

Preface: Every soccer tryout system is imprecise and has its flaws, but we believe it is difficult to attempt to use an overly detailed evaluation form. It can be very distracting and cumbersome for the evaluators. We believe it is better to use a broader approach that focuses on the key factors that can predict success.

Ratings: We suggest a "thirds" system of rating players in the top third, middle third or lower third of the group being evaluated.

Evaluation and What to Look For: In our opinion, some criteria are more important than others, especially for certain positions. For example, **speed**, **"strength on the ball"** (ability to shield and control the ball) and **winning the ball** are very important for all positions, and a **Fullback** must be tough and not afraid of contact. A **Center Midfielder** should be able to pass the ball, to hold the ball under pressure, have good field vision and, ideally, be able to win a lot of ground and air balls. If you play your **left and right Midfielders** as "wingers", they should be fast and able to run with the ball ("speed dribbling") and to cross the ball. **There are several types of good Forwards, but the main quality is the desire to do whatever is necessary to score**; blazing speed can be good but slower players can make great Forwards if they position themselves well, are quick or have good anticipation and play well with their backs to the goal (this type of Forward excels in front of the goal). A **Sweeper** should be fast and not afraid of contact. A **Stopper** should be tough and able to make good long passes and come up into the attack. There is much more about the qualities to look for when assigning positions in "Assigning Soccer Positions" on SoccerHelp Premium.

Using SoccerHelp Games: SoccerHelp Practice Games are a great way to evaluate players. How players perform in competition, under pressure, at "game speed" is the important question (some look good in Drills, but not in Games).

Tryout Tips and Questions:

1. Keep in mind that the players who have the best skills may not be the best players in matches (i.e., those who look the best in Drills may not be the best under pressure or perform the best at "match speed").
2. You want to determine who will play the best in games, not who practices the best.
3. How can you determine who has the best speed, is aggressive and has good field vision and instincts? You can't tell these things if you only have small sided scrimmages on a short field.

We suggest you scrimmage some on a larger field to watch open field speed, movement off the ball and long passing.

4. Do you want to choose players who have the best current skills, or the most potential for helping the team? Skills can be taught if a player wants to learn and will practice, but speed and aggressive play are tougher to teach.

We suggest you structure your tryouts so you can evaluate the following:

1. **Speed:** Speed is important at high levels of play. You can teach skills and improve speed, but natural speed is an advantage.
2. **Aggressiveness:** Also important. A player who can't win the ball is at a disadvantage.
3. **"Strength on the Ball":** This is different from physical strength. It is the ability to retain the ball when under pressure. It has to do with skill, positioning and physical strength. "2 Team Keep Away" can help evaluate this.
4. **The Ability to Play Quickly:** Better teams will play faster and the ball handler will quickly be pressured. Look for players who can play fast by making quick, correct decisions under pressure.
5. **Passing to Open Space and Movement off the Ball:** Being able to pass to open space (instead of just passing to feet), anticipating passes to open space and "movement off the ball" are critical at higher levels. Players who can play this way have an advantage over those who can't. It is a way of thinking, as opposed to "passing to feet". Playing this way allows a team to have a much faster, more fluid and more creative attack. The Premium "Pass to Space, Run With Ball and Shoot Game", "2 Team Keep Away", and "3 Man Direct Attacking Game" can help teach passing to open space and movement off the ball.

Soccer Tryout Evaluation Form: See the next Page. We have tried to position the form so it can be printed on one page. If you have a problem, copy it and paste it into a Word Document. You can adjust the form to fit your needs.

Soccer Tryout Evaluation Form

(Assign weights to the criteria and adjust the form to meet your needs)

Team Name: _____

Player/Number _____

: _____

Date: _____

Criteria Top Third - Middle Third - Lower Third

A. All Players

1. Attitude

- a. Coachable? _____
- b. Gets along with others? _____
- c. Team player? _____
- d. Hot head? (yes or no) _____

2. Speed

3. Winning the Ball

- a. Balls on the ground _____
- b. Balls in the air _____

4. Strength on the Ball

5. Defense

- a. 1 vs 1 _____
- b. Team Defense _____

6. Skills

- a. Dribbling/Turning
- b. Passing on the ground
- c. Lofted passes
- d. Crossing ball while running
- e. Throw-ins
- f. Movement off the ball
- g. Passing to open space

h. Heading (if appropriate)

B. Attackers Only

- 1. Finishing Ability**
- 2. Desire to Score**
- 3. Success in Front of Goal**

4. Breakaway Ability

C. Midfielders Only

- 1. Field Vision**
- 2. Distribution Skills**
- 3. Ability to "Create"**

D. Fullbacks Only

- 1. "Defenders Mentality"**
(Tough, won't back down)

2. Clearing the Ball

3. Long Lofted Passes

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