

Understanding the Differences between Recreational, Academy, Challenge and Classic Soccer

The following table has been put together to highlight the similarities and differences between Recreational Soccer, Academy Soccer, Challenge and Classic Soccer. This table is meant for parents and coaches alike and should be used as a tool to find what program fits your child best.

	Recreational Soccer	Academy Soccer	Challenge and Classic Soccer
Age Groups	U5-U19	U8-U10 *	U11-U19
Main Objective	Recreation/Fun	Player Development	Competitive Play
Brief Description	Recreational Soccer is primarily meant to be a fun recreational outlet for players. Scores and standings are not recorded nor maintained by leagues. All players are, generally, required to play at least 50% of each game. The season usually concludes with an in-house or local tournament or Festival	Academy Soccer focuses primarily on <i>individual skill development</i> and prepares players for Challenge or Classic Soccer in later years. Scores are not recorded; standings are not maintained. All players generally play the same amount of time in each game. The season usually concludes with a regional Academy Festival. Some may also participate in pre-season & post-season festivals. Pool training format is used and the ratio is about 8 to 1	Club Soccer is the most competitive format available for young soccer players. The primary objective of club teams is to <i>win games</i> . Individual playing time varies from team to team but players do not usually get equal playing time. Scores and team standings are maintained throughout the season. The Club Soccer season usually concludes with a regional, state or national tournament. Most teams also participate in competitive preseason & post-season tournaments.
Team Selection Process	Open Registration	Open Registration / with Assessments*	Competitive Tryout
Focus on Competition	Low - Above Average	Above Average - High	High - Highest
Regular Season	Fall and Spring / Two Registrations	Fall and Spring / One Registration	Fall and Spring / One Registration / Age dependent
Amount of Travel	None/Minimal	Minimal/Regional	Regional/Statewide
Relative Cost	\$	\$\$	\$\$\$
Coach/Trainer Background	Parent Coaches	Experienced/Paid Coaches & Trainers	Experienced/Paid Coaches & Trainers

*Academy Assessments differ from Challenge / Classic Tryouts. While Challenge / Classic team tryouts are competitive in nature, whereby players compete for a position on the Challenge / Classic team, selection to an Academy team/program is open to all players meeting age requirements and a brief assessment to group like abilities.