



2026/2027 Updated Decision on Age Group Formation

Following extensive review and discussion, US Youth Soccer, AYSO, and US Club Soccer have collectively decided to move to an age group player formation cycle that runs from August 1 to July 31, starting with the 2026-27 season/registration year. This change was made based on additional critical feedback, data, and expert input to better align players with their school-grade peers. Our associations feel that this age group player formation will be the most inclusive and help increase participation.

2026/2027 Age Grouping Rationale

- Transitioning to an 8/1-7/31 age grouping is a return to the former grouping prior to 2017. Calendar birth year was mandated by US Soccer when most youth soccer was previously using school age.
- Most youth soccer is non-competitive/recreational. The benefits of youth sport participation are numerous, but USYS feels that the social elements are some of the most important.
- Using the school year grouping creates the fewest trapped players.
- USYS feels that school year grouping promotes stronger team chemistry and retention by allowing children to play with their schoolmates and closest friends.
- Grouping by school year often places players in a more consistent emotional and physical developmental environment.
- School age grouping will help college recruitment. Players of the same graduating class will be participating together in high-level tournaments and matches.

2026/2027 Age Grouping Changes FAQ

When do the age group changes take effect?

For the 2026/2027 seasonal year, USYS competition age groups will be structured based on the dates August 1 - July 31. Beginning on 8/1/2026 all USYS competitions will use August 1 - July 31 to group players. All teams formed for the 2026/2027 seasonal year should be grouped based on these dates.

What age group will my child play in based on the new groupings?

Parents and guardians can use the table below to determine their player's age grouping or the U.S. Soccer roster [formation tool](#).

Who else will be grouping players based on August 1 - July 31?

USYS has collaborated with both US Club Soccer and AYSO to mutually recognize August 1 - July 31 age groupings.

What about National Championships and Presidents Cup?

Teams participating in National Championships and Presidents Cup National Qualifiers and Nationals must be grouped using the dates August 1 - July 31.

Will players who are impacted by the new groupings be given exceptions to play on their existing teams?

For USYS run competitions there will not be age variances granted. Players can play up in accordance with the competition rules but play downs will not be permitted. USYS State Associations, can grant age variance under USYS Policy 105 (below) for state sanctioned play.

Rule 105. STATE VARIANCES

A State Association may permit variances in Rules 104 and 205 of this policy in the best interest of developing the sport within the jurisdiction of the State Association. Those variances do not apply to the state level of US Youth Soccer National Championship, National Presidents Cup or Regional or National League competitions.

How will the oldest age groups be handled?

For USYS competitions (leagues and cups), the U18 and U19 age group will continue to be combined in a U19 age group.

2026/2027 WYSA Specific FAQ

Will WYSA allow age exceptions?

For participation in WYSA leagues only, age variances may be granted in accordance with Policy 162-001.

Policy 162-001: WYSA Age Exemption Policy

Exceptions for age eligibility or roster size may be granted at the discretion of WYSA based on the specific circumstances of each request. Consideration will be given to factors such as player safety, developmental appropriateness, and alignment with the goals of the program. All requests must follow the established [application process](#), and approval is not guaranteed.

How will WYSA handle the oldest age groups?

U18 and U19 age group will be combined in a U19 age group.

Our club is in the middle of a uniform cycle. Will players be required to purchase new uniforms to ensure everyone on a roster has a unique number?

Duplicate numbers will be permitted for WYSA administered leagues. Teams who participate in Presidents Cup and/or the National Championship Series are required to observe the unique uniform number rule at all levels of the competition.

How do clubs implement the age classification change in PlayMetrics?

Clubs who use PlayMetrics for their club operating system can refer to [this article](#) for birth year to age group guidance. Please note, this article is specific to the club system. If your club is using a different software platform for club operations, players will be classified appropriately based on their birthdate when imported into the WYSA system.

How will the Olympic Development Program (ODP) be grouped?

ODP groupings will be unchanged and continue to utilize only January 1-December 31.

Who do I contact with questions?

Registration specific questions can be sent to Executive Director, Melissa Zielinski at mzielinski@wiyouthsoccer.com.

Competitions specific questions can be sent to Competitions Manager, Patrick Hodgins, at phodgins@wiyouthsoccer.com.

Birth Year and Season Matrix

When determining the age group for a season, the year the season ends should be used for determining the birth year. Also note that the format “U followed by age” really means that age and younger.

**2026/2027 Seasonal
Year Age Chart**

Birth Year	January - July	August - December
2007	N/A	U19
2008	U19	U18
2009	U18	U17
2010	U17	U16
2011	U16	U15
2012	U15	U14
2013	U14	U13
2014	U13	U12
2015	U12	U11
2016	U11	U10
2017	U10	U9
2018	U9	U8
2019	U8	U7
2020	U7	U6
2021	U6	U5
2022	U5	U4
2023	U4	U3

based on August 1 - July 31 seasonal year

