



## **Strikers Fall 2022 Soccer Program – 2011 Age Groups Transitioning from the Academy Program to the Competitive Program**

### **How does the training philosophy change when transitioning from Strikers Academy to the Competitive program?**

Across all programs, Strikers tries to create an environment that strengthens players' passion for soccer, teaches fundamental and complex soccer skills, and provides kids with a community of support that encourages personal growth. With these ideals in mind, each program Strikers offers is structured to accommodate the varying needs of players as they age. The transition from Academy to Competitive is designed to adapt with the players' evolving abilities and provide them a more structured opportunity to further their soccer skills.

In this 2022 “bridge” fall season, 2011 players are transitioning from the Academy program to the Competitive program. In Academy, the program focused on inspiring kids to fall in love with the game. The priority was to have fun, and learning mostly occurred through play. Now, in the Competitive program, there will be a shift in the purpose of practice. Instead of coaches mostly highlighting the joys of soccer, they begin to emphasize the joys of learning through training. Strikers coaches will introduce players to a more “competitive” practice environment designed to cultivate individual skill development through the teaching of fundamental soccer skills. There is a continual emphasis on deliberate practice and recognizing/enjoying the personal growth that comes with working hard to achieve a goal.

Although the program is called “competitive”, the focus at this age is not on winning or losing games. Results at this age are not a priority. Rather, coaches view games as learning opportunities that indicate strengths and weaknesses that can be addressed at practice. Then, as the season progresses, we base our success on the ability to achieve growth related to the lessons we've learned, regardless of scores or standings. We call our program the Competitive program because the purpose is for players to compete in a healthy, positive way so each player can grow as fruitfully as possible.

### **How will the teams be structured?**

This fall, teams will mostly practice all together as an age group. However, this can change based on the discretion of the coach. If the coach feels it is in the best interest of the individuals to pool players into different training groups each session, they have that freedom. Groups can be structured with various goals in mind. Groups may be separated positionally (i.e., grouping the defenders together), or based on specific skill strengths and weaknesses (i.e., a group of weaker passers gets together to work on passing technique).



Groups are fluid to accommodate the needs of each player based on the objectives of the practice session. For games and tournaments, rosters will look different based on the size of the player pool and availability of players. However, coaches will ensure that all players registered will have the opportunity to play in games and tournaments.

Once the fall season ends in October, players will be encouraged to attend tryouts in November. Please know that we do not cut players for U12 tryouts. If your player comes to tryouts, he or she will be given the opportunity to play soccer. After tryouts, players will be placed on a team with a coach that they will practice with consistently through the spring season. Strikers generally prefers to tier competitive teams as Premier and Select if possible. This is because we believe players are most successful when they are in an environment that matches their skill ability. Coaches are then able to design sessions that target the specific needs of each team and player. As the club with the most qualified, most experienced, and overall best coaching staff in Missoula, we are confident in our coaches' ability to execute this vision for your child. Regardless of your child's team, trust that your Strikers coach is doing the best they can to improve each and every individual.

### **When and where are training sessions?**

Training times and locations are determined by coaches and administration. This fall teams will be training two times a week, and if the coach, players and team wish they can add a third optional practice. Coaches will send out field assignments and times as the season approaches (we are currently waiting to hear from Parks and Rec to confirm the practice times we requested). Training times are not consistent between fall and spring, so expect to have a different schedule after tryouts.

Training Dates, Times, and Location: We should know by the beginning of August.

### **What is the tournament schedule?**

- Flathead Soccer Club's Tamarack Fall Classic in Kalispell, September 24-25
- Glacier Surf Cup in Whitefish, Oct 1-2 - TBD
- Helena Sleeping Giant Tournament in Helena, October 15-16

Both the 2011 boys and girls groups will have friendlies scheduled throughout the season as well. Friendlies are scheduled at the coach's discretion and will likely be a mix of intrasquad (playing against each other), intraclub (playing against other teams in the club) or interclub (playing other clubs) games. We will use these games as checkpoints to see how the players are developing and to identify areas of focus for season-long training.



Please know that game/tournament expenses (lodging, food, travel) are to be covered by parents/guardians. Team managers (parent volunteers who help organize team events/finances) will assist in reserving hotel blocks if desired.

### **What does the commitment look like for a Competitive team?**

Players are expected to attend all practices and games. However, we recognize (and value) that players at this age likely have other interests and commitments that may conflict with soccer. Consistent communication between parents and coaches is expected to navigate any schedule conflicts that arise.

### **How many players are on each team?**

At the U12 age, games are structured in a 9v9 format (the same size they played this spring in Academy). Typically, 9v9 rosters max out at 16 players. This means that up to 16 players may play in a 9v9 game. These roster and field limitations will be consistent for the upcoming spring season. Next fall, at U13, games will transition to 11v11.

If a large number of players mark themselves as available for a tournament, a coach might enter two teams to maximize playing time. This is dependent on age group numbers and availability. Therefore, there may be situations in which teams have 16 players. Please recognize that if a roster is full, the coach will have to manage multiple subs. We guarantee that each player rostered will play in a game, but please be patient with the coaches as they navigate how to best manage playing time for all players.

### **How do I register my player, and how does the cost differ from Academy?**

The first step is to take care of your player registration, which is \$36. This fee goes directly to the Montana Youth Soccer Association. After we receive your registration our registrar takes a look at your registration and verifies the birth certificate and picture are correct. Once these items are verified you will receive an email stating that your player registration has been approved. Once your player registration has been approved please register for the Competitive program. The fee this year for Fall Competitive program is \$275 per player. This is the initial registration fee. Then, once each team determines their tournaments and friendlies schedule, there will be a team fee paid by each player to cover these expenses. This can range between \$200-400 during the fall.

Here are the links to registration:

Player Registration: <https://system.gotsport.com/programs/6641W5407>

Program Registration: <https://system.gotsport.com/programs/42E440083>



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As the season progresses, coaches will reach out to answer more questions about tryouts and clarify expectations for the spring season. However, please feel free to reach out to your coaches or administrators with any pressing questions or concerns.

Thank you for your interest in the Missoula Strikers Competitive Program! No other club in Missoula has the history, culture, proven track record, and time-tested locally grown methodology that Missoula Strikers exhibits. We look forward to cultivating your child's growth as both a soccer player and human being!

Thank you,

**Natalie Hiller-Claridge**

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