



# Cosmo Stars Soccer Club (CSSC): *Travel Team Playing Time Policy*

## PLAYER'S TRAVEL TEAM PLAYING TIME POLICY

Recreational soccer's playing time policy is that each player must be able to play equal or "at least 50%" of the time in each game. However, travel soccer is competitive soccer. There are several factors that are considered by travel team coaches to determine playing time. For example, the most important factors are commitment to the team, such as attending practices, arriving on time, and showing effort, and demonstration of disruptive behavior, poor attitude, and habitually missing practices or games. Here is a guide to playing time:

**Performance and discipline/commitment:** what is the player's level of performance during practices and games? Players are evaluated even during warmups to determine whether or not the player is having an off-day, etc. (see form below). Although age is a factor to allow younger players to gain experience in the field, some of the players have been playing or practicing for longer periods of time with the club or with a specific coach. The expectations are higher as they are supposed to be able to apply the principles taught in class. This leads to the level of ability within the club. As they had been practicing longer with the team or club, the expectation becomes more merit based.

Other factors that count as discipline and commitment are **attendance and communication** with the club and coach regarding missing practices or games, and **how much effort and hard work they put into training and games regardless of their ability**. Goalkeepers may have separate training sessions and are not required to practice with the team unless it is asked by the coaches. Practices are very important to enhance the level of each player to be competitive, to understand the game, and to work on the lessons learned from previous games. Most of the time player's performance observed during the games is directly connected to the level of effort and discipline observed during practices, as well as the level of attendance.

**Coachability:** This is evaluated as part of performance and commitment. Here we asked questions like: is the player easy to coach? Do we need to call his/her attention frequently during practice? Is he paying attention, distracted, or distracting others? Every drill is evaluated here, including the ability and motivation to run around the field. Are they learning or making strides in practice? We recognize that through playing time.

**Form:** This factor relates to how well the player is doing during a game, or if he/she is having an off-day.

**Score line and opponent team:** If the result is to try to come back from an unfavorable game where the coaches want to balance against the strength and the skills of the other team, the coaches may want to keep more competitive players on the field. This has a strong debate among coaches as to whether or not allow all players to play if the game's score is unfavorable. However, it is always at the coach's judgement to evaluate the other team's skill level and their level of strength to consider what players may balance out the game on the field and what amount of playing time each player gets.

**Injuries/Fatigue:** It is important to be attuned to player's needs and injuries. As a result, their playing time may need to be spread out more evenly over the games. If a player misses practices due to injuries or to avoid aggravating a possible injury for any particular condition, the coach will evaluate his ability to return to play and may request a note from the doctor. As physical activities, practices and games present the same level of risk, and games should not be the only activity or event to do. Players should not skip practice due to injuries and expect playing time without clearance from a doctor or an assessment from the coach on his/her ability to play.

The problem is that it is a difficult subject for all coaches and clubs as this is competitive soccer and there are many factors at play. Regardless of the situation, we attempt to place every player on the field considering all the criteria above. Be mindful that there may be other factors outside of coaches' control. For example, early termination of games, bathroom breaks, etc. that may limit the amount of playing time.



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Be mindful that inability to perform and execute drills and training lessons due to interruptions and lack of attention from any player/kid will refocus the practices on physical fitness and teamwork.

Your feedback is very valuable to us. Please, let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Thanks, and see you all in practice and games.

### **CONTACTS:**

#### **Juan Carlos Raymond**

Owner/President and Director of Coaches  
10197 Maxine Street, Ellicott City, MD 21042  
(301) 996-8551  
juan.c.raymond09@gmail.com  
[cosmostarssc@outlook.com](mailto:cosmostarssc@outlook.com)

#### **Kamilla Bakirbayeva**

Owner/Executive Director and Club Manager  
10197 Maxine Street, Ellicott City, MD 21042  
(410) 776-9737  
kamray2219@gmail.com  
[cosmostarssc@outlook.com](mailto:cosmostarssc@outlook.com)

For questions regarding the travel team playing time rules, please contact the Executive Director and Club Manager.