



Red Bulls

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Team Formation and Player Placement Process

Long term player development starts by building a structure that requires coaches/trainers to observe, monitor and identify player progress over an extended period (one soccer year Fall to Spring).

A year-long evaluation process provides a more accurate and in-depth look of each individual player. Even so, there will be instances, such as the U7/8 pre travel age groups, where player pools are used to better assess players, as well as player movement heading in U9.

Traditional open tryouts create undue stress for players and parents alike.

With limited try out opportunities in the spring season, a fluid team formation process is key so that players continue to train without interruption to each teams Seasonal Development Plan (SDP).

For clubs to operate this process they first need to establish three key areas:

1. Club Specific Timeline
2. Parent Education Sessions - Share the club's philosophy and methodology
3. Player evaluation rationale – what is being evaluated and when

The New York Red Bulls operate from the following player placement and team formation philosophy and framework:

1. Simplicity and realism to the game itself are the most effective ways of assessing the skill level of a player.
2. Clear and simple organization creates an environment for a fair and accurate assessment of technical and tactical ability.
3. Training sessions culminating in small-sided games with variable conditions, are utilized to create specific attacking and defending situations. This allows for increased ball contact and increased instances to assess each player individually.
4. Players are assessed in relation to the ability level of the team. This will precipitate more accurate and reliable results as the goal of the player placement process is to rank players within the group and identify areas of strength and need for improvement.

The player placement and team formation process is used to ensure that all players feel comfortable and can meet their personal goals over the course of the year. A year-round, ongoing assessment is not only less taxing (mentally and physically) on our players, but it is much more accurate and detailed.

Our staff can evaluate a body of work over a larger period of time and in a more natural setting, and the club can feel more confident in our decisions for each player.

The Player Placement process relies on a variety of tools to evaluate a player to help ensure each player is placed appropriately based on his or her tactical, technical, physical, and psycho-social development. These evaluation tools include:

- **Player Development Meetings**
Players and families are provided a player end of season evaluation twice a year to go over a player development plan and evaluation. These end of season evaluations are designed to allow the player and parent the opportunity to gain feedback on a few key areas for the player's development. Information highlighted in these evaluations is tracked by trainers to monitor the growth and development of a player.
- **Games and training sessions**
Players are constantly being evaluated (formally and informally) to ensure the player (and team) are on track for development. This is an ongoing process that happens throughout the year.
- **Tournament participation**
Tournaments are a good way for the staff to evaluate players in a state, regional, or national context (depending on the age and event). Tournaments can also be very useful as they allow staff to collect and observe a lot of games in a short amount of time.
- **Player Progress and Team Formation Meeting**
Player and team rankings are done by staff twice a year (Fall and Spring) and can be inclusive of training session notes, game analysis reports and player evaluations. These track and monitor team and individual performances and progress.
- **Parent Coach and Trainer feedback**
Parent coaches communicate frequently with the Red Bull Youth Program Regional Coordinator (RC) about the successes and challenges each team faces. This communication and evaluation go both ways, from parent coach to RC and from RC to parent coach. This relationship is vital as Regional Coordinators provide and set the developmental pathway for our players and teams.

This information, collected throughout the year while players perform in a natural setting, ensures that the Red Bull Youth Programs staff receive a well-rounded view of each player's ability level and development. We strive to maintain a high level of professionalism and organization while providing a consistent, high-quality coaching environment at each session, and game to guarantee the integrity and quality of information collected. As such, we are confident that this player placement process is more accurate, and less taxing (mentally and physically), than a one-off tryout event.

Listed below is the 10-step process for team formation:

Step	Action	Time	Specific Outcome
1	Player Evaluation 1	End of Fall Season	Players are given feedback based on ability at the end of Fall season.
2	Current 'low bubble' feedback discussions	End of Fall Season	Low performing players are identified. A discussion is had with the parent to discuss further development opportunities.
3	Winter Training/Clinics	Winter (December to March)	Players who are low in team rankings are encouraged to attend winter training opportunities
4	Player Development Meeting (part 1)	January	Trainers and Club Director meet to discuss player rankings and discuss 'bubble' players- Those players who may move up or down teams.
5	Team Formation Period Publicized	March	Club announces team formation process and publishes instructions
6	Open team training sessions for new and current players	April	Current 'top bubble' players identified for opportunity to train 'up'. New players invited to train during club teams training sessions.
7	Formation of Teams	Upon conclusion of team formation training sessions	Team trainers adjust team rankings/rosters as needed based on performance of 'top bubble' and new players added accordingly.
8	Team Formation Presentation Meeting	May/June	RBYP Staff present proposed teams to club for year ahead.
9	Team Offers Sent	May/June	Invites are sent out to players on a rolling basis – A team then B team, and so on.
10	Team Registration in League	Before league deadline	Team registrations submitted to league with developmentally appropriate flighting.

*Please note that 'lower bubble' players do not train with the team below the players current rostered team.

Bubble player can be identified on a seasonal basis and in the form of a player evaluations and/or observations.

The player assessments should be used in conjunction with a team ranking document. Players should be ranked in relation to the current team they play on to ensure they are playing at a developmentally appropriate level.

It's important that all parties (parent and players) and representatives (trainers and club officials) are made fully aware of the goal and objectives of the player placement and team formation process each year.

Summary

- Greater engagement from all club members –parent coaches, trainers, board members.
- Player placement based on a large body of work (7-10 months).
- Players centric development focus.
- Lower yearly cost to club.
- Greater knowledge of all players in the club.