



## ***Player Placement FAQ***

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As a soccer parent, family or player you've many choices in where you choose to call your soccer home. At Westminster Soccer/Westminster AFC we value your choice, our players, and their growth and development as citizens and athletes. This shapes our processes every day. We could spend many pages telling you about our club, we will instead provide you with some highlights, answers to frequently asked questions, and an open invitation to ask our staff more as we hope you make our club, your club.

### ***ABOUT WESTMINSTER SOCCER/WESTMINSTER AFC-***

Our organization has partnered with the City of Westminster in providing soccer opportunities in the Westminster community and surrounding area for over 15 years to date. On an annual basis this means servicing approximately 1750-2000 players and families ranging from 4-23. In 2014-15 nearly 900 of these played under the Westminster AFC badge as competitive players. We are proud to service this community and area, the world's game, and to show ourselves to be the premier youth club in the north-metro Denver area!

We take great pride in every aspect of our club, but in particular we pride ourselves on having a professional and forward looking approach, in putting our player and member first, and in serving our community and sport in a manner that is second to none. We are your professional but personal connection to the global game.

***Professionalism:*** Together our key staff brings more than 40 years experience in serving the Westminster soccer community and it's immediately surrounding areas. Their service and experiences in the game, which includes individuals holding the highest level coaching credentials, graduate and post-graduate qualifications, and extensive experience in working within youth, collegiate and professional soccer environments stands out among our neighbors and competitors. We guarantee your player will be treated with respect, shown deference to the game, their opponents, and those who officiate; and will be a part of an organization that exemplifies professionalism on and off the field when you choose Westminster Soccer.

***A forward thinking approach:*** The soccer "landscape" has seen dramatic shifts from the highest levels, particularly the United States Soccer Federation (USSF), in recent years. As these changes affect pathways in the game, we have adapted our programs to best serve our member in a local, regional and national sense. Our club has shown that we can lead in our area by developing programming that is attendant to the pathway for player development set forth by USSF, but tailored to our member and player at the same time.

We take it as flattery that many area clubs have since modeled their practices on our own as we introduced age appropriate programs like the Elite and Academy Training programs, the "squad" development system, our Player Performance, Player Development, and College Advisory Programs to the area in recent seasons.

***A player-first philosophy:*** While our programming is based around the USSF Developmental Curriculum, our philosophy recognizes our player within the vast landscape of soccer. We offer age specific training by our pro coaching and training staff, which includes several area collegiate coaches, for every player in our club. This approach allows us to push every player's growth, while being capable of closely monitoring his or her process along the way. Our evaluation processes are in effect at every moment in the seasonal year; from the time your player signs to play with our club.

While we attend to the development curriculum from USSF, we recognize that this pathway is narrowly focused toward developing the player to the professional or national level, and as such

Revised 5/19/15



## ***Player Placement FAQ***

---

we adjust our programming slightly to serve our member more pointedly by developing players in the game, as citizens, future college students, and collegiate student-athletes. This allows us to advance players toward the highest levels, and to focus on targets that more directly affect more of our members and our community.

### ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS-***

Q: We've heard that Westminster AFC teams at u11 are playing 11v11, is this true?

A: Yes. While Colorado Soccer Association (CSA) has begun offering parallel league formats at u11 (9v9 & 11v11) we have, for the time being, elected to keep our competitive players and teams playing the eleven-a-side format. This is a complex decision, and while our key staff support the small-sided games (SSG) approach, as reflected in our in-house programs up to u10, at this time we feel the best developmental environment for our competitive players remains at 11v11.

Q: Will Westminster AFC move to the smaller league format in the future?

A: We will continue to work with CSA and other clubs in the state and Region IV to shape the soccer experience for the players in these areas. Again, our staff supports the SSG approach; however, many elements of implementing a league format change must be considered, and attended to, in order to appropriately tailor the developmental environment for the players within.

Q: Does my player have to be "great" to play at Westminster AFC?

A: No. We offer teams and training programs for players at any level. Our competitive programs offer teams playing in every level from Challenge to Super League. Our partnership with the City of Westminster allows us to assist with 5v5, 7v7 and 9v9 recreational soccer options for players up to u12, and 11v11 options for u13-14. Competitive programs are 11v11 at this time, with the exception to our u8-10 competitive teams, which play 7v7.

Q: How are Player Placements (tryouts) conducted, and why?

A: First, we want to tell you that the process known most commonly as tryouts is a flawed one. Our aim is to make this experience easy for the member as attainable, as low-stress as possible for the player, and professional and effective for everyone. There are many factors and moving parts in the placement process, too many to explain here, but we guarantee that our approach is professional, efficient and honest. The primary goal is to pair the player with like ability players, and the best developmental setting for them at this moment in time.

You may also review our "Player Placement in 1-2-3 Easy Steps" info sheet.

Q: What does it cost to play for a team?

A: Costs for competitive soccer vary by level and age. Our pricing is tailored around service and programming for your player. We place professionally licensed, non-parent coaches on every team or squad from u8-18. For all WAFC programs, coaching services fees are included in our program pricing. We invite you to contact our club for more details, but proudly place our costs and programming alongside any club's, as we are more than competitive in the market. Additionally, we offer many options to assist in reducing and deferring the costs of competitive soccer for our members.



## ***Player Placement FAQ***

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Q: What is the structure?

A: At competitive levels (u10 & above) we offer the following:

First Team	Samba
Second Team	Cosmos
Third Team	Copa

If/when needs must, we will offer a fourth team; however, our model is based on servicing the best suited players to the competitive environment at a consistently higher level than our neighbor clubs, and many across the state and region. We will always work to find appropriate opportunities for any player attending Player Placements; however, we believe in emphasizing quality over merely having large numbers of players/teams.

Q: What level will my team play at?

A: We place teams based on a number of factors, including past performance and development within our programs and against other competition. At u11, with their entrance into the formal competitive structure within CSA, we place teams based on their ability, and an assessment of the best developmental environment for that group of players. It is important that players be placed in meaningful and challenging situations, on a regular basis, and their league placement is a significant element of this process.

The state governing body has rules governing league operation, which will impact, even dictate placement beyond u11. Most prominently the league rules contain promotion and relegation processes aimed at sustaining a consistent level of competition within each level of league play. Overseen by a League Operations Committee, these rules contain specific criteria for teams to promote (move up), or relegate (move down), at fixed periods within the seasonal year, and in between seasonal years, as well as pertinent processes for placing teams at u11 based on a formula using historical data from the member club.

We encourage you to review the complete information regarding these processes as provided by CSA at: <http://www.coyouthsoccer.org/UserFiles/file/Rules%202013-14%20Final%20Draft.pdf>

Q: What if my player is unable to attend/participate Player Placement (tryouts)?

A: For current Westminster players we ask that you contact our Technical Director to let them know of this, but assure you this will not affect your player's placement. We evaluate our player year round, and have a very well informed understanding of their growth, and needs in the game. For new or prospective players, we offer early evaluations during the spring season of play. Please contact our Director of Coaching to arrange an early evaluation. These evaluations and the placement sessions are our chance to evaluate your play and compare you to current ("known") players for team placement.

Q: When will I/we know about my, or my player's, placement?

A: There are many more players than coaches involved in the process, which takes place over a 3-4 day window across the state. Our commitment is to execute the process in a manner that we believe is simple, honest, and better than those around us. We notify players of placement in two manners: First, every player who is offered a position receives this offer from the team coach or our staff either in person or via phone (please note, we will make phone calls until 11p during the placement process). In addition, every "verbal" offer is guaranteed and followed by an electronic offer message via our online registration system. As a club, we commit to contacting every player attending our Player Placement process within 48 hours of



## ***Player Placement FAQ***

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the on-field session for the age group/division: You will know your status with us, we guarantee it!

Q: Do I have to pay right away?

A: In order to secure placement AND complete registration a minimum payment is required for all programs. This amount varies slightly by program. Beyond the initial payment, we offer several payment options, and programs to offset, assist and manage the cost of playing soccer for Westminster AFC.

Q: How often do we travel?

A: As a club we design a tournament plan for every team in our program. This plan may include travel events for higher level teams as early as the second half of their u11 season. We will be happy to discuss these plans for any team with you as your player proceeds through the placement process.

Q: How often do we practice?

A: U9-18 teams will train three times a week beginning in early August for the fall, and in mid-February for spring. U8 teams train twice per week during the same periods. We offer age specific training programs for players beginning at u11, wherein the player will train once per week, for 10 weeks per season, with club staff or trainers.

Q: Who are the coaches, and how are they selected?

A: Every Westminster AFC coach is required to undergo an interview process with our Director of Coaching, Club Director and staff. Coaches must pass a KidSafe/CSA background check, complete a bi-annual concussion education program, possess or be enrolled as a candidate for a recognized coaching certification or badge in order to be placed with a club and competitive team. As a youth organization partnering with city and area school programs, we take player safety and coach conduct very seriously. We take great care in hiring and placing coaches with our teams, and evaluate these decisions consistently throughout the year.

Q: Is "placement" final or permanent?

A: No. As we've noted the placement process is imperfect, and only a part of our evaluation process for players within our programs. Our ultimate goal, and defining purpose in devising our processes, is to develop players; and the environment for the player is a significant factor in that effort. Whenever movement is considered, we evaluate a number of factors, including:

*How does the player perform in games?*

*What are the player's training habits?*

*Will this move benefit the player?*

*How will player movement impact the team(s)?*

In the end, player movement is one element of affecting a player's development, and when appropriate, is a normal process. It is not the only way in which we can help a player to grow, and we utilize many other means, including the Club Pass system to extend opportunities to players in our programs.

If you have any questions that we did not cover herein, please contact one of our staff and we will be happy to assist with further information.

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