

At what age does competitive play begin in your state? At what age do you think competitive play should begin?

Competitive Play: Try-outs where a player makes the cut onto the team or not and once on the team has no guarantee of playing time or a place in the line up?

<i>STATE</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>COMMNETS</i>
<i>AL.</i>		
<i>AK.</i>		
<i>AZ.</i>	10	
<i>AR.</i>		
<i>CA. N.</i>	12	My dictionary defines the word game, "Competition according to rules." So, anytime children (adults) organize a game it is automatically a competition. We should eliminate such words as 'Recreational' and 'Competitive' and focus on the attitude of adults after a win or loss. I know that this does not answer your questions directly but I think it has to do more with 'travel' and travel teams. And I believe distance in 'travel' should grow as the child grows. From local games U-6 to U-10 -- to travel games by U-12. Hope this is what you are looking for?
<i>CA. S.</i>		
<i>CO.</i>	10	
<i>CT.</i>		
<i>DE.</i>		
<i>FL.</i>		
<i>GA.</i>		
<i>HI.</i>	10	
<i>ID.</i>	12	Idaho YSA does not permit out of State Travel for non-competitive teams. We do not permit teams to register as a competitive team until U12. Thus, we do not allow out-of-state travel until U12 play begins.
<i>IL.</i>	8	Tryouts should not begin until children reach the age of 11 v 11 play.
<i>IN.</i>	9 (player must be a true U9)	This question was asked to the Indiana Youth Soccer Coaching Committee and based on the results will be soon recommending that the age of competitive play start at U11. The same question was also asked to most of the college coaches in our state (IU, ND, etc) and answers varied from 11-13 being the start of "travel" soccer.
<i>IO.</i>	11/13	If clubs can form multiple teams of competitive U11s then competitive play should begin at U11. If not, U13 would be a more appropriate age to start competitive play. Tryouts would therefore begin at U11.
<i>KS.</i>	9	I feel we should not start competitive play until U13.
<i>KY.</i>	9/10	U9 is my position on this issue.
<i>LA.</i>	10	

ME.	12	Here in Maine, the state association runs non-results-oriented tournaments through U11, so the first state championship is offered at U12. We recommend that clubs hold off on tryouts until U12, and many create as many teams as necessary to satisfy demand through U11, but there are still some that start tryouts at U10.
MD.	13/14	In many countries where soccer is under the Realm of education (Spain, France, Norway, etc.) Competitive play for 11 vs. 11 doesn't start 'til they are teenagers - 13 & up. I think that is a measured thought based on the abilities of the players rather than a disjointed way that we come to an answer, e.g., the political part of USYSA plays with this answer but never addresses it. (2) There are many studies that show that at best tryout might start at U.14 where you have a 50/50 chance of getting it right.
MA.	11/13	I wish I had an easy answer for you, but here it goes. The word “competitive” causes a great deal of controversy up here. To put it simply, if competitive means state and regional and ODP competitions I/we feel U13 is a good level to start. If competitive means a travel league and standings U11 would be good and U10 is harsh to swallow (by all means, let’s stay away from U9 and U8 please). Why: adults to the point that development is placed as secondary overemphasize the competition factor. True, the children keep score in their head and know who wins and loses, however we can steer their goals towards development over those ends quite easily. Once adults get over-involved in the competition, children become groomed to win, versus challenged to both develop and enjoy the game regardless of the outcome. Both the short and long-term outcome of this is that children do not find the game as enjoyable and cease playing. Whether that occurs at U14 or U18, children who measure sport value by outcome are less likely to continue to play the game (at any level) and report lower satisfaction levels. Tryouts: falls in line with competitive play.
MI.	11	We have no DOC at the moment. On behalf of MSYSA, we believe age 11 is when kids should tryout for competitive soccer.
MN.	8	We have travel and tryouts at U9/U10. While I am not thrilled I believe that this is what parents want and it will be provided one way or another. I will however work like heck to try to ensure we do not lapse into travel and tryouts and U8 and below.
MS.	10	As the former MS DOC I believe it should start at U12...at the moment competitive play begins at U11...however we have a rec. state cup for U10’s...dollars will drive competitive play in smaller states...I made such a proposal change, which fell on deaf ears...cause the budget would be cut in half.
MO.	6	Missouri begins tryouts and cutting players at age 6, I think tryouts should begin at age 13. The proper term should be sign ups from 6 through 12 years of age. If a club has 48 kids that sign up, then

		make the number of teams according to the number of players that sign up.
MT.	12	
NE.	11/13	This debate is where the theoretical and real worlds collide. As such, I would recommend U11 for tryouts and U13 for competitive play (e.g. State Cup). If we attempt to go much older, it will be even less possible to hold the line. Teams are already forming through coach select as young as 7 & 8, so the reality is moving tryouts older than U11 will be a fruitless endeavor.
NV.	11/12	My personal opinion is 11-12. Most of the coaches I spoke with said 10-12, but some already do at 9.
NH.	9/10	Please find my response below to “What is the appropriate age when kids should try-out for competitive soccer?” I think around age ten / nine. As an ex-elementary school p.e. Teacher, I often think about children's development in terms of what grade they are in school. I always found third grade to be a big transition year. By the time they get to fourth grade (9 and 10 year olds), they have jumped from being "little kids" to preadolescents and, if things are handled properly, should be able to deal with the "competitive" soccer environment.
NJ.	7	At U8-- Waaaay too early! Not until U14s (13) should we begin. We have State Cup Competition at U11 and Region 1 has club championships for U12s!
NM.	12	I feel that “competitive” play should begin at U12. The competitive league in New Mexico begins their tryouts at U9. We do not control this league.
NY. E.		
NY. W.	11	Our state has no competitive play for anyone under 11. The U9 and U10 travel, but results and leagues are not published. Personally the U13 age group would be my ideal starting age.
NC.	13	1) U13 would be the age to start competitive play. That is when they begin playing 11v11 and most states have their State Cup Competitions 2) Tryouts for our club teams start at U-11 for our Challenge and Classic Teams (NC has three levels- Rec, Challenge and Classic)
ND.	12	My opinion is that competitive play should start at under 12’s. I think players could be developed enough to play a quality level of soccer that would call for better competition. Tryouts in Fargo for (U11-U19) are held in September for the Summer competitive. U10’s sign up and are divided equally onto teams.
OH. N.	10	I am more comfortable with U-10 than I was a few years ago. They have matured to the point of competence as players, with some players being capable of exceptional skill; they have matured emotionally to be able to compete in meaningful games; this is the age that team association starts to become important; competition is not a bad word and games can provide good lessons. What we

have to overcome is adult pressure. I don't know how to do that any better than everyone else who has tried, so it becomes a paradox for us. Perhaps this is where our premier level clubs can become part of the solution. We are not going to solve this at the community level, but we have a chance with the more educated coaching populations.

OH. S.
OK. 13

If we continue to use the narrow, limiting and stereotyping titles, recreational and competitive, I believe that ability-based tryouts shouldn't happen before the U13 age group. Prior to U13, the children (and their parents in many cases) aren't emotionally ready for the pressures of the tryout process and the potential tryout outcomes. Trying out too early, prior to the development of a deep passion for the game in the players and a strong commitment from the parents, will continue to erode our base of players. The challenge is that our competing organizations are using this early selection as a selling point to gain membership. We are caught in a rock in a hard place, as they will continue to market this type of flexibility to attract membership. My belief is that we must do what is right for the kids AND cultivate a climate of trust with our clubs and member organizations. I believe that too much legislation is the wrong approach with the challenge of tryouts too early. We need to create a climate where the primary source of player development, the clubs, feels trusted and empowered to develop players. We must provide them the flexibility that they desire while maintaining as safe as possible an environment for the players. Instead of legislation, we must do a better job of education. Educate and guide them to the answers and not put on more layers of bureaucracy that drives them away. I believe that the education on tryouts too early must take root in player retention. More players continuing to play and love the game. More players participating in our programming. We must provide programming alternatives, not just rules that will be followed.

OR. 10
PA. E.

I feel competitive play is appropriate at age 11, with no travel outside the state, no state cup play and no regional competition. Try-outs for U14 and above should be given in late June. At this time all state cups are completed and there is little impact on the clubs a player may be leaving. The weather almost makes it impossible for February or March and teams are busy preparing for competitive tournaments and cup play.

PA. W.

In our state "competitive" play starts at U10, though why there is a problem with the term "competitive" is beyond me. All play is competitive whether a pick up game in the park or an adult organized event. At the U10 age they can travel out of state.

RI.	10	Rhode Island begins competitive play at U11. U10 and below are non-results.
SC.	10	SCYSA “competitive / tryout” play begins for the U11 age division. Also, SCYSA does not have any restrictions regarding out of state team travel for any age.
SD.	10	My personal belief is that U11 is where this begins. This is where a tournament, with winners and losers and a trophy for a prize, defines itself for young players.
TN.	8 State Cup begins at U11	According to the definition of 'competitive play' given on the survey, my personal opinion would be U-12. I believe this is an age where we can start the infusion of the words 'competition' and 'try-outs'.
TX. N.	10	
TX. S.	11	
UT.	7	
VT.		
VA.	8/10	Boys and girls. Gordon Miller, our Technical Director, may have a different take on this, and I (Gary Allen, Director of Coaching education) don't presume to speak for him. As I see it more and more, I am becoming more and more of the opinion that competitive play, as we currently define it to being a select team type of concept with different divisions and statewide travel-team play, should not begin before 14 years old. Everything we have determined, and continue to find to be important concerning player development from physical, technical, emotional and mental levels, militates towards being more inclusive longer, and selecting out players later. I realize that this appears to be radical and that others argue that parents won't stand for such a late selecting out process. But my question remains, who are the experts? Those of us who have spent a lifetime in the game and studied not only the game, but the development of players -- or parents, whose only brush with the game is usually caused by their kids' participation. We seem to be a sport where the tail is definitely wagging the dog, and one of the main reasons is that the controlling entities are generally youth leagues that developed before there were large numbers of young players. Therefore, in many instances, the power base that determines policy is a league whose measure of success is size and dollar signs, not the development of players. I would like to see it start at 12. – Gordon Miller
WA.	10	
WV.		
WI.	11	In reverse order, Wisconsin is as follows: Try-outs start at u11. Soccer is exclusively recreational up to u10. U11 seems to work fine for the starting point for try-outs and competitive play. As above u11 seems fine. If we need to go to u10 to help fight off our competition and keep some of our member

WY.

states happy, I personally could live with that.