

## Cape Elizabeth Soccer Club U13 and U14 Team Formation

Starting with the 2021 season, CESC will form competitive teams at the U13 and U14 levels. This is a change from prior years in which all kids were placed on the same team without regard to player evaluations. This document explains what that means and why we have made the change.

### Team Formation Policy:

CESC will form competitive teams of 16-18 players at the U13 and U14 levels to play at the Division I level for the Fall Classic League. Players who do not make the team will not be cut from CESC. The options for players who do not make the Division 1 team depend primarily on the number of total players registered at the U13 and U14 groups.

If there are enough players (typically at least 16), either at one age group or by combining some of the U13s and U14s, a Division 2 team will be offered. If there are not enough players to form a Division 2 team, either at one age group or by combining age groups, or a player would prefer to stay within their own age group, players will be offered a training player roster spot on the Division 1 team for their age group. A training player is a player that will practice with the Division 1 team and may get the opportunity to play in friendlies (i.e., scrimmages), if scheduling allows. Players who choose not to play will be offered a full refund. Players who play as training players will receive a 50% refund off of the registration fee.

For consideration for placement on the U13 or U14 Division 1 team, one must.

1. Register on time.
2. At registration determine if you want to be a full player or training player (see discussion below for a description of a training player).
3. Attend assessments, if conducted. Depending on numbers registered there will likely be a need for **assessments** depending on the number of registrants. Soccer Maine states that a team of 16-18 players is ideal. When registration numbers go beyond this threshold, there will be a need to assign some players with an option that may not be on a Division 1 team.
4. Following assessments, "offers" will be made to players to participate in one of 3 ways: Division 1 team; Division 2 team (either within their age group or on a combined U13-U14 team); or training player. Those who choose not to accept the offer will receive a full refund.

### Question and Answers

CESC recognizes that in our current Covid environment that the ability for kids to be active and participate is essential to their mental and physical well-being. Soccer has been an exceptional outlet within town in the last year to do just that. It is not CESC's desire to cut or lose kids due to this transition to competitive teams at U13 and U14, but rather to place kids in an environment in which they can maintain social interactions safely while continuing to progress as soccer players in a manner that maximizes their touches and ability to play.

### Why is CESC doing this?

For the last 7 years CESC has formed balanced teams throughout the club. This has resulted in a consistent problem at the U13 and U14 age groups. More often than not CESC has 20-24 players on these teams. Soccer Maine recommends that teams at this age group have only 16-18 kids. This means our team is too large for one team, but not large enough for two teams. Not wishing to cut kids, CESC has had to ask for waivers from Soccer Maine to field excessively large teams. These excessively large teams have greatly reduced game play for participants, made practices unwieldy, increased stress on coaches trying to figure how to play all these kids, and frustrated parents who may have higher expectations for playing time.

### Is this all about winning and creating the best team possible?

No, it is not about winning. Ask any coach in our club and most will respond that their greatest enjoyment in coaching is seeing the kids develop the skills that help them to grow into adults, and maybe tell you about one or two plays that brought a huge smile to a kid's face during the season. CESC has been and will remain primarily focused on player development. This transition to competitive teams is really about setting expectations for the season, maximizing touches and development, and creating more realistic playing time expectations in league games for D1 kids or friendlies for training players or by having a whole additional team.

### Why is there a transition at U13 and U14?

Historically, with other soccer options in 7th and 8th grade, CESC sees a slight decline in registrations in this age group because some players decide that Middle School soccer is enough soccer each week, some players decide to play for other clubs (e.g., Seacoast or Maine Lightning), and some players decide to try a different fall sport. CESC does not want to make cuts and is dedicated to developing all soccer players who are dedicated to playing soccer and focused on their soccer development.

### What is a Training Player?

A training player is a player that sticks with their age group but is not rostered on the Classic league or tournament game rosters. Training players will participate in all Division 1 team practices and may have the opportunity to play in some friendly matches (i.e., scrimmages). Registration as a training player is 50% off of the normal registration fee.

### Will team formation be the same every time?

The common theme for team formation is flexibility. It is a framework and expectation to help create our teams at U13 and U14 levels. Each season and group has its own unique challenges. The number of registrations is the biggest key. CESC will also consult with coaches from past seasons, consider the results of assessments, and factor in other considerations that may be relevant from year to year.

### What are other towns doing?

Nearly all of the towns we play in the Fall Classic League have competitive teams at U13 and U14. This has been done as Middle School soccer begins and players have a choice whether to play for their school, their travel club, or both. For comparison, the following chart details what some of the other Fall Classic League in the Portland metro area towns are doing.

Town	D1	D2	Assessments?	Cuts?	Training Players?	Highschool Opponent?	Competitive teams at U13/U14?
CAPE	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	-	Yes
CUMBERLAND	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes (Greely)	Yes
FALMOUTH	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	?	Varies Yearly	Yes
FREEPORT	Yes	Sometimes *	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
GORHAM	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
PORTLAND	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes-Waynefleet	Yes
SCARBOROUGH	Yes	Sometimes*	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
SO, PO	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	?	No	Yes

WINDHAM	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
YARMOUTH	Yes	Frequently	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

### **What is the competition like?**

The competition level at U13 and U14 for the Fall Classic League is always high. At this level, there is less emphasis on equal playing time, and more emphasis on competitive play. Equal playing time is no longer guaranteed, but is at the discretion of the coaches. Depending on many factors, players will likely play more in some games than others. Depending on the size of the team, there may be games when some players get very little minutes on the field during games.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER PRIMER:**

### **Can I play both Middle School and CESC?**

Yes, most kids play for both teams. CESC fully supports kids playing on the Middle School team. It should be understood, however, that Middle School soccer is completely independent of CESC.

### **Can I play for CESC but not Middle School?**

Yes, although CESC believes that it should be thought of as an extension to the school team, meant for those players looking to play soccer at a more competitive level. An exception to this would be players who are committed to CESC and another club team or who choose to play more than one fall sport.

### **How many games and practices per week?**

The Middle School team typically plays 4 days per week: 3 for practices and 1 for games. All activities are on weekdays. Practices are usually right after school and kids are done in time to catch the late bus home. You read that right: no driving kids to and from practice!

### **Are there cuts?**

There are no cuts in Middle School. Everyone makes it and everyone gets playing time!

### **What is the cost?**

There is a middle school athletic fee of \$75 that once paid, covers your student athlete for all three (3) seasons of middle school sports. Uniforms are supplied by the school.