

# Fighting Irish Soccer Club Tryouts Attract More Than 400 Youth

by Leanne Guthrie, Reporter  
May 20 2019 3:16 PM





GODFREY - Fighting Irish Soccer Club conducted its annual tryouts through this past week for local kids. Tryouts this year had an impressive turnout of kids along with their parents cheering them on at the sidelines.

Friday night's tryouts filled up Glazebrook Park with many eager kids ready to impress their future coaches and trainers. Fighting Irish also debuted their Junior Irish team this year, giving kids born in 2012 and 2013 a chance to play soccer for the club as well.

Robert Stephan, founder of the Fighting Irish Soccer Club, said more than 400 kids showed up for tryouts during the five-day period.

"We currently have 20 teams and we are now looking at 24 teams," he said. "We started four years ago and had two teams at that time."

Stephan said now the Fighting Irish Soccer challenge is managing the growth.

"We don't want to have teams just for having a team and want to make sure it is a good fit," he said. "We are certainly happy with the response; we are getting players all around the Metro East. Most of our players are from Alton and Godfrey but come as far away as Carlinville, Gillespie, Jerseyville, Bethalto and everywhere in between."

"We prefer to call it club soccer," he said of the description of his group. "If you do strive to be a high-level soccer player, at some point you have to join a club type of environment. We are really focused on not burning kids out. We regulate their time and don't go four and five days a week or 12 months out of the year. More than 80 percent of our players play another sport, which is also important to us that they are well rounded. Part of our success is we have been able to work with players who do other sports."

The club serves as a way to bring together local youth to enjoy the sport of soccer. Those in the club are taught a wide array of athletic skills as well as team building. Through their disciplined training approach, youth in the club learn footwork, agility, coordination, defense and goalie training, and much more. Members of the club are trained by past college coaches and professional players. Coaches find strengths within each player and help them play off of those strengths in a safe environment.

Fighting Irish teams compete in the St. Louis Youth Soccer Association. Teams travel all through Illinois and Missouri to compete in competitions for different skill levels. The club is backed by multiple local businesses in the Alton area and hosts fundraising events to benefit the club. Some of these fundraisers include their annual Glo BINGO event and pizza fundraising.

For more information check out their facebook page <http://www.altonfightingirish.com> and website.



