



Hollandia Soccer Club

PO Box 25103

Saskatoon, SK, S7K 8B7

info@hollandiasoccer.com

WELCOME TO CLUB SOCCER AND THE HOLLANDIA FAMILY!

For many parents and players, the change to club soccer can be daunting. This year we are welcoming families with children ages 5-18 in our club.

For those playing for the first time in club soccer, there are new people, new processes, and different expectations. For those moving up from the Developmental leagues there are fewer changes, but the introduction of divisions and evaluations can still be unfamiliar. We have put together a question and answer to help with some common start of season questions.

WE HAVE REGISTERED FOR CLUB SOCCER – NOW WHAT?

Once registrations have closed and we see how many players we have, you will receive an email with an evaluation time. The first round of evaluations is tentatively scheduled September 7-9 but will be confirmed a week in advance. All players at all age groups (both new to the club and known to the club) undergo evaluations to help determine which team is going to be the best fit for them in the current season. U7 and U9 are balanced (we create as evenly balanced teams as possible) and U11 and up is tiered. This means that the technical committee undertaking the evaluations will be working to create teams of players of a similar ability, to be placed in the appropriate division with teams of similar ability, in the Saskatoon Youth Soccer league. Nobody is ever cut and there truly is a home for everyone in our club.

WHAT DOES THE EVALUATION SESSION LOOK LIKE?

Each club does their evaluations and creates their teams a little differently. At Hollandia, we believe the best way to evaluate a player is to watch them play. When you sign in at evaluations, your child will be assigned into a smaller group and will be given a number. These smaller groups will then play games against each other.

Evaluations can be nerve-wracking for young players, especially if it is their first time. It is important to let them know that they're just going to be playing soccer for an hour with a few coaches watching. Individual players are never singled out, ridiculed, or chastised during this process. We want players to be relaxed and happy, as that is when they tend to perform to the best of their ability.

Coaches and technical committee members will be watching the children play to determine groups of players who will be at a similar skill level with each other. Players are evaluated for physical ability (fitness, agility etc.), mental readiness (maturity, attitude etc.), technical ability, and if appropriate, tactical ability.

For the indoor season the first round of evaluations is done grouped by birth year regardless of the division in which you last played. Subsequent rounds of evaluations will be set up to assist the technical committee in making teams by division, and balancing teams within divisions.





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A FEW MORE NOTES ON EVALUATIONS

It is important to note that pre-season evaluations are not the only time at which players are assessed. The Hollandia skills sessions, team practices, and games are also used by coaches and technical staff to watch players and track their development. If a player has “a bad day” during evaluations, this does not mean that their potential will not be recognized. Evaluation sessions are simply the easiest method of grouping players based on their current stage of development.

It is rare for first year players to be evaluated at the Premier (the highest) level. This is especially true for less physically developed players. Hollandia considers player safety the highest priority and putting players in an unsafe physical environment is something we avoid whenever possible. Because we have two-year age groupings, and most children are going through growth spurts at this time, there can be a large height and weight difference between players. This means that the higher-level players will typically be the senior, or second-year players in an age group. If a junior player is evaluated at the higher level and the coaches and technical staff feel they are able to safely compete at that level, they may be placed onto a Division 2 team.

I DON'T THINK THEY EVEN LOOKED AT MY CHILD DURING EVALUATIONS

Not surprisingly, we hear this a lot. There are a lot of kids on the field at one time, there is a lot of motion and activity, and there are 4 or 5 or more people evaluating the players. The evaluation process requires a lot of communication between the evaluators, so you will often see them talking and comparing notes and seemingly not looking at the players. You will see them referring to phones or tablets where they may be looking at previous player evaluations or notes from previous seasons that is available for evaluators to use. You will notice that not all the evaluators watch all the players. All of this is quite normal. If at the end of the first evaluation session the technical committee feels they didn't have enough eyes on a player to make a fair judgement, they may call them back to a second or subsequent evaluation.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER EVALUATIONS?

The technical committee will meet to review the evaluations for each age group and begin the process of creating teams. Apart from the evaluations of the players, the committee has other considerations when making teams. Where possible, Hollandia tries to create teams of players from the same birth year, as this creates better player development. Sometimes there are



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changes in the divisions, or rules, at a city level or among other clubs that have to be considered. Once teams are created, you will receive an email letting you know which division and team your child has been placed on, as well as the name of the coach and team manager.

WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH WHERE MY CHILD HAS BEEN PLACED?

As a club, Hollandia has the best interest of all our players in mind. We want to ensure that our players are in a playing environment where they are challenged to develop, but are also able to have success and enjoy playing. Our goal is to keep all our players playing with us straight through to adulthood. That being said, it is very common for players to change divisions from season to season, and placement in a division in one season should not be seen as the final placement for a player for all future seasons. Players frequently move up and down divisions depending on their physical, mental, and technical growth, both as an individual and in comparison to their peers.

We encourage parents to trust the experience and judgment of the technical committee and evaluating coaches and watch your child playing with their team for a few weeks. The coaches and technical committee will also be watching during this time in case any adjustments are required. If you feel very strongly that your child should be in a different division, please speak to your coach who will use club protocols to raise the concern with the technical committee. If you would like to discuss your child's placement prior to the start of the season due to a personal conflict or consideration, please feel free to contact the technical committee at technical.committee@hollandiasoccer.com. Please note, that while we want to hear your concerns, we cannot guarantee that we will change a placement because of them.

WHAT IF MY CHILD DOESN'T WANT TO UNDERGO EVALUATIONS?

If your child doesn't want to be evaluated, for any reason, there is a place to tell us this during the registration process. We are able to place your child directly into a Division 3 team without an evaluation. If this is the case, we won't schedule your child into an evaluation period. If they choose to be evaluated at the next season, we will be happy to see them at that time.

WHAT ARE TIME REQUIREMENTS DURING THE SEASON?

Depending on which division your child is placed in, the requirements may be slightly different. Generally, teams will have one game a week, one team practice during, and a skills session, usually on the weekend. The team practice will be run by the team coach and will focus on building skills unique to the needs of your team. The skills sessions are run by Astra Academy coaches and are designed to improve individual technical skills. Some teams will have additional practices or physical conditioning sessions. Please see our website for tentative game nights.



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I HAVE HEARD WE HAVE TO PAY TEAM FEES? WHAT ARE THESE FOR?

Team fees will be discussed at your team's pre-season meeting. Generally, these fees are to pay for turf fees (for premier and division 2 teams) practice jerseys, tournament registrations, coaches' gifts, etc. The registration fee you have paid is the cost incurred to register the team and provide equipment for our teams. Higher-level teams often have higher team fees because they play in more tournaments, and may have additional field rental costs.

DO WE HAVE TO TAKE PART IN ASTRA?

No. Many Hollandia players do train with Astra, and many do not. Hollandia contracts with Astra to provide us with technical coaches and access to coaching expertise. There are other private academies in the city that provide similar services to other clubs. Players looking for additional technical training or who are interested in moving into the highest levels of soccer competition may want to consider training with a private academy.

I'VE HEARD THAT YOU CAN'T PLAY PREMIER IF YOU AREN'T IN ASTRA THOUGH. IS THIS TRUE?

Astra and Hollandia are two separate organizations. Hollandia does not give any preferential treatment to players who are in the Astra or Whitecaps academy programs. Hollandia players are placed on Hollandia teams purely based on how they have been evaluated throughout their time with the club. It is important to remember though, that players who take part in additional training may touch the ball for 3 or 4 hours more a week than individuals that do not. At early ages this may not make much difference, but over a long period of time this can have a strong impact on player development.

WHAT DO WE DO IF WE HAVE QUESTIONS DURING THE SEASON?

Start with your team manager. They will be able to forward the question to the right person at the technical committee or the board. You can always drop an email to info@hollandiasoccer.com. There are a group of us that monitor that account and try to get back to people as quickly as possible.

HOW CAN WE GET MORE INVOLVED?

At all levels, Hollandia is a volunteer club. We rely on parent and volunteer coaches, and need team managers for each team. We also need committee members and board members from time to time. Opportunities are emailed when they are available, and we encourage you to sign up to volunteer when you register.

We hope this has answered some questions and that we will see your player out this season. If you have other questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us! Welcome to Hollandia!

