 teams will still employ a goalie rotation.

• Specific tryout results and rankings should never be quoted because the information is personal and sensitive. Trainers should be able to explain decisions using nonspecific descriptions of the results.

• Conflicts of interest among process participants such as Tryout Evaluators, Tryout Coordinator and Travel Executive Committee members must be declared prior to tryouts, to permit an individual to be replaced in the process for the affected age/gender group.

• All tryout participants must receive an e-mail with the results.

• When making offers to players, it is important that the trainer provides the parents with an indication of his/her plans for the team in the upcoming year and how the team will function including playing time, leagues, tournaments, cost, etc. General guidelines for different travel team categories can be found on travel section of the club’s website.

• There will be a standardized tryout evaluation form used by the evaluators to record and report results.

• All teams must conduct an open tryout each year. If there is more than one team in the same age & gender returning the next year, an age group tryout is required to facilitate the process except where noted for U-15 and older.

• Regardless of the age group and gender, prior to the tryout date(s), all tryouts must be posted on the WWPSA website 3 weeks prior to the first date and advertised in the local media 2 weeks prior to the first date. Information provided must include time, place and person to contact.

• Prior to the commencement of tryouts the TEC must set a date by which offers to players must be finalized.

• Trainers will begin making offers as soon as possible after completion of a tryout.

• Typically for an age group and gender, the first offers are made within one week of the completion of tryouts.

• Any deviation from the tryout procedures incorporated within this document requires approval vis-à-vis a majority vote of the TEC.

• A returning player will not be allowed to tryout if he or she has:
  ◦ not completed the tryout registration form
  ◦ outstanding debts to the Club or a WWPSA team.
U-9 to U-14 Tryouts

The Tryout Coordinator (TC) is responsible for the U-9 to U-14 age groups and will facilitate the tryout process and dispute resolution.

Pre-Tryout
In advance of tryouts, the following information must be gathered to facilitate steps later in the process;

1. Program Evaluation Form/Parents Feedback Survey – Must be distributed to all families. This form (found under the Travel section on the website) requests feedback from parents, which is an important part of the smooth functioning of our organization. Failure to inform team parents of this survey could be cause for that coach/manager to not be reinstated for the next year.

2. Player Rankings/Player Evaluations (Team Managers and Trainers) – The TC, prior to tryouts, must receive a single ranked list of rostered players from each team manager. Team managers are encouraged to include written assessments of players at this point in the process. This information is accumulated by the TC and kept confidential during much of the tryout process. Trainers will submit a mid-season evaluation no later than 3 days prior to the commencement of tryouts. This information will be used if any abhorrent results occur during the tryout process.

3. Team Manager Applications – WWPSA employs professional trainers to be the head coach of the travel teams. The TC will ask the current team manager volunteers in early April. The Director of Coaching (DOC) and TEC will review current volunteers expressing interest in returning in the period up to tryouts. For new teams, during the formation meeting WWPSA will ask for volunteers for those teams. Where applicable, an appropriate NJYS coaching license is required. Final assessment and selection will occur once the tryout results are known.

Tryout Evaluation Process

1. A combined age-group-tryout is mandatory and will be organized by the TC. All players intending to play the next year must attend a tryout unless given special consideration by the TC. In special considerations such as injuries, the TC must be notified by a parent that their child can not participate in the tryout. It is also highly recommended that parents indicate to the check-in coordinator on tryout date(s) that their child is not able to make the tryout due to an injury so that it is properly noted. Parents should not rely on coaches informing the TC that a player is not able to attend tryouts due to an injury. A doctor's note is required for all instances of non-attendance due to injury or illness.

2. There will be a minimum of 2 - 90 minute sessions.
3. The tryout format will incorporate skills based evaluations in addition to the small sided games, which are a staple of the tryout process. For U-9 to U-10, tryouts will end in an 8v8 format while for U-11 to U-14, they will end in an 11v11 format. Under certain circumstances, U-11 may also conduct an 8v8 session.

4. The sessions will be run using a combination of current team’s professional trainer(s) and independent professional evaluators who have no previous exposure to the age group and gender.

5. The DOC will provide a schedule of the professional trainer-evaluators as well as the independent evaluator by age group and gender to the TC and TEC 2 weeks prior to the tryout.

6. In instances where a parent of a player in the age group and gender is also the only team trainer, the individual will be requested to identify a substitute professional evaluator.

7. It will be the responsibility of the professional evaluators to jointly develop a single ranking for the entire age group at the end of the process. The independent professional evaluator will make the decision whenever there is a disagreement over a ranking but will seek consensus among all evaluators.

**Team Selection**

1. The TC will gather and keep confidential all player ranking results.

2. To ratify the tryout lists the TC will chair a panel consisting of at least 2 more TEC members for each age group and gender. The TC will exclude any TEC member that has a conflict such as a player on an age group or trains a specific age group. The panel will use the team manager rankings and the professional trainer evaluations to identify and resolve any anomalies.

3. Team Manager Selection: The Travel Executive Committee (TEC) will confidentially assess team manager candidates and work with the TC to make a selection based on all available information including criteria such as experience, qualifications, program evaluation form comments, feedback from trainers, and the player rankings. Wherever possible, to promote continuity and the long-term best interest of the players, the TEC generally has a bias toward qualified returning coaches/managers “in good standing” and will try to select a volunteer parent from the top half of the player rankings for a team.

4. Team Category: The “A” team within a specific age and gender may not necessarily be considered a Premier team. In order to qualify for this status, the team must expect to meet the minimum guidelines required for a Premier team. Similarly, it is possible that two teams within an age-group and gender may be designated Premier if they both meet the minimum guidelines required for a Premier team and if approved by the TEC.

5. Roster Selection: panel(s) noted in #2, will develop a finalized ranked lists. The TC will present the list to the DOC and Director of Travel (DOT). The DOC can suggest changes, mindful that changes must be substantiated and agreed upon by the TEC. A couple of alternates should also be agreed upon should any offers not be accepted.
Team Offers

1. Once the lists are finalized, the TC, DOC and DOT will prepare email invitations to approved players. The offer process will begin with the “A” team. The players will have 48 hours to accept the offer.

2. Once the “A” team has been formed, the TC, DOC and DOT will send email invitations to the “B” team. The players will have 48 hours to accept the offer.

3. The process will be repeated for however many teams are to be formed.

4. It is absolutely critical that all families who attended the tryout receive a call. If any players did not make a team, the DOC will send emails to those families with remaining options for the player to continue their development.

5. The TC will keep the list for each team, to monitor registrations to ensure all players are registered.
U15 and Older Tryouts

The TC is responsible for these age groups and will facilitate the tryout process and dispute resolution. Team Managers within the same age & gender group must jointly discuss their plans and present a tryout plan to the TC prior to the publication of the spring tryout schedule. The TC will present the TEC with the tryout plans for each age group. Since these teams play primarily in the spring their formation may not be completed until early to mid fall.

Pre-Tryout

The TC will request the days, time and place of the team practices.

Team Managers will let the TC know if they plan to continue on in the role.

The Team Manager will work with the DOC to either retain current trainer or find a replacement. The TC will assist as necessary.

Tryout Evaluation Process

Team Managers and the TC will direct any interested player to the proper team. The player will attend as many practices as the Team Manager and Team Trainer need to get a proper assessment of the player in terms of talent and fit with team.

Team Offers

The Team Manager will offer a spot to any player that the Team Trainer has assessed fits into the skill level of the team.
Mercer FC (Premier Elite) Team Tryouts

Premier Elite teams can be formed when the talent and commitment are present. Refer to the ‘Travel Team Categories’ link within the Youth Travel Program section of the Club’s web site for details on the different travel team categories. The TC facilitates the tryouts at the request of the Mercer FC Program Director. These tryouts are invitation only and players must attend at least one of their age group’s open tryout.

Pre-Tryout
1. Tryout schedules will be posted on the WWPSA web site at least three weeks prior to the first tryout date. The Club will also advertise the tryouts in the local newspaper at least two weeks prior to the first tryout date.
2. Every player must complete a tryout registration form in order to facilitate tryouts.
3. The following will be made public and posted on the Club’s web site at least two weeks prior to the tryouts:
   i) name and qualifications of the Mercer FC trainers
   ii) a preliminary outline of the team schedule in the upcoming season indication of dates and frequency for practices, league(s) play, tournaments, etc. during the summer, fall, winter and spring
   iii) a specific set of team and player objectives and expectations
   iv) team fees

Head Coach & Team Manager Selection
1. Every team will have a professional Head Coach.
2. The professional Head Coach is responsible for all aspects of soccer for the team including team training and coaching during friendlies, scrimmages, league games and tournament games. The Head Coach will handle all administrative aspects of the team as well.

Tryout Evaluation
1. Tryouts are for players who have the desire, soccer skills and year round commitment to the sport of soccer to compete within NJYS premier leagues and/or within NJYS affiliated premier leagues within the Mid-Atlantic States.
2. For the U-10 through U-14 age groups, Mercer FC tryouts will be conducted at the same time and location as the WWPSA Tryouts. When necessary, a separate 3rd tryout date may be conducted following the 2 standard tryouts noted earlier in this document. Participation in the Premier Elite team tryout is by invitation only by the Mercer FC Program Director.
3. Any player interested in trying out for a Premier Elite team must attend a minimum of one of the standard tryouts to be considered for an invitation to the Premier Elite team tryout.
4. For U-15 and older, teams will be selected through advertised individual team tryouts which begin in May and end in the fall.

**Team Offers**

1. Whether a Premier Elite team is formed in a particular age group and gender in a given year is determined by two factors:
   a. the level of interest expressed by players and parents;
   b. assessment of skill level at the tryouts.

2. The Mercer FC Program Director is responsible for team formation and selection. The Mercer FC Program Director will make the offer to each player and will be responsible for communicating the final roster to the TC in a timely manner.