



## **Catonsville Cobras Travel Soccer**

### *2026–2027 Travel Team Formation & Tryout Process*

#### **Overview**

As part of the upcoming U.S. Soccer birth-year realignment, Catonsville Soccer will adjust its travel program to align with the September 1 – August 31 date range. This change better reflects the Maryland school calendar and the intent of U.S. Soccer’s guidance: allowing players to participate with their classmates. This document outlines how our organization will conduct tryouts and team formation during this transition.

#### **Guiding Principles**

Catonsville Soccer has always been built on the dedication of volunteers, coaches, and families who share a commitment to developing confident players and strong teams. Our process remains grounded in:

- Fair and comprehensive evaluations of every player.
- Transparency in how teams are formed and offers are extended.
- Collaboration among coaches, evaluators, and board members to ensure competitive teams.
- Community spirit, recognizing that while this process is complex, we will navigate it together with fairness and respect.

#### **Tryout Structure**

- Tryouts will be organized by age group, based on the new September–August alignment.
- Coaches from adjacent age groups will attend tryouts together to help assess player talent and team composition.
- Players should attend their birth date appropriate age group tryout. Evaluators will determine if they should be considered for an **Accelerated Track Placement (ATP)** within the program.
- Board members and designated evaluators will be present to ensure consistency and documentation.

#### **Evaluation Criteria**

Player evaluations will take a holistic approach, recognizing that soccer performance is built not only on technical skill but also on effort, teamwork, and attitude. Each player will be assessed across the following areas: all considered equally important in team placement decisions:

- Technical and tactical ability: ball control, passing, positioning, awareness, and decision-making.
- Physical readiness: endurance, speed, balance, and overall athleticism.
- Coachability and attitude: willingness to learn, listen, and apply feedback.
- Teamwork and communication: collaboration with teammates, respect for others, and positive presence on the field.
- Commitment and reliability: showing up prepared, consistent effort, and dependability.



- Soccer awareness: understanding of the game's flow, anticipation, and adaptability to different roles and formations.

### **Rating & Recommendation Process**

- Each player's evaluation will be documented by the lead coaches within their age group.
- These evaluations will be reviewed collectively by coaches, the Vice President of Travel, and board representatives to ensure fairness and consistency.
- To ensure a fair and objective process, no coach will make team placement decisions unilaterally. All recommendations are made through a collaborative review and require final Board approval.
- Based on these evaluations, the Age Group Lead Evaluator or Team Head Coach will extend team offers to players.

### **Team Offers and Acceptance**

- Players will be offered a roster position on a specific team within their eligible age group(s).
- In some cases, based on player readiness, maturity, and team needs, a player may also be offered for a team in an older age group. This is known as the Accelerated Track Placement (ATP).
- These recommendations will be made carefully and collaboratively by the lead coach, other coaches in the relevant age groups, and the board.
- Families may accept the placement offered, or, if invited, consider an alternate team: whether within their assigned age group or, if appropriate, in an older one.
- Once a placement is accepted, players and families will proceed with standard registration and team communications.

*Players not offered a travel team position will continue to have the opportunity to play within our Catonsville Recreational Soccer Program. The recreational program is a cornerstone of our community: robust, fun, and competitive—and offers players of all abilities the chance to develop their skills, build friendships, and enjoy the game. Our recreational coaches and parent volunteers are equally dedicated to fostering growth, teamwork, and a lifelong love of soccer for every child in our program.*

### **Moving Forward Together**

This transition marks an important update for youth soccer programs across the country. With open communication and community cooperation, Catonsville Soccer will continue to provide a positive, development-focused experience for every player.

Our goal remains the same: to help each child grow as a player, teammate, and member of our soccer family.

Respectfully,

*The Catonsville Soccer Board*



## PLANNED AGE GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES

### Girls Age Group Lead Listing

Age Group	Age Group Lead Evaluator
U9	TBD
U10	Don Scott
U11	Natalie Powell
U12	Heather Cassetta
U13	Don Scott
U14	Tom Yorke
U19	Keith Sullivan

### Boys Age Group Lead Listing

Age Group	Age Group Lead Evaluator
U9	Jim Emery
U10	Dan Gill
U11	Reed Sothoron
U12	Jon Gowen
U13	Drew Myers
U14	Kyle Leahy
U19	Scott Ensor