



Iowa Soccer Association Levels of Play

Beginning in the fall of 2010, Iowa Soccer Association U11 through U19 teams will be self-designated as “Level 1”, “Level 2” or “Level 3”. All U10 and below teams will be classified Level 3. These categories will replace the terms “premier”, “classic” and “recreational”, respectively, and corresponding team formation rules will better support the needs of our members across the state.

Through the implementation of levels of play, and with supporting rules and events, the aim is to have the levels better reflect the challenges our soccer communities and players face, and to get away from the use of terms like “recreational” that have associated stigmas in the older age groups.

While there exists a “classic” designation of teams in our state, the reality is most non-select teams, regardless of age group, register as recreational. By better supporting and promoting a level of play that is currently under-served, Level 2 opportunities will encourage players to play instead of quit. In addition, the rules guiding Level 2 and Level 3 will open more opportunities for Level 3 teams that seek a higher level of competition. Level 3 teams will have the option to compete in Level 2 events, increasing opportunities for that level of play as well.

In many clubs throughout the state, select tryouts begin at U11. Often, less physically developed players do not make the team and the only other option within their club is to play on a recreational team. This can result in players becoming frustrated with the level of play, facing the stigma of playing recreational because they didn’t make a team, and ultimately, quitting the sport. Retention rates at U11-U13 support that most players who quit do so at these age groups. Level 2 will give those players a place to play.

To help further Level 2 opportunities, there will need to be an emphasis on offering Level 2 opportunities at tournaments. Iowa Soccer will encourage tournament directors to offer a Level 2 option, and will itself offer this level of competition. Currently, Classic/Level 2 teams already have the option to enter the Iowa Director’s Cup and the Toyota Indoor Championships. By working together to promote additional playing opportunities, our soccer communities will benefit by increased participation and retention.

Level 3 is intended to provide the opportunity for all players to participate in and enjoy the game of soccer without regard for ability or soccer skills. Level 3 teams may participate in Level 3, Level 2 or Level 1 in-state tournaments. These stipulations do not apply to out-of-state tournaments.

Level 3 Team Formation Rules

- The team formation process will be random in nature.
- Criteria for player assignment will include NO consideration for the ability of the player or the relative strength of the team.
- All forms of recruiting, invitations and tryouts are specifically prohibited. Coaches will have no direct input to or involvement with the assignment of players to their teams.
- If a Member Organization permits teams to remain together from season to season, the player has the option to stay on the team.
- New teams and returning teams that need players are formed by one of the following methods:
 - a. Players are assigned (rostered) to a team by age groups on a territorial basis (neighborhood, schools, precincts, zip codes, etc.)
 - b. Players are assigned (rostered) to a team by a random draw from one (1) player pool on a territorial basis as stated in (a) above.
- Players' names shall not be identified to the coach until the player is placed on the team. Only the head coach may request their child be rostered to the team that he/she is coaching.

Level 2 is intended to provide players a higher level of competition than Level 3. Level 2 teams may participate in Level 2 or Level 1 in-state tournaments but not in Level 3 events. These stipulations do not apply to out-of-state tournaments.

Level 2 Team Formation Rules

Member Organizations and playing leagues may establish their own criteria for player selection and team assignment provided there is no conflict with Iowa Soccer Association Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Policies.

Level 1

Level 1 soccer is intended to provide players with a higher level of competition than Level 2. Level 1 teams may participate only in Level 1 in-state tournaments. These stipulations do not apply to out-of-state tournaments.

Level 1 Team Formation Rules

Member Organizations and playing leagues may establish their own criteria for player selection and team assignment provided there is no conflict with Iowa Soccer Association Constitution, Bylaws, Rules, and Policies.