

REAL COLORADO
Guidelines and Recommended Procedures
For Competitive Tournaments and Travel
Effective Date: 8/1/21

Purpose

The purpose of travel tournaments (the coach decides that the team will travel, stay, eat as a team) is to provide teams the opportunity to compete against new and different competition, to aid in the maturity of the players and teams in the soccer realm and, in the high school years, to provide exposure for the team and players on the college, regional, and national levels. For the team to be mentally focused throughout the tournament, it is imperative that the players and families understand the purpose of the trip is to **play soccer**. The environment for the players should encourage team unity and focus on soccer.

The team should act like a team not only on the field, but also off. Traveling together, staying in hotel rooms together, eating all meals together, and traveling to and from games together create a focused environment for the tournament. With these goals in mind and based on the experience of many teams over many years, Real CO has developed the following Guidelines and Recommended Procedures for team travel to help make the tournament experience as positive, constructive, and fun as it can and should be.

****Note**, U11 and U12 team travel procedures (but not the team philosophy) can be different from procedures followed by U13+ teams and will be discussed appropriately throughout this policy.

Picking and Applying to the Tournament

I. What tournaments should our team attend?

- A. As a team begins preparation for their fall or spring season, **tournaments will be decided by the team coach**. The Real CO Tournament Director maintains a list of approved in-state tournaments, and a list of possible out of state tournaments, but will consider any tournament a coach suggests. The Real CO Technical Directors can suggest specific tournaments for specific teams.
- B. Once the coach selects tournaments, the team manager must complete the Real CO Tournament Request google document, **PRIOR TO APPLYING TO ANY TOURNAMENT**. (Note: no tournament request is needed for the Real CO Cup, State Cup, Centennial Cup or Presidents Cup).
- C. Approval via email will generally come within 48 hrs.
- D. This is an internal Real CO process and is not part of the actual tournament application.

II. The Application Process

- A. Once you receive approval to apply, you should submit your application to the tournament ASAP.
- B. Fill out the application completely, considering tournament deadlines. Most applications are submitted online.

- C. Tournament payments are generally made with a credit card. Applications often aren't considered for acceptance until fees are paid so be sure to complete the application when there are enough funds in the team account.
- D. If the tournament is a college showcase, player profiles will be required. Begin work on these ASAP.

Preparing for a Travel Tournament

I. Team Travel/Tournament Coordinator

- A. Teams should have a Travel/Tournament Coordinator who will handle all aspects of team travel, such as airfare or carpooling, hotel reservations, car rentals, meal planning, necessary paperwork, and to assist the team manager in travel planning.
- B. Travel plans should start ASAP after an application has been submitted. *Before committing to any contracts (for airfare or hotels, etc.), be certain the team is accepted, or that the likelihood of acceptance is very great.*
- C. Most tournaments require their teams stay in specific hotels (stay-to-play) so be sure to research this carefully on the tournament website and follow all direction.
- D. The travel coordinator should be in constant communication with the manager and coach regarding travel plans for decision making.

II. Team Communication and Finances

- A. Families **MUST** be advised of the coach's intention to apply to all tournaments prior to application. It is vital that the manager and coordinator keep all families updated regarding all aspects of the tournament plans from start to finish, especially regarding expected expenses and money due dates, etc.
- B. All anticipated tournament expenses must be collected prior to departure for the tournament – no exceptions.
- C. All rostered players at the time of application are responsible for paying the initial tournament fee. Exception would be if a player is injured and won't be able to attend or if a player makes the coach aware prior to application that he/she will not be able to attend.
- D. If guest players are added to the tournament roster, they may be asked to assist with the tournament fee, if rostered players are unable to attend after application is made. **Ex:** Rostered player Johnny is injured prior to the tournament. Billy is a guest player. Billy could be asked to participate in the tournament fee so Johnny can be reimbursed for the tournament fee.
- E. At no time will be a Real guest player be required to pay more than once for a tournament fee. **Ex:** Billy is a Real White player who is asked to guest play with Real Red when Johnny is injured. Billy has already paid the tournament fee with Real White, who is attending the same tournament. Billy does not pay Real Red to reimburse Johnny.
- F. Guest players are responsible for their pro rata share of all tournament expenses, including coach expenses, hotel, rental cars, gas, groceries, meals, etc.
- G. Rostered players not attending are not responsible for any tournament expenses, other than the original fee.
- H. Note: any player who commits to a tournament and for whom an airline ticket is purchased is responsible to pay for that ticket, even if they end up not going.

III. Paper Work for Traveling Teams –

- A. Real CO Tournament Request Form – [click here](#) to complete Google Doc.
- B. Player Code of Conduct – [click here](#)
- C. Volunteer Disclosure – all chaperones, drivers, managers – contact ddemmel@realcolorado.net
- D. CSA/USYS Travel Papers – only for teams traveling outside of Region 4, [click here](#)
- E. CSA/USYS Player Loan Forms – for OUT-OF-CLUB guest players – [click here](#)
- F. Specific Tournament Requirements – to be found on tournament website
- G. Request to Postpone League Game, if necessary – [click here](#)

IV. Team Expectations and Commitment

- A. Prior to departure for a travel tournament, coach must provide information to all parents and players regarding coach expectations, coach rules for travel, representation of Real CO, behavior on and off field, consequences, etc.
- B. A proposed itinerary and all hotel, flight information, tournament website, etc., should be provided to all parents.

Travel Arrangements

H. Travel to the Tournament****

***** Real will continue to be sensitive to any family's COVID concerns if they wish to travel to and from a tournament with their player and stay with him/her separately from the team. However, this does not excuse the family from participating in the team travel expenses. Permission will still be needed from the team coach.**

A. Driving

1. If a tournament is within an acceptable driving distance, the coach may approve that the team travels with families to get there. The coach will name a meeting time and location for all players to come together with chaperones and coach as a team. At tournament's end, the coach will designate when the players will be released from the team. Every player must be "checked out" by a supervising adult from the coach and/or chaperones.
2. The team is responsible for the transportation costs of the coach if the coach uses his/her own vehicle for travel to tournaments **in excess of 90 miles from the Real CO office one way**. The team shall reimburse the coach per mile for the distance to and from the tournament, but not during the tournament. Please check the IRS website (irs.gov) for current business mileage rate. Note: if a tournament is less than 90 mis. from the Real CO Office, no mileage reimbursement will be provided to the coach.
3. Some teams have found it cheaper to pay for a rental car for the coach for such trips rather than paying the mileage on his/her car.
4. The coach can make his/her decision about driving vs. flying, however, if airfare is less expensive than rental car or mileage for the coach who chooses to drive, the team will only be responsible to reimburse the coach up to the cost of the airfare.

B. Other Ground Transportation

1. For certain tournaments, the coach may decide if the team will use one of the following to travel together. The coach may ask the Tournament Coordinator to research these options for cost and viability.
 - a. renting team vehicles,
 - b. caravanning using family/chaperone vehicles;
 - c. charter bus service.

C. Travel by Air

1. Real CO Philosophy Regarding Group Travel by Air has always been that teams travel as a group by air (according to distance). Reasons include:
 - a. Safety of players,
 - b. Level of responsibility placed on chaperones,
 - c. Team training and preparation for tournament play,
 - d. Logistics and respect for schedule required when dealing with large numbers of children,
 - e. Team camaraderie and unity, and
 - f. Guarantee of group rate with the airlines.
2. In the event that a player can use frequent flyer miles or the benefits of a parent who works for the airlines, permission may be requested from the coach to not travel with the team, based on the following.
 - a. The request is made prior to airline booking.
 - b. The team's ability to obtain a "group" rate isn't compromised by a reduction of #'s.
 - c. A ticket hasn't already been purchased for the player.
 - d. The player, regardless of age, is accompanied to and from the tournament by an adult taking full responsibility for the player.
 - e. That adult takes full responsibility for getting the player to the team at the time and location provided by the coach or chaperone, and after the tournament, picks the player up when and where the coach or chaperone indicate.
 - f. The responsibility of the coach and/or chaperones for the player begins and ends only when he/she is in physical presence of the team.
 - g. If a player/family is traveling separately, the player/family is still responsible for pro rata share of all team travel expenses, including coach/chaperone (as appropriate) airfare, team hotel rooms, coach per diem, etc., even if the player misses a night in the hotel with the team.
 - h. If during a trip, circumstances arise that may require a player to travel separately, the coach may use his/her own discretion in allowing a player to change travel plans.
3. The travel coordinator will be responsible to secure reservations for the coach, chaperones and players, only – not parents.
4. The team will pay for the coach's airfare.
5. Whenever a team uses chaperones who have complete charge of the players in order to assist the coach, the team will pay for the chaperone airfare. The number of chaperones will be determined by the coach and may vary for different tournaments and situations.
6. Players who might not be flying with the team must still pay for coach and chaperone airfare (and any other expenses).

D. Team Travel Attire

1. The coach will be advise what the whole team will wear when traveling as a group. All players are to conform. At the minimum, players are required to wear the same Real CO jacket, training shirt or Real CO top (not team jersey).

II. Hotel Accommodations ** U11 procedures discussed

- A. The Travel Coordinator will make all hotel arrangements for the players, coach and chaperones.
- B. All players are expected to stay in the team hotel in the player rooms.
- C. Many teams make it a policy to turn off room service, pay-per-view, and local/long distance calling in all player rooms upon check-in.
- D. **It is recommended that all U11 and younger teams have a parent chaperone stay with three players in a room. If necessary, it is acceptable to have 2 rooms that adjoin to each other so that there is one chaperone and seven players between the two rooms, with the adjoining door remaining open at all times.
- E. **For U11 teams, the coach has the discretion, when a majority of parents will travel, to determine whether players will room with parents rather than assigning chaperones.
- F. **If this is the case and some players' families do not go, then the manager should arrange for single players to stay in rooms with families who will be attending. If this isn't possible and extra room expenses are incurred due to numbers, any extra room charges must be divided between the players' families who aren't attending and not distributed to the whole team.
- G. **Further, when families are sending their players to stay in rooms with other families, those families will contribute to the cost of the family room.
- H. For U13+ teams, the coach may transition to a system where players stay in assigned rooms with a room captain and chaperones are assigned to designated "chaperone rooms".
- I. For teams playing 9v9, the recommended number of chaperones, when staying in the room with players, is 5. For teams playing 11v11, the recommended number of chaperones, when not staying in rooms with players is 3, or the number required to drive the team around.
- J. Notwithstanding C. and D. above, it is within the sole discretion of the coach to decide at what age his/her team will transition from chaperones being in players' rooms to being in designated "chaperone rooms."
- K. When there are players in rooms with chaperones or when there are player rooms and separate chaperone rooms, these rooms are all paid pro rata by the players. When a parent is with the team for the sole purpose of chaperoning, driving and being with the players for the entire trip, the team will pay the entire hotel bill. The chaperones will not be expected to pay, except in their capacity as a team parent.
- L. It is Real CO policy that chaperones must be the same gender as the players when they are sharing a room with players.
- M. Each player is responsible for his/her pro rata share of the cost of the hotel rooms.
- N. In the event that a player has received permission from the coach to stay in a room other than team rooms, the player is still responsible to pay their pro rata share of total hotel costs assessed to all players.

- O. The cost of the coach's hotel room is paid by the team and divided equally among all the players. Each team is responsible for the cost of one hotel room for the coach. Coaches will generally not share rooms.
- P. The cost of the chaperones' rooms is paid by the team and divided equally among all players. Chaperones staying in "Chaperone Rooms" shall share accommodations two to a room.
- Q. Real CO maintains that no player may leave a team room alone or without the specific permission of a team chaperone or coach.
- R. All player cell phones will be collected prior to lights out every night and returned at breakfast the next day. It is not the chaperone's duty to charge cell phones.

III. Rental Vehicles

- A. If the team is traveling with chaperone/drivers, the Travel Coordinator will rent vehicles for team use during travel tournaments to be driven by the chaperones.
- B. Every passenger must be individually belted at all times.
- C. Real CO drivers will never have alcoholic beverages when there is any possibility of driving a team vehicle.
- D. Full insurance coverage will be taken out through the car rental company for every vehicle rented by Real CO teams. No exceptions!**
- E. Car rental expenses are the responsibility of all traveling players.
- F. Regarding players riding in rental vehicles, often the coach will assign players to specific vehicles or the players may make their own choices. Once the players are in a specific car, however, they will ride in the same car throughout the tournament so as to eliminate the risk of any players being left anywhere.

Coach and Chaperone Expenses

I. Tournament Coach and Chaperone Expenses

- A. The team is responsible for all team/travel related expenses for the coach and chaperones.
- B. This includes mileage at IRS current business rate (if driving personal car), airfare, DIA parking fee, hotel, transportation, coach per diem for meals, gas for rental cars, etc.
- C. The coach per diem is \$50 per day and should be provided to the coach prior to departure for the tournament in team check or cash.
- D. Real's staff policy for paying coach parking is for reimbursement for Economy Lot at DIA (adjacent to but not in the parking garages) at rate on dates of tournament. The coach must provide a receipt. If a coach chooses to park in the garage at a higher rate, then he/she will not be reimbursed for difference over Economy Lot fee.
- E. Chaperones will not receive a per diem nor will they be reimbursed for parking at DIA reimbursement.
- F. When acting in their role as chaperone, meals will be included and paid for with team meals. The cost will be a tournament expense for all attending players.
- G. All expenses should be estimated and collected in advance from team, as much as possible.

NOTE: Every team member must receive an itemized breakdown of team expenses for all trips at the conclusion.

Team Meals

- A. The Team Travel Coordinator should collect and keep a list of all player allergies, and make sure coach, manager and chaperones are always aware.
- B. The team is expected to eat all meals together. It is the coach's sole discretion to allow exceptions.
- C. It is extremely important that players eat nutritious meals throughout their travel experience and make a conscious effort to keep well hydrated. The coach should make it clear prior to travel what foods/drinks are off limits. Players should never skip a meal. *Parents are expected to support the coach's and Real's recommendations.*
- D. If your team has two games on a given day, plan ahead for what they will eat between games. It may work best to bring along granola bars, bagels or fruit, etc., to the field and find a shaded area to eat. Avoid turkey or turkey products on game days due to the "sleepy" effect they can have.
- E. All meals, especially breakfast, should be planned ahead as much as possible.
- F. Regarding food expenses, determine a rough estimate of what all meals will cost and charge each player prior to the tournament so the expenditure is covered in advance.
- G. Regarding payment for team meals, it works well to use the team debit card or one credit card to pay for the whole check. If an individual's credit card is used, reimbursement by team check must be immediate upon return.
- H. For player meal costs, it works well to split the total bill by the number of diners, and charge each player's travel account the same.
- I. Coach should use the per diem to pay for his/her food. If he/she participates in the team meal, he/she should pay from per diem.
- J. The team must pay for all chaperone meals. If the chaperones decide to dine separately from the team, they are responsible for their own dining expenses.

Collecting and Using Travel Funds

- A. Estimate the total cost of hotel, transportation, meals, coaching costs, and chaperone costs and divide it by the number of players traveling to the tournament.
- B. It is a good idea to add \$25 per player for miscellaneous expenses such as water, snacks, laundry, or entertainment. It is a very good idea to stock player rooms with bottled water, fruit, snacks at the beginning of a tournament, as well as to bring water to the fields for all players during games.
- C. Collect funds from all traveling players prior to due dates for deposits and final payments, as well as all estimated team expenses, including food for the trip.
- D. You can use a team debit card, and team checks to pay for hotel, rental vehicles and some meals. Always carry some cash. If a personal credit card is used, obviously that individual needs to keep receipts for quick reimbursement.
- E. Maintain receipts for all expenses during the trip.

- F. When you return, have the team treasurer review money actually spent. If you have collected more money than you spent, you can either refund to each player's account his/her pro rata share or put it in a team account for extraneous team expenses or a team party, etc. in the future.
- G. Remember that parents spend a great deal of money to send their kids to tournaments. It is so important that their money is spent wisely.
- H. All parents must receive an itemized accounting of the total travel expenses.
- I. Each team is responsible for the tournament expenses of only one coach. Should an additional coach travel with the team, discussion must be had regarding his/her expenses prior to the trip with a Real CO Technical Director (boys or girls).

Real Colorado Chaperone Guidelines

- A. Chaperones for traveling teams will be responsible for overseeing the behavior and care of all players traveling with the team. The coach and Real CO rely on each chaperone to ensure that all players are safe, acting appropriately and supervised at all times.
- B. The coach has sole discretion in naming chaperones for travel tournaments.
- C. The coach is ultimately responsible for all team decisions. This includes meal venues, meal content, and setting of curfews, down time activities, etc.
- D. Chaperone duties begin at the onset of the trip and continue for the duration of the tournament and trip home.
- E. Generally, chaperones will drive rental vehicles while traveling. Coaches generally do not drive rental vehicles to transport the team.
- F. No smoking will be permitted by any team chaperone while in the company of any players.
- G. The consumption of alcohol by a chaperone in a player room is strictly prohibited. Chaperones may not consume any alcohol or controlled substances while providing direct supervision to players or prior to driving any team vehicles.
- H. All chaperones are required to complete a risk management assessment. Please contact the Competitive Registrar for direction as to how to take care of this.
- I. In the event that a player or chaperone becomes ill or suffers an injury or an unexpected situation develops while the team is traveling, the team coach should be notified immediately. He/She will work with their staff coach on an appropriate plan as to how any specific situation should be handled.