



ETFC TRYOUT QUESTIONS



ETFC Tryouts - What to Expect?

Every year many players and parents worry about Eugene Timbers FC's club soccer tryouts. Coaches, too, are nervous, though for different reasons. In hopes of reducing anxiety, I would like to explain how the tryout process works for ETFC.

First, all US Youth Soccer competitive teams are required to hold open and publicized tryouts each year during a specified period. This year, the Oregon Youth Soccer Association has determined that tryouts can be organized after May 12, 2016. ETFC youth tryouts are scheduled from Sunday, May 15 through Tuesday, May 17, 2016 for U11-U15 age groups. All age groups will have two tryout sessions, and each player needs to attend both sessions to get a fair and good evaluation from the coaches. Most clubs charge players to tryout for teams; ETFC does not. Our tryouts are free.

How do I register for the tryouts? Beginning in mid-April, players need to register online for tryouts. Once the registration is open, players may access the online registration system through the Eugene Timbers FC website: www.eugenetimbers.org Players are strongly encouraged to register online before the tryouts begin to provide ETFC with a realistic sense of how many players will tryout and how many teams may form. If a player cannot register online before May 15, registration forms will be available at the tryout check-in table.

What age group do I register for? US Soccer has mandated to form teams in their birth year starting with the coming season 2016-17. For example, everyone born in 2006 will tryout for one of the U11 boys or girls teams. Players can still play up but this decision is made by the ETFC coaching staff with the support of the ETFC Director of Coaching and the ETFC Technical Director. In general, you should register for the age group that your birthday falls within. Please check the following link on our website to learn more about the US Soccer mandate around the Birth Year registration.
<http://eugenetimbers.org/us-soccer-mandate/>

What about the 2002 age group? This age group will have players in 7th grade and in 8th grade. If you are in 7th grade and you were born in 2002 you should tryout for this U15 2002 team. This team will play from May to November and will play in the fall in a newly organized U15 Portland Timbers and Thorns League. At the end of November, ETFC will organize another tryout for the 2002 age group and this time all players born in 2002 will participate and tryout for a 2002 U15 team and starting a new club season running from November 2016 to July 2017. If you are a 2002 born player in 8th grade you can remain on your current team and play and train until early August 2016. If you are new to the club and born in 2002 and in 8th grade, you can tryout for those teams in their training sessions. Please contact Jurgen at doc@eugenetimbers.org

When should a player play up? In most cases players should not play up on older teams. However, if a player is not challenged in his/her age group, as the Director of Coaching I sometimes allow this player to tryout for an older team. In general, players must be considered to be potential starters and in the top 5 or 6 players on the older team before I allow them to play up. In the younger ages, it is very important for players to gain confidence and to get enough playing time. If a player will likely sit more on the bench on the older team, it may not make sense to play up. The overall quality of the team also plays a factor. Sometimes an older team is not the better team, and it makes more sense for a strong player to stay with his/her age group. And of course, safety is an issue. Younger players often lack the physical presence and strength needed to train and compete effectively against older players. We also take the psychological maturity of a player in account as well as the social environment in which the younger player might be challenged. In general, I will make these evaluations along with the coaching staff, and we will make decisions with the best interest of the individual player and the teams in mind.

How many teams do you form? ETFC tries to form two teams in each U11-15 age and gender bracket. If there are enough committed players, ETFC will form both A and B teams in an age group. Each of these teams has a head coach and an assistant coach. Both teams receive the same coaching support from the Director of Coaching and the Technical Director. If there are not enough qualified players trying out to form two competitive teams, then we will select a roster for one team. If there are enough quality players to form three teams we will consider it.

Why should I tryout for an ETFC team? If you love the game, want to learn how to play at a high level, and also want to join a committed team, ETFC is the right address for you. We pride ourselves on providing quality training throughout the year and form committed teams that often stay together for years. While some of our teams compete at the highest state level in the Portland Timbers and Thorns Leagues we also have teams competing in the next highest Division 1 or 2 leagues. While it is nice to be a big fish in a small pond, in order to improve, soccer players have to compete against good teams. Because it is unlikely to find this competition in Eugene, ETFC joined the Oregon Youth Soccer Association and competes each year in the Portland Timbers and Thorns Leagues to ensure that our teams play in leagues with the best possible competition in the state. The combination of quality training and consistently good competition ensures the improvement of our players and teams.

What happens on tryout day? During both tryout sessions, players have many opportunities to demonstrate their individual and team skills, knowledge, energy, and attitude. Coaches will organize age-appropriate exercises and games for players to showcase their skills, athleticism, and potential. We assess players' technical skills, test physical attributes (speed, strength, fitness, athleticism, etc.), observe the players' knowledge about the game in small-sided and full-sided scrimmages, and learn more about the mentality players bring to the game. Is the player a competitor? How does a player respond to coaching advice? How does a player react when challenged? In order to give players a fair look in just two sessions, the team's head coach and assistant coach, and usually one or two other coaches, including myself, will evaluate.

How are coaches selected for teams? As the club's Director of Coaching, I assign head coaches and assistants to all teams, and by mid-April, the coaching slate is listed on the ETFC website. Head coaches usually stay on teams for two years and then are rotated on to other teams. ETFC believes that players need to work with different coaches to grow as players. Head coaches work closely with

the Technical Director (U11-15 teams) and the Director of Coaching (all teams) on the development of individual players and teams. Our coaching staff shares experience and knowledge by often working together on the field, and through our off-the-field discussions and coaching clinics.

What should I bring to ETFC tryouts? Players should bring an age appropriate soccer ball (size 4 for U11-U12, size 5 for U13-15) marked with their name/phone number and water, and should arrive 15 minutes early to check in. Always look at the ETFC website before coming to tryouts in case there are any schedule changes. Players may not wear current team, club, or ODP affiliated clothing or uniforms during the tryouts, and they may be asked to remove such items. Each player will be assigned a tryout number before the first session. After the first tryout session, please make sure to keep your number and bring it to the second session.

How do players learn if they made a team? Coaches will tell players after the second tryout session when the rosters will be published on the ETFC website. Coaches will also phone players who have not been selected for any of the teams and those players who do not have access to computers. Players will also find details about the club's team formation meeting on the website after tryouts are completed.

What is the team formation meeting? During this meeting, parents will meet the Director of Coaching, board members, most of the ETFC coaching staff, and the club's registrar and office administrator. We will distribute a lot of information about fees, fundraising, uniforms, and club expectations. Players and parents will also meet with their coaches and teammates to learn more about the team's plans, goals, and summer schedule, and hopefully, each team will select a manager by the end of the meeting. In short, it is a very important meeting to get a team started well.

What will my schedule be after tryouts? Typically, training sessions begin after the formation meeting. All coaches follow a general training plan for the summer but each team might have slightly different plans depending on the selected summer tournaments. Coaches are expected to present their team's summer plans at the team formation meeting.

If there are two teams – A and B teams – is there movement between the teams? In general, the two coaches stay in close contact with each other to discuss player movement from one team to another during the year. In a few cases, the coaches may choose to permanently move a player after tryouts if it becomes clear that a player would benefit from being on the other team. More often, one team will need to temporarily borrow a player for a game because of illness or injury. In these situations the Director of Coaching is usually directly involved to ensure fairness and transparency. Sometimes a player will be invited to participate in the other team's training sessions to allow the coaches to evaluate a player's progress. Players are permanently moved in very few cases and only with the Director of Coaching's input and approval.

Can I tryout after the scheduled tryouts? The simple answer is yes – in some cases. If a team is full after tryouts, the coach probably will not add players to the team's roster. However, if we have two teams in an age group, new players will usually tryout with the B-team first and then work their way up if it is clear they belong on the A team. In some cases when rosters are full, players are allowed to join as "training" players first and later added to the roster if openings become available.