

Updated Dec 2025

MLU Policy Under New U.S. Soccer Age Change

U.S. Soccer has updated its age-group guidelines to better support long-term player development and reduce competitive and physical imbalances. The shift to an August 1–July 31 birth-year cycle is designed to more closely align players by age and school grade, keeping teams together as players mature.

Without this adjustment, teams risk fragmenting in 8th grade, when some players move to 9th grade (high school) while others remain in middle school. Aligning players sooner helps maintain team continuity, improves competitive balance, and supports healthier physical, social, and emotional development. For these reasons, U.S. Soccer strongly encourages players to compete within their designated age group whenever possible.

MLU evaluated all current teams against the new guidelines and made the decisions below to best support the club and its players, with a focus on flexibility while also converting our program to comply with the spirit of the age change as quickly as possible. We recognize that change can create uncertainty, and our goal is to minimize its impact as much as possible.

At registration, you must choose which birth year/grade you will be trying out for based on the information provided below.

U8–U10 Players

- All players must try out and play in their mandated age group-**NO exceptions.**
- This applies to both returning and new MLU players.
- U7 players may tryout out “up” but must return to appropriate birth year the following year.
- See August/September birthday exception below.*

Current MLU Players (Rising U11–U14)

Returning MLU players may choose at registration to:

- Try out according to the new US Soccer age groups
- Try out one year above

**Players must choose which age group he/she will tryout at during registration and must remain in age group moving forward.*

New Players to MLU (U11–U14)

- New players must try out according to the new US Soccer age groups

High School Age Players (U15–U19)

- Players may try out in their mandated age group or one year above

Exceptions

- August/September-born players may choose either their birth year or grade-appropriate placement. For example, if someone is born in August or September, they may have chosen to go to school early and may choose to play with their grade. However, they are eligible under the new guidelines, to play at a younger age. MLU highly suggests they try to play with their grade
 - Players entering high school in Fall 2026 may play in their mandated age group or one year above.
 - Any current MLU player trying to play up more than one year up requires board approval prior to tryouts
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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why is MLU encouraging players to play with their age group?

Playing with age peers supports long-term development, keeps teams together longer, and avoids major roster disruptions when players enter high school.

What happens if we don't align now?

If players remain split by grade too long, teams often fall apart in **8th grade**, when some players move to high school and others do not.

Can my child still play up?

Yes, in certain situations—returning players, high school-age players, strong evaluators, and August/September birthdays all have flexibility outlined above.

My child is born in August/September—what should we choose?

Families may choose either the mandated birth year or grade-appropriate placement, depending on what best fits their child. MLU suggest playing with their grade.

Can a player play up more than one year?

Only with board approval, as this is considered an exception.

Can a player tryout in more than one age group?

A player will need to select which age group they want to tryout for. This will allow the club to form teams as quickly as possible. If they have the option to play up, and decide to tryout for this age and do not make it, they will be considered for placement within the new age guidelines.