

*Crossfire*TM **SELECT**

TRANSITION TO SEASONAL YEAR AGE GROUPING

As we near the end of league play and with State Cup around the corner, there is already a lot of conversation about the 2026 changes.

We want to ensure Crossfire Select families clearly understand the upcoming adjustments to age groups and team formation.



WHAT IS CHANGING?

Beginning with tryouts for the 2026–27 season, youth soccer nationwide—including NPSL, RCL, and other competitive leagues—will move to a seasonal year age system. Age groups will be determined by birth dates falling between:

August 1 – July 31 of the following year

This change is directed by U.S. Soccer and applies to all clubs and leagues, not just Crossfire Select.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Some players may fall into different age groups than they do under the current calendar birth-year system. Summer birthdays may place players in a different grade than many teammates—which is why the system is referred to as a seasonal year, rather than school year.

Important:

No exceptions will be made for players to participate “down” based on school grade or closeness to the cutoff. All players must follow U.S. Soccer guidelines.

2026–27 SEASONAL YEAR AGE GROUPS

U9 — Aug 1, 2017 – Jul 31, 2018 — 7v7
U10 — Aug 1, 2016 – Jul 31, 2017 — 7v7
U11 — Aug 1, 2015 – Jul 31, 2016 — 9v9
U12 — Aug 1, 2014 – Jul 31, 2015 — 9v9
U13 — Aug 1, 2013 – Jul 31, 2014 — 11v11
U14 — Aug 1, 2012 – Jul 31, 2013 — 11v11
U15 — Aug 1, 2011 – Jul 31, 2012 — 11v11
U16 — Aug 1, 2010 – Jul 31, 2011 — 11v11
U17 — Aug 1, 2009 – Jul 31, 2010 — 11v11
U18/U19 — Aug 1, 2007 – Jul 31, 2009 — 11v11

EXAMPLE:

- A player born November 3, 2013, who is currently U13, will remain U13 for the 2026–27 season.
- A player born June 20, 2013, who is currently U13, will move to U14 under the new system.





COMMUNICATION TIMELINE

- Older boys' age groups (U16–U19) will be addressed first due to earlier tryout timelines.
- Any new information from U.S. Soccer or participating leagues will be shared with families promptly.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

My child has a Fall 2011 birthday. When will they try out?

Players who fall into the U15 age group under the new system will try out in May 2026.

My child is younger for their grade because we delayed school entry. Can they play with classmates instead of by birth year?

No. U.S. Soccer does not allow players to “play down” based on grade or delayed school entry.

CAN A PLAYER PLAY UP?

Players may be considered for playing up only if they demonstrate the maturity, skill, and readiness—and only with Director of Coaching approval at tryouts. Play ups are only allowed on the A teams. Please see policy on our website under resources.

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT CURRENT TEAMS?

Teams will be formed using the new August–July birthdate system. Some roster changes should be expected.

WHEN DO NEW TEAMS BEGIN PLAY?

Seasonal-year teams will begin official competition in June 2026.

Teams still finishing postseason matches will complete all commitments before switching.

DOES THIS AFFECT ONLY CROSSFIRE SELECT?

No. All sanctioned clubs must follow the new roster structure nationwide.

WILL COACHES COMMUNICATE PLACEMENTS BEFORE TRYOUTS?

While coaches will continue to provide developmental feedback, roster placement is not confirmed until after the tryout process is completed.

WILL TRYOUTS TAKE PLACE AT THE USUAL TIME?

Yes. Specific dates will be posted on our website as we approach tryouts.





WHY U.S. SOCCER MADE THIS CHANGE

The new system is intended to:

The August 1 age group cut-off most effectively reduces the number of “trapped players” in youth soccer and reduces negative impacts on these players at multiple stages of their career. “Trapped” players are those who, due to soccer age group cut-offs, are in an older soccer age group than their school year. Trapped players have significantly reduced competition opportunities and disrupted training experiences in 8th grade (when most of their team is in high school) and are similarly negatively impacted four years later when players from the older soccer age group, but who are still in high school, are moved down into the same soccer age group. Second, an Aug. 1 age group cut-off best aligns soccer age groups with school year ages (around the country), maximizing the number of players who participate in soccer programs with their school-year friends. This alignment has a positive correlation with increased numbers of youth players entering and staying in the sport.” ***No age group cut-off will eliminate all trapped players.

WHY U.S. SOCCER MADE THIS CHANGE

More resources and implementation details will be made available on the [U.S. Soccer website](#), as well as through [US Club Soccer](#) and [US Youth Soccer](#).

Thank you,
Crossfire Select

Crossfire[™]
SELECT