

Top 3 Reasons Travel Soccer is Bad for Your Family

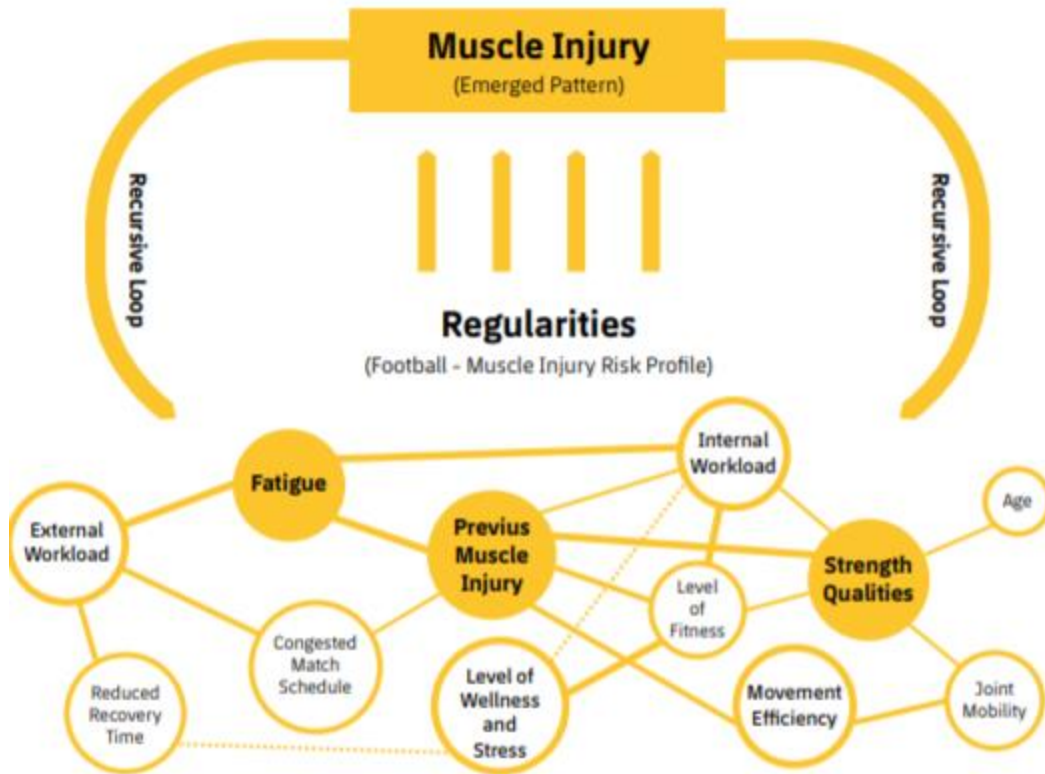
1. The Costs are Enormous and Unnecessary. How much does it cost you to travel with other clubs? \$3,618 per year. Here's how that breaks down:
 - a. Tournament Entry Fees. 4 tournaments a season means 8 per year (many do much more) breaks down to a cost share per family of \$250/season or \$500/year.
 - b. Hotels. Hotel stays are 2 nights/tournament at \$120/night which equals 16 nights at a cost of \$1,920.
 - c. Food. Assume a family of 4 travelling for 2 days at 3 meals a day equals 24 meals. At \$8.75 a meal that's \$210 per tournament or \$840/season and \$1,680/year. Subtract typical grocery costs of \$482 for this same time period and you're left with \$1,198.
 - d. Gas. Gas is estimated at \$482 with an average gas expense of \$60.25/tournament as travel can be as far as Tampa and Orlando.

We've been there. After spending all that money on travel, we can at least hope our kids are getting better. They're not and it is actually bad for their health. This is because a club that focuses on tournament play is focused on winning and coaches that try to win these tournaments will make different decisions than coaches that are focused on player development. Clubs focused on player development takes risks, puts players in new positions and doesn't pigeonhole players into a single role too early and attempts to build a players skill set over the long term recognizing playing sports is a long-term love affair. Focusing on the short-term short changes all players and their future in the sport especially when they are young.

2. Increased chances of injury due to Fatigue and Overload. No other country in the world plays in soccer tournaments, just the USA. The best soccer clubs in the world come from Europe, Central and South America and they do not play in tournaments. Why?

- a. Because first it is strictly an American (USA) concept unheard of throughout the rest of the world.
- b. They play in single matches within a soccer league and never more than 1 match in a single day.
- c. Within that single match, players play to their maximum level of effort with most of the injuries to players occurring in the second half due to fatigue and overload. The graphic below compiled by FC Barcelona's medical staff shows the factors that play into injuries with Fatigue highlighted and "External Workload" in bold. In tournament play, the children play 2, 3 and sometimes 4 matches at maximum level of effort. However, they are unable to play at their best after the first match due to muscle fatigue from the load. This makes subsequent matches more dangerous than the first increasing the chance at injury.
- d. All great clubs know that to perform well, they must first ensure their players are healthy. The tournament system is inherently unhealthy by design.

Figure 3
Theoretical web
of determinants
for muscle injury
in football.
Redesigned by FC
Barcelona
v



3. Increased Chances the Sport will Decrease in Fun and cause the player to want to quit. 70-75% of children will quit playing a sport by the age of 14. Why? US Youth Soccer did a study and found 7 primary reasons as listed below.
 - a. Overemphasis on Winning
 - b. Lack of Fun
 - c. Coaching/Adult Behaviors
 - d. Lack of Social Support
 - e. Other Activities are more interesting
 - f. Lack of Playing Time
 - g. Dissatisfaction with Performance

Tournament play is designed for one thing; winning the tournament. But what do they really win? The tournaments are essentially meaningless since winning one doesn't advance your team and affords no new competition opportunities. Kids can win dozens of tournament trophies and develop far behind their peers in other countries. This is because true development can't co-exist with a club that always has its emphasis on winning. Trying to win means playing your best players (lack of playing time), coach yelling at you when you make a mistake (coaching/adult behaviors) and lectures when you lose (overemphasis on winning). Clubs that focus on development rarely participate in tournaments because they know it is detrimental to the kids and may even cause them to quit playing altogether.

Find a club that emphasizes league play, keeps tournaments and travel to a minimum, and emphasizes player development over winning. Your players long-term health and your wallet depend on it!