



# **TRI-CITY UNITED SOCCER CLUB**

**Competitive Program  
Player & Family Handbook**

Updated June 25, 2025

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## Introduction

Tri-City United Soccer Club (TC United or the Club) is dedicated to providing the most comprehensive soccer experience in our region. TC United has enjoyed success with our involvement in youth soccer and learned that one key ingredient of success is evident, consistent communication between the Club, its teams, coaches, players, and parents. This document, along with the website (<http://www.tricityunited.org/>), will help provide clarity and details about the Club's expectations for players and parents. This handbook will provide members of the Club with its policies and expectations. As a Club member, you are responsible for reading the handbook and website to understand the expectations, rules, and regulations.

## Program Overview

TC United is committed to providing the proper environment to help our athletes achieve their goals. We believe that there are different stages of development in each player's soccer career. By joining the Competitive Program, you have joined a group of players looking for a training program designed for the youth athlete who is serious about soccer and interested in playing at the highest competitive level available. The training program is geared to prepare the players to compete both technically and tactically at the highest level.

## Competitive Seasons

The entire soccer registration year runs approximately August 1st to July 31st. TC United breaks this year into three seasons:

- Fall
- Winter
- Spring/Summer

\* Seasons may vary depending on weather, tournaments, or other considerations. See the website for additional information on season fees, calendars, etc.

## Other Programming

TC United offers an array of programming options, which players may consider participating in along with the Competitive Program, including Recreational, Extras, Camps, and other special programs. When committed to the Competitive Program, it takes precedence over other programming, but careful communication with coaches will allow participation in other programs.

## Player Placement

All players joining the Competitive Program must attend evaluation sessions as outlined below

- U9 Entry: Player must have participated in one of Pre-Competitive U8 sessions offered during the previous soccer year and invited to register for the Competitive program.
- U10-U12 Entry: Player must have participated in one of the STEP sessions offered during the previous soccer year and invited to register for the Competitive program.

- U13-U19 Entry: Player must attend two evaluation sessions either during Team Placement week for the new season or during the previous session at previously scheduled training sessions and be invited to register for the Competitive program.
- TC United Administration will send details on placement timelines to each player after Club Membership registration.
- Player evaluation will be based on technical, tactical, physical, and psychological development levels.
- Players can join during an ongoing season only if there are available spots in their age group. These players would be evaluated at a regularly scheduled training session(s) for their age group.
- Existing club players will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.
- Failure to place policy.
  - At any time in the registration process, your child's registration does not guarantee a place in the program.
  - There may be instances where your child will not be offered a place in the program. Such examples include, but are not limited to, the inability to provide a suitable program due to lack of players, late registrations, unsuccessful payments, missing payment deadlines, and/or improper fit of the player's skill level in a competitive program. Full refunds of any placement fees will be automatic if the player is not offered a place in the program.

## Team / Pool Placements

- Each season, teams or pools for age groups are formed once registrations are completed. The Club uses a combination of teams/player pools to establish appropriate environments for player development.
- As much as possible, the Club will separate age groups into teams. There may be multiple teams at each age level, depending on the number of players registered.
- Players will be grouped with other athletes of similar skill levels. This enhances the ability of the coach to develop training sessions that will help further the development of the individual players. Our club's primary focus is on individual development. We believe that when development is done well – when players are consistently improving technically, tactically, and mentally – positive results, including success at high-level competitions like Regionals, can follow. While we strive to be competitive, our measure of success remains rooted in the long-term growth of our players.
- All players assigned to a team are expected to attend all planned events during the season. This schedule will be clearly communicated via the TC United website prior to the season starting. TCU planned events take priority over all other activities, including Dakota ODP, guest playing with our partner club, St. Croix or any other club or any other soccer activity.
- There may be age groups where forming teams is not possible due to the number of players registered. There also may be age groups where a pool is a better choice for individual player development. In these cases, players will be assigned to a pool of players. Rosters will be chosen from the pool for each scheduled event. All players in the pool are expected to be available for each planned event.
- If there is some reason that a player cannot attend a scheduled event, the parent/guardian must update their availability via SportsEngine by the date communicated by the coach and/or team manager.
- Professional coaches and evaluators determine the player placements within age groups. Parents/guardians and/or players may not request which team or pool they wish to be assigned to.

## Playing Up

During evaluation (tryout) periods, TC United staff will consider placing a high development player 'up' an age group if they feel it is more appropriate for their continued soccer development. Such placement will not be done at parent/player request. More commonly, TC United staff will seek opportunities throughout the soccer year for high development players to train and play in different environments to provide fresh challenges and perspectives. This includes opportunities such as Dakota ODP, guest play with our partner club, St. Croix, and different age groups within TC United. Opportunities for players to train and play with an older age group will be managed by our Director of Development and Competitive Director. Any questions on this process can be directed to our Director of Development.

## Guest Players

### Guest Player Playing for TC United

In some circumstances, TC United may need to add players from other clubs to fill a roster spot for a specific event. The Competitive Director will be responsible for approving this request.

- All guest players will need to complete the appropriate Guest Player Registration and pay the relevant player card fee(s).
- If the guest player is a guest at the request of TC United for an event already incorporated within season fees, there will be no fee to the guest player.
- All tournaments/events which are invoiced individually, the guest player will be charged the relevant tournament/event fee.
- If the guest player is a guest at the request of the player (e.g., visiting from out of town; looking for additional playing opportunity) they will need to pay fees to cover:
  - The tournament fee is charged to the other team members.
  - A player card fee (if applicable).
  - Other fees if applicable (to be communicated by Competitive Director).
- Guest players will be required to purchase a TC United uniform kit if any of the following are true:
  - Guest player intends to play in more than one event with TCU
  - Guest player is dual-registered with TCU and another club
  - Guest player is committing to compete at a regional level event with TCU
- The number of practices (if any) the guest player will attend prior to the event should be agreed upon prior to attending any practices. Typically, this will be restricted to the week leading up to the game/event.

### TC United Member Playing for Another Club

TC United players may guest play for another club/team, but there are specific rules and processes that must be followed. Recruiting rules from US Soccer and enforced by US Club Soccer and US Youth Soccer state that club officials are not allowed to talk to parents of players or the players themselves about guest playing with them if they know they are attached to another club. Therefore, all guest playing requests for Tri-City United players

must come from the club looking for guest players to [competitive@tricityunited.org](mailto:competitive@tricityunited.org). TC United's competitive leadership will evaluate the request and make opportunities available to the relevant players.

TC United players who want to play for another club at another event must follow these rules:

- Event cannot conflict with a TCU planned event for that team/age group.
- Obtain permission from their team's coach and Age Group Coordinator
- That permission must be forwarded to Competitive Director and Administrator
- Once permission is obtained, the requesting club must email [competitive@tricityunited.org](mailto:competitive@tricityunited.org) with the guest player loan form attached. No other form of request will be processed.
- Requests from clubs for players where permission was not obtained will be denied.

## Coaching Staff

TC United coaches are instructed to conduct themselves first as teachers and second as soccer coaches. Our coaches cannot overlook the impact they have on players' lives. Coaches are responsible for the team's conduct on and off the field whenever the team is together. We insist our players are polite, well-behaved, and respectful. Players and parents can expect honesty, communication, consistency, and reliability from the coach. The Club and coaches are committed to giving players the tools and skills to become as good as their ability, desire, commitment, and effort allow. Coaches are committed to creating an environment that is conducive to the development of quality, competitive soccer. We recognize there are things more important in life than soccer. In terms of priority, family and schoolwork come first.

Because TC United is dedicated to player development, it follows guidelines for the hiring/placement of coaches, including qualifications and playing experience requirements. The Club has created clear duties and responsibilities for its paid staff. This will help in ensuring that each team is assigned the appropriate level coach. TC United's philosophy is that coaches will lose their effectiveness over a long period of time with the same group of players. As such, TC United reviews its coaching assignments each year to ensure players under the guidance of their coach continue to develop and are challenged.

Coaches will be evaluated regularly by the Age Group Coordinator, Director of Development and the Director of Coaching, who will use information obtained through direct observation, self-evaluation, solicited feedback from all players, and informal/unsolicited feedback from members as part of the evaluation process.

## Games and Events

During the soccer season, players participate in practices, scrimmages, and games, during which the coach will make decisions about the player lineup, player's position, amount of playing time, and tournament participation. Players are responsible for maintaining a positive presence on their teams in fulfilling the role they are asked to perform, even if that role has them coming off the bench, playing a different position, or not playing the desired minutes.

Parents/Guardians and players should not communicate directly with event coordinators (i.e., tournament directors). All questions or concerns should be directed to their team manager or coach.

## Playing Time

TC United recognized the importance of player development as one of the pillars of our Club's philosophy. While player development occurs during team practices and individual work, specific skills are best evaluated/tested in game settings. For this reason, TC United has placed the following guidelines in place regarding playing time during games\*:

- U9-U10: Players should be given equal playing time.
- U11-U12: Players will play no less than 50% of each game.
- U13-U14: Players should expect 50% of most games, with a minimum of 25%\*\*.
- U15-U19: Players will play no less than 25% of each game\*\*.

\*Unless injured, disciplinary action, or repetitively missing training sessions.

\*\*Playing time requirements for teams attending Regional Events (i.e. Presidents Cup, Midwest Regionals) is players will play no less than 25% of each game.

## Event Fees

For most participants in the Competitive Program, event fees were included in your season fees. TC United requires competitive players to commit to attending all scheduled events. Therefore, not attending an event is a choice, and refunds will not be given.

For groups where event fees were not included in season fees, event fees are calculated at the time the roster is communicated to the Competitive Administrator/Director. Once a player is on the roster, event fees will be charged. Players who back out of an event after the roster is released will still be charged the event fee. The player and family should also understand that pulling out of an event has a detrimental effect on the team and the rest of the players rostered for that event. It could even mean that the team must pull out of the event due to a lack of players. Any unpaid event fees after their due date prevent that player from attending training, events, or any other TC United event until the past due amounts are paid in full.

If events are added to a team or pool's schedule after the season starts, the players that attend that event will be invoiced separately. All such invoices are due upon receipt.

## Financial

Players will only be allowed to participate in TC United programs if one of the requirements below has been met:

- All current and past fees have been paid.
- The Club received a scholarship request, and communication has been made with the scholarship applicant about payment terms.

## Fees

Please see the website for current information regarding fees. The Club will make efforts to collect past due payments, as appropriate, with the potential for removal of current and future playing privileges. Please

remember that the Club is a non-profit organization that relies on player fees to operate. Timely payment reduces the effort and cost to the Club.

A commitment fee, which is non-refundable, will be required at the time of registration for each season.

## Refunds

All Competitive Program fees are non-refundable. If you believe you have a circumstance that qualifies for a refund, you must complete the Refund Request Form obtained by emailing [competitive@tricityunited.org](mailto:competitive@tricityunited.org). Refund requests will be reviewed and decided on a case-by-case basis. The Club will review the refund request based on the circumstance of each situation.

**Families should seriously consider purchasing RegSaver insurance at the time of program registration. This insurance provides coverage for illness, injury, and other events and provides up to 100% reimbursement for program fees.**

## Other considerations

- No discounts will be given for players who are not able to attend all events.
- No refunds will be granted for previous seasons for any reason.
- If granted, any refunds may be subject to a processing fee and may be minus any expenses already incurred.

## Scholarships

TC United Soccer Club is committed to providing opportunities to our area youth. The Club offers a limited number of scholarships to players each season whose families do not have the financial means to pay for their child's registration fees. We ask that families carefully consider the ability to pay registration fees, as the monies allocated for these requests are limited and will be awarded to those families with the greatest needs. Please complete and submit the Scholarship request form on the website.

Eligibility requirements:

- The family commits to participating in at least 80% of scheduled practices and games.
- The scholarship request is received before the registration closing date (The Board must approve late requests).
- Player needs to qualify for reduced or free school lunch and be able to provide proof of that approval or other significant financial hardship must be provided.

Other considerations:

- Scholarships will not be granted for registration fees that have already been paid.
- Late or incomplete application submissions may result in participants not being placed on a team.
- Eligibility for our scholarship program does not guarantee that you will receive assistance. **Funds are limited** and will be awarded per the approval of the TC United Soccer Club Board of Directors.
- The Board of Director designee(s) shall review all requests, and all inquiries will be kept strictly confidential.

## Uniforms

The cost of uniforms is separate from the program fee because TC United works with specific vendors to provide player uniforms. Uniforms will be ordered through a designated vendor and will be paid for by each player. Only TC United approved logo(s) and jersey number can be on TC United uniforms (jerseys, shorts, etc.).

Each player must own at least one of the required uniform items for their age group. This information will be on the website. TC United has chosen a relatively inexpensive training jersey so players can order more than one as they will be training twice or three times per week. The typical uniform kit will consist of one training jersey, two game jerseys, shorts and socks. For U13-U19 teams, there the addition of light color socks, so these players will have a dark color set and light color set.

Players are required to wear the appropriate jerseys, shorts and socks to all training sessions, games and events. This is required for participation in the program. **There are no exceptions.** Please ensure the player always has all pieces of the the uniform with them at all events.

## Jersey Number

To avoid number clashes, TC United assigns a jersey number to all players. Players are not able to request specific jersey numbers.

## Fundraising

We want to provide the soccer experience to as many youth players as possible. To further this and help make the Competitive program more affordable, TC United will be offering fundraising opportunities throughout the year. While these will not be mandatory, we depend on your support to keep pricing as low as possible. Thank you for your support.

## Code of Conduct

Developing youth in our community with a passion for soccer is our primary focus. We strive to prepare youth who understand the value of treating others with respect, giving their best effort, and always looking for ways to improve. We seek to challenge the players to become stronger players on the field and engaged community members off the field. Ultimately, we expect players, parents, coaches, and club representatives to represent the Club and its values through integrity and honorable behavior.

### Player Code of Conduct

All players commit to:

- Treat all others with respect.
- Always give their best effort.
- Maintain good attendance at practices, games, and events.
- Offer praise and encouragement to teammates.
- Avoid acting like a 'bully' in any way and report any bullying to the coach or their parent.
- Learn the rules of the game.
- Report all injuries to the coach as soon as possible. Do not, under any circumstances, hide an injury from your coach.

- Be humble and open to learning (open to being coached).

## **Family Code of Conduct**

As a parent/guardian of a TC United Soccer Club player, I agree to lead by example to include:

- I will respect a 24 hour "cooling off" period and will not approach a coach with issues/concerns immediately after a game/event/practice. Instead, I will reach out to the coach to set up a time to discuss my issues.
- I will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every player, regardless of their abilities, gender, religion, or cultural background.
- I will not treat any player in an unfair, unjust, or discriminatory manner.
- I will respect the decision of coaches, officials, and club administrators and teach my player to do likewise.
- I will remember that my player participates in the sport for their enjoyment, not mine.
- I will raise any issues or concerns with my player's coach, team manager, or club staff, whichever is appropriate.
- I will report any inappropriate actions by my player's coach, trainer, or another adult to the Club's leadership.
- I will not question the official's judgment in public. I will not approach a referee before, during, or after a game.
- I will not criticize or yell at my child for performance or for losing a competition.
- I will remember that children learn best by modeling - I will recognize and reward good players' performances by my child's team and the opponent.
- I will teach my child that doing one's best is as important as winning so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or event.
- I will support my child by offering praise for competing fairly and for honest effort.
- I will encourage my child to play in the spirit of the rules and resolve conflicts without hostility.
- I will support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from youth activities.
- I will respect and show appreciation for the coaches who give their time to provide sporting activities for my child, understanding that I have a responsibility to be a part of my child's development.
- I will respect and show appreciation for the other parents who share these standards of behavior.
- I will refrain from criticizing the calls and performance of referees, coaches, players.
- I will attend and participate as a spectator, not as a coach. I will not shout instructions from the sideline.

## **Coach Code of Conduct**

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a high level of sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both off and on the field. All coaches are required to complete a background check as TC United coach. A coach's primary responsibility is for his/her players to have fun, develop as soccer players, and instill a passion for the game. The performance of coaches is not measured in wins and losses but rather what is taught to players in terms of technique, sportsmanship, and fair play. Coaches must maintain respect for the game. Coaches are charged with the responsibility of controlling their players at all times during a match. Coaches lead and teach by example; player's actions will be a reflection upon each individual coach.

## **Grievance Procedure**

TC United believes most concerns and/or complaints related to TC United can be and should be adequately addressed internally by TC United's coaches, Competitive Director, the Executive Director, and/or the Board of Directors. TC United encourages direct, honest, respectful, and professional communication among coaches,

players, and parents. Parents have the right to make complaints about issues regarding their child's treatment, but must follow the procedures set forth below.

### **Procedure for issues regarding soccer coaching actions or decisions**

If a TC United player or parent has an issue with their coach regarding a coaching action or decision, the following steps should be followed:

- Any player or parent with an issue with a coaching action or decision should first wait at least 24 hours following the event to address the issue. This provides all parties time to process the circumstances at point.
- Following the 24-hour waiting period, the player and/or parent should contact their head coach to discuss the issue. Please approach this discussion objectively and with an open mind to differing opinions.
- If the issue is not resolved after speaking with the head coach, the parent/player should contact the Age Group Coordinator assigned to their age group.
- If the issue is still not resolved, the parent/player should contact the Competitive Director and/or Executive Director. Contact information can be found on the website at [www.tricityunited.org/aboutus](http://www.tricityunited.org/aboutus).

### **Procedure for questions regarding events or practice**

Please contact the designated Team Manager for logistical or general questions.

### **Procedure for general issues regarding Tri-City United Soccer Club**

If a TC United player or parent has a general issue with the Club, which may include suggestions for improvement and/or information about policy violations, the following steps should be followed:

- Parent/player should email or discuss with their Team Manager or Competitive Administrator the following information: name of the person making the suggestion/complaint, player's name, coach's name, age group, a detailed description of the issue at hand, steps taken to resolve the issue, along with a recommended solution.

## **Right to Refuse**

TC United believes in making every effort to work through issues; however, to protect the players, families, and organization; the Club reserves the right to refuse any participants (including, but not limited to: players, coaches, referees, family members, spectators) for any reason. These restrictions may include (but are not limited to) restricting the individual from attending/participating in club activities, including practices and games.

## **Safety**

### **General**

Safety is of the utmost importance to TC United. Coaches are required to notify a parent or guardian if the player is injured or is ill during a practice or a game. Coaches also must complete an Injury Report Form and follow its instructions for filing/reporting. Parents, players, and coaches are expected to communicate any injuries to each other when known to evaluate and agree upon a plan to protect the player best. Safety is the responsibility of everyone, and any unsafe act or situation should be stopped immediately and reported.

## Concussion

TC United believes that it is the responsibility of every player, parent, coach, and certified medical professionals to effectively manage potential concussions. Education, awareness, and cooperation will be the key to act accordingly. The following are some basic rules to remember:

- Learn about concussions -the player, family, and coach should be familiar with the signs and symptoms of a concussion.
  - Parents & Players – Educate
    - Refer to the below link for an understanding of concussions and symptoms of a concussion.
    - <http://www.cdc.com/headsup>
    - Seek a certified medical professional's advice if you have any suspicion of a concussion.
  - Player – notify a coach, parent, or another player if you experience head contact and any symptoms of a concussion.
- Do not let the player return – the player should not return to play until they are evaluated and released by a certified medical professional.

## Concussion Protocol

If a coach sees or is informed (this could be from the player, another coach, parent, spectator, or another player) of any head contact AND the player demonstrates ANY symptoms, they are removed from play.

- The parent is notified.
  - Coach completes the Concussion Notification form and parent signs.
- The player cannot return until a certified medical professional provides a copy of clearance.
  - Once clearance is received, it is attached to the form and sent to the Competitive Administrator to be placed on file.
- If any one of the previous circumstances occurs individually (sees or hears of head contact OR the player demonstrates any symptoms), the coach notifies the parent and allows the parent to determine the best next steps.

In general, as a club, we provide education, define a line at which we will defer to a medical professional, and for the instances where it is unclear, we defer to the parents.

## Other Injuries

All injuries should be treated seriously. The following procedure should be followed for injuries that occur during TC United practices or games our players participate in.

- The parent is notified.
- Coach completes TC United's Injury Report.
- The player cannot return until a copy of clearance is provided by a certified medical professional.
  - Once clearance is received, it is sent to the Competitive Administrator to be placed on file as documentation.

## **Risk Management**

All adults in positions of responsibility or direct contact with members of TC United, including coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, board members, TC United staff etc., will complete the risk management requirements as provided by the Club Policy. These requirements must be met as directed by the timetable released by the Board of Directors or Club Management. TC United is dedicated to completing these requirements to provide for the safety of the youth in our programs.

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 was implemented in 2018 and extended the duty to report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to all adults authorized to interact with minor athletes. US Club Soccer and US Youth Soccer have added the Safe Sport Training course to their risk management requirements. All our coaches and team managers are considered "mandatory reporters," which means they must report suspected child abuse. This includes sexual abuse within 24 hours to a local law enforcement agency or local child protective services agency with jurisdiction or the FBI. TC United will comply with these requirements, as the health and safety of our members are our top priority.

## **Facility and Equipment Policies**

### **Use of Soccer Complexes**

The TC Indoor Facility, Pepsi Soccer Complex, Moorhead Soccer Complex, West Fargo Soccer Complex, Rustad Recreation Center, and Fargo Parks Sports Center are privileges and not a right. All players, parents, family members, coaches, and staff agree to learn and respect the rules for each facility.

Scheduling of the complex will be done through club staff and in accordance with the complex owner's policy. Individual players and teams wishing to request the use of a TC United soccer complex outside of the regularly scheduled training sessions, games, clinics etc., must first obtain approval from the Competitive Director and the staff currently tasked with scheduling that facility.

### **Substance Free Environment**

TC United facilities and TC United training, games, tournaments, special events, and other TC United sponsored events are pet, tobacco, alcohol, and substance-free environments. Coaches, players, parents, spectators, and staff are expected to refrain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances while participating in TC United events or on TC United facilities.

## **Weather, Lightning, Game & Practice Cancellation**

Games will generally only be canceled by TC United due to unsafe playing conditions, including lightning or heavy rain before or during a game. Practices can be canceled, rescheduled, or postponed by the coach or the Club for reasons pertinent to their specific team, including but not limited to: Adverse weather, unsafe playing conditions, conflicting events/game schedules.

- If lightning is within 10 miles of the complex, games and practices must be canceled or postponed until at least 30 minutes after the last seen or heard lightning/thunder or as soon as the danger has passed (training only).

- TC United will follow US Soccer Heat Guidelines and Cold Weather Guidelines (<http://www.recognizetorecover.org/heat-hydration>) for games and practices.
  - TC United will follow our Air Quality guidelines (insert link here) for games and practices.
- Cancellations will be communicated via the club website and messaging tools within it.

## **Alcohol, Tobacco & Drugs**

TC United is a drug-free organization. Alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and other drugs are not permitted at TC United events, including practices and games. No coach or volunteer shall participate in any TC United activity while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Smoking or use of tobacco products is not permitted in or around youth sports practices or games.

## **SportsEngine**

TC United uses SportsEngine as its primary method of communication with team managers, coaches, players, and parents/guardians. All participants are expected to learn how to use the platform for communicating with their coaches, team managers, and teammates. Downloading the mobile app is highly encouraged. You can find help and downloads at <https://www.tricityunited.org/sehelp>.

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

TC United provides the SportsEngine platform as a central hub to provide parents, players, coaches and team managers a way to communicate information about training sessions, team bonding, games, tournaments etc. All information posted on team pages, including the team chat functionality, should be limited to providing information about TC United events, training sessions etc. and not used as a platform for club feedback or complaints.

The way we treat each other helps to define our culture. TC United wants to be a club that has a healthy culture, where we value hard work and development and act with grace and class on and off the field. Culture is critical to our long-term success and everyone has a responsibility to contribute in a positive way to that goal.

TC United welcomes feedback, but that feedback needs to be communicated following the grievance process outlined separately in this handbook and in alignment with the Parent and/or Player Code of Conduct. Use of the chat feature to air grievances does not provide the feedback to the appropriate staff and negatively impacts the rest of the team members. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated.