

Tryouts Tips for Players and Parents
Vince Ganzberg
Indiana Youth Soccer Director of Education

Players:

- Be prepared!
 - If you fail to prepare then prepare to fail.
 - This means taking some time away from the video games and going in the back yard to juggle, strike a ball against a wall, dribble against your dog, play some pick-up games with neighborhood friends.
 - Get outside and do something with the ball for about thirty minutes a day. If you go into a tryout without having prepared yourself then you may struggle.
 - “Everyone wants to go to heaven, but no one wants to die”-Mike Shanahan. Prepare yourself.
 - Due to the small window of opportunity you have to impress a club’s coaching staff, by the time you get going it may be too late.
- Prepare your mind!
 - Be prepared to play in a different position than what you are used to.
 - A good soccer player can play anywhere on the field and should not tell the coaching staff that they only play in goal, defense, midfield, or up front. Who knows you may be even better in a different spot.
 - Don’t worry about where you are playing but how you are playing. Most coaching staff know that they are moving players around and understand.
 - Watch the movie “Searching for Bobby Fischer”
- Deal with the “Thunderbolts”!
 - If you make a mistake, don’t try and make it up all in one shot. Breathe, talk positively to yourself and realize that everyone is making mistakes. Try and get the ball back as soon as you can and do one thing well like making a simple pass to get you back into a “positive” state.
 - “You can’t always choose the situation you find yourself in but you can always choose your response”.-Paul Robinson-Goal keeper for the England National Team
 - “Tough times don’t usually last-Tough people do”.-Bill Beswick
 - Control what you can and that is how you play, not where. Think of it as a challenge and accept it as one.
- Prepare your body!
 - Stay away from the junk food the day of tryouts. Eat good/healthy foods!
 - Drink water throughout the day.
 - Don’t go swimming and do belly flops the day of tryouts. If you go in a pool, it should be to relax, not to exercise and play.
 - Get a good night’s sleep the night before.
- Showcase yourself
 - This doesn’t mean to turning into a “ballhog” the day of tryouts, but if you are a good dribbler than show it! If you are athletic, try and put yourself into those positions to showcase that. If you possess a “soccer brain” then put yourself in the middle of the field to showcase that.
 - Try to win every 50-50 ball, which shows determination.
- Enjoy the experience!
 - Be composed and carry yourself with confidence.
 - Have a positive attitude. Good coaches will not only look for talent but character as well.
 - “If you can’t be a star, then don’t be a cloud”!-unknown
 - Smell the roses while you can, enjoy the experience of playing.
 - Have Fun and smile, that shows you truly love this game. Show that your soul is on the field.

Parents:

- Be Prepared!
 - Before the tryouts list with your child 50 positive words and then make a sentence out of it! Refer to that positive sentence before the tryouts.
 - Understand that a good soccer tryout for youth (9-14 years of age) should not involve laps, sprint tests, pushup challenges, etc. A good soccer tryout should allow the kids to play soccer so they can be evaluated as a “soccer player”. Contact the club that you may be interested in to see how they conduct tryouts, what their philosophy is, etc.
 - Understand that your child may not be the big fish any longer. This is an unpleasant but crucial lesson to learn. Part of being prepared is being realistic.
 - Accept that the club’s coaching staff may see your child playing in a different role than what they are used to. Have an open mind.
 - Watch the movie “Searching For Bobby Fischer”
- Be Supportive
 - Before tryouts stay away from the “Gipper” speech but refer back to the positive sentence that you created. Tell them you love them!
 - During tryouts, refrain from coaching them, standing with your arms folded or any other negative body language, lurking next to the sideline, talking to the coaching staff, etc. Go catch up on your reading.
 - After tryouts, refrain from the “PGA” or Post Game Analysis during the car ride home. Ask them if they had fun and where they want to eat.
 - Be more like your grandparent(s), not parent(s). Most grandparents when watching youth sports just chuckle and enjoy it. They have pretty much seen it all and are proud that they are watching their grandchild(ren) participating in a sport.
 - Remember how you felt when you “tried out” to make a team.
 - Watch the movie “Searching For Bobby Fischer”

Finally realize as a parent that your whole self worth should not lie in the fact that your child makes a travel club. They are not you and often what different things than you do. Life isn’t always fair, but honest. All human beings are not created equally. Cherish your child(ren) when you can because you just never know what an negative reaction about a “tryout” can do in the long run. Have fun because these times go quickly.