

Here are some explanations of what the coaches are looking for.

Receiving and first touch – A good first touch (including trapping) allows for better heads up for decision making. Juggling is a good exercise which can help develop good first touch.

Passing - ability to pass to space (short and long) and the ability to pass to feet are important. Passes to feet are easy and will be evaluated for their pace and touch. Passes to space will be evaluated for their creativity. Remember the adage – short, short, long! Two short passes should be followed up by a long pass.

Communication - Communicates with team mates on the field – verbal communication is important. Uses proper terminology - i.e. drop, square, man on, mark, ballside, goalside, etc. Click here for [soccer terms](#).

Speed – Speed kills. While pure speed can't be taught, players can appear faster by using smartness. Quickness and brains can compensate for a lack of pure speed. By thinking ahead and not “ball watching” a slower player can anticipate the play and move to a better position which provides him the step or two head start which makes him appear faster.

Size – If speed is good then speed and size are better. But smaller players can play “physical”. The smallest player on the field in the Women’s Olympic Championship game (5’3” Tiffeny Milbrett) scored the tying goal as time ran out off of a header by soaring above all the taller players. Proper positioning can make up for a lack of size.

Speed of Decision Making – This is the one quality that tells whether a player is ready to play at a higher level. The ability to make a correct decision quickly is imperative. Failure to make a decision shows that a player will have trouble with the faster game.

Pace - Physical Fitness – Can player run five miles at an 8 minute per mile pace without becoming winded? Even with only a week left until ETS Tryouts, players can improve their endurance by running several miles a day.

Aggressiveness – Does the player win or lose most 50/50 balls? Does the player win all 60/40 balls? Does the player win any 40/60 balls? Does the player win the 1v1 battles? Does the player back off when confronted with a 1v1?

Field presence, heart, etc. – These are all intangibles which coaches are looking for which can be measured by time, weight or height but which stand out on the field. Is the player a team leader? Does the player get along with and lead the other players or cause dissension among the other players? Does the player stand out or disappear? Voice, clothing, friendliness, etc. all combine to add up to field presence.

Creates space with movement - Movement “Off the Ball” is extremely important and a very good sign of maturity in a player. Does the player stand around or do they make runs (without the ball) to create space? Is the player willing to make many runs when they don’t get the ball in exchange for that one opportunity when they do?

Maturity - Attentiveness – Is player talking when the coaches are giving instructions or are they listening attentively?

Positioning - Does the player maintain proper positioning on field? For defenders that is always goalside - for attackers that is usually ballside. Do they “dive in” when defending?

Field Vision - Does the head stay up or do they watch the ball?

Agility and balance – How often does the player end up on the ground? Forwards and other attackers must maintain balance in order to attack in the box.