

AC Desoto Competitive FAQ

1. What is competitive soccer and how is it different from recreational?

Recreational soccer is usually coached by parents who never played the game. It has a 50 percent play rule and has very little technical or tactical instruction for a players growth. Competitive clubs require previous playing experience and licensure by their coaches.

To compete effectively at the competitive level you cannot be weak at any position. In recreational you can get by with 1 or 2 strong players and have lots of offense. Competitive defenses are better trained, to the point that 1 player is not going to dribble through all of them.

2. I think my child is "good" but how do I determine my child is ready for competitive or how do you determine my child is ready to make the move from rec to competitive?

A passion for the game, enjoying new challenges and the desire to learn are key components. Being ready to make the commitment to get touches and train at home are also key components. Even in a great training program nothing takes the places of touches on the ball every day because “touch” comes from muscle memory which is taught by rote. As fair warning you don’t grow in this game just by attending practice. It takes games, practice, and at home to really grow. That is why commitment and determination are huge components.

3. How is competitive different from Middle or High School soccer?

Our coaches go through training programs for what are called licenses. They are soccer specific courses with both classroom and field sessions to teach the coach how to coach the game. Very few coaches in the school system played the game, even fewer have furthered their soccer education by getting a license. Soccer players go to college through their club program, not their school or recreational program.

4. What is coaches licensure and why does it matter?

It is coaching education. As players get older different challenges appear requiring more specific coaching knowledge. The levels of coaching education are designed to reflect and enhance a coach’s knowledge level in relation to the player development process.

5. How do you form teams?

We have tryouts that consist of a skills session and a game session. In today's world tryouts are more the chance to identify those that do not need to be there as opposed to finding those that do.

6. Would it not be easier to recruit players from the local leagues?

Recruiting is illegal. Question the intentions of a club that invites you to join - can they not attract players or can they not develop the players they have?

7. Competitive means winning, right?

No. Competitive means training and a level of play. It also means that the teams you play against receive the same training. For every year past the age of 10 that a child waits to start training it is a year that child is behind the rest of that team. It takes months to a year to get a team together and playing at the level of most of their competition.

8. How do you handle teams in their first year to give them chances for success?

We put them into the lower brackets of the local league and try to carefully select the tournaments that they attend the first year.

9. How is my child's playing time determined?

We have a liberal play time rule in place in league play as long as the child has been attending practices. It does not matter who wins the league because it is a development league. It matters if you win when you go to a tournament and we lift this rule but encourage its use if a team is up or down by 3 goals. The truth to the matter is we cannot develop game quality players if they do not get game time to develop.

10. How much travel can be expected?

We try to utilize the various tournaments at Mike Rose once or twice per playing season. (spring and fall) That means 1 or 2 tournaments out of town.

11. What is the general travel radius?

We keep travel to within a 3 to 4 hour driving radius. More elite older teams may travel a broader regional area.

12. What is the over all time commitment?

On average three days a week with the occasional weekend for tournaments.

13. Do I need to sign a contract to play with your club?

No. Tennessee clubs have binding commitment letters and contracts.

14. What if in the middle of the season I feel this is not working out, am I liable to pay the remaining training fees? Are there refunds?

Sorry, no refunds and while we hope that you would wait until at least the end of that spring or fall season there are no early termination fees. It is suggested that you give it time, and speak with the manager about your concerns. It may be that they agree with you, they may have insight to your child's specific growth, not all children progress at the same speed and it takes some time to adapt to the new atmosphere.

15. Where do you get your development philosophies?

We follow the USSF, USYSA, and NSCAA recommendations of player development philosophies. We honor Tennessee and Mississippi's Codes of Ethics and Conduct along with the USSFs Best Practices Manual.

16. What is age appropriate training?

The game is taught in phases. U10 is really about the player as an individual. U11 and 12 are more about playing as pairs. U13 is the first exposure to 11 v 11 and playing in groups of 3s and 4s. It may sound easy but there are technical and tactical elements inside of each group that they must be mentally and physically ready for.

17. What is the max # of players you can roster on a team?

18. We normally max out an 8 v 8 side at 14 and an 11 v 11 side at 16.

18. On the website it says “economical” pricing but being new to competitive this does not look “economical!”

The first season, with it's uniform purchase, etc. is always the most expensive. A full year is around 800 dollars. After that the number drops down to around 650 dollars per year. The few other area clubs that will post their fees on their websites are 1100+ a year.

19. What are the differences in the area clubs?

All the local clubs have good players and good coaches. They have happy people in their organization or they would not exist. All coaches played the same game growing up. All coaches go to the same coaching licensing courses and get the same information. We all have access to the same CDs, DVDs, books, etc. That leaves three big differences. Location, pricing, and the team's coach. Some people like bragging that they have to travel to Bartlett to practice and pay 1500 dollars a year. To some people "that" coach may be worth the 1500 a year.

20. How much of your staff is local?

ALL of it. We are based here. We are run by Desoto County residents for Desoto County residents and are the only club that can say that. We are not a satellite program for another club in another state.

21. How do you explain your solid college placement rate?

- A. Quality training. College coaches look for smart, skilled players.
- B. College research, preparation, and marketing assistance.
- C. Networking.

We start working with the players on their college choices their sophomore year in high school.

22. Is it true that some clubs Directors make over one hundred thousand dollars a year and people pay tens of thousands of dollars for soccer club franchises?

All true. Your child can spend their entire career in a club contributing to that six figure income and never meet the people whose salaries you are paying. Research soccer clubs by pulling their IRS form 990s. It's public information since they are 501 corporations.

23. Fees. What are included in yours? On other club's websites I see that team costs are separate from club fees and are rather vague. Yours are not like that, why?

We like to be up front and honest. This is not a business, it is a passion for us. The only things that we are not specific about are tournament fees (figure 35-40 depending on tournament and number of players attending) and referee fees which are somewhere usually between 30 and 40 dollars depending on the age of the team. Other than that we have a uniform fee,

monthly club fee, registration fee and Mike Rose fee. Makes budgeting a lot easier.