



Playing Up in Age Group Policy

Adopted: 21 April 2010
Revised: 6 October 2021

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It is the intent of the MSC Board to encourage player development by remaining flexible in allowing players to play up in age group in cases of hardship or extraordinary prowess.

The leadership and playing strength exhibited by the better players entering the second year of a two-year age group are important if we are to maintain continuity and improve the caliber of the team as a unit and the club as a whole. There will always be cases where a young player is capable of moving up to the next age group and where coach/player interactions will reinforce the wish to move up.

Given the other opportunities for advanced competition (such as classic teams and Olympic and district development programs) and the opportunity for leadership in his/her peer age group, requests for playing up shall be thoroughly reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The occasional player losses will be more than compensated for by the consistency and strengthening of the team and the overall club program.

Playing up in age group will always be an exception. In some circumstances, which may include

- 1) The desire to remain in an age group with the child's classmates (carrying the most weight for a U12 who will be playing on the middle school soccer team),
- 2) The demonstrated inability of the parent or guardian and child to participate in the age group's games or practices (highly unlikely for in-house players) or
- 3) Demonstrated physical skills, cognitive development and understanding of the game that would be enhanced by playing up, but only in the second year of the two-year age group,

The MSC Board at its sole discretion (and with parent/guardian approval) may consider action to advance a player to an older age group. The approval would only be made for that one playing season but does not guarantee placement on a team in an older age group.

Because of recommendations by PA West and the US Youth Soccer Association, procedures differ for play-up requests for players U12 and below versus those U13 and above. For players U12 and below, unless the play-up was initiated by the Board, the

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following procedures must be followed and conditions met in order for the Board to consider a play-up request:

- 1) The parent or guardian shall meet with the player's current coach to jointly submit a letter to the Age Group (or Travel) Coordinator and MSC Board requesting permission for the child to play up and indicating the name of the current coach and team, the birth date of the child and the specific reasons for this request.
- 2) Upon request of the Board, the parent or guardian, coach and/or Coordinators shall appear at a regularly scheduled Board meeting. Once teams are formed, no age group movement shall occur.
- 3) If agreement among all parties cannot be reached, the request shall be automatically denied. Even if these parties agree, the Board must approve the movement.
- 4) The Board will approve movement of the player only if it is in the best interest of the club as a whole.
- 5) Upon the player's placement on a team in an older age group, the parent or guardian must complete the play-up permission form as specified by the Board. The form must be notarized if so required by PA West regulations.

As outlined above The Board may initiate a play-up request (to facilitate team formation, for example). In this case, item 5) above is still required should the parent or guardian give permission for the play-up.

National guidelines recommend that players U13 and above be placed on teams according to their skill level and/or desired level of competition. Approval of the Board is not necessary for play in a higher age group, but item 5) above applies and a permission form must be completed for a U13 player placed on a U16 or higher team or a U14 player placed on a U17 or higher team.

[Attachment on following page: MSC Play-up Permission form]

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[Insert Date]

Dear Parent:

The Monroeville Soccer Club Board has approved a request for your child to play in an older league, ("play up"). Although playing up is permitted by PA West, our governing body, Monroeville Soccer Club wants you to be aware of all factors that could be relevant in this situation. In playing up, there could be physical, psychological and social risks stemming from this activity. Playing up involves children potentially 3 years older than your child. There is also some correlation to playing up and leaving soccer as a sport when met with frustration or the changes coming from a jump in competition. These factors have been debated and weighed by the Board prior to our approval.

You as a parent have a better understanding of your child's social, physical, and psychological strength than we do. We therefore require you to sign and return this letter as well as the attached PA West play-up form prior to any play. This letter is your acknowledgement of the risks that are associated with playing up.

Both forms need to be returned to the club registrar before you child can participate in playing up. Please either mail the completed forms to: MSC Registrar, 1161 Colgate Drive, Monroeville, PA 15146 or signed copies can be emailed to registrar@monroevillesoccer.org. Please contact the Registrar via email if you have any questions.

Thank you again for your participation in Monroeville Soccer Club and good luck to your athlete in the upcoming season.

Sincerely yours,
Monroeville Soccer Club

I acknowledge receipt of this letter and understand the risks associated with allowing my child

<<***Insert Name***>> to play up.

Parent's signature

Date

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