

For some players, playing up is the right thing to do. Players should be playing soccer based on their developmental age.

Considerations for Play Ups

- Has the player outgrown their age group? Players have a developmental age that can be different from their true age. What is the player's developmental age and is it similar to other players in their age group?
- Is there a viable team at their age group? Not having some governing oversight over play-ups opens the doors to allowing parents to do what they want. Doing what they want might not be the best long term decision for a player. See most common reasons below.
- Are we taking away an opportunity for an "of age" player to make a team and help that age group thrive?
- What play level is the team they will play up on? D1, D2, D3, etc
- What will happen to the play up when the older team transitions into different play formats, middle school, high school? Will they miss out on developing through 7v7, 9v9, or playing a full year when high school players transition into 1 club season per year?
- Does the player and parent/guardian understand they might be left without a team when the older teammates graduate?
- Is the player considered coachable (being very receptive to feedback, willing to learn, capable of improvement through guidance and training, with little behavioral issues)?
- Was the player a consistent (90%+) starter the previous season played?
- Will the player thrive on the field in the play up environment allowing them to grow into a diverse player that can play various roles?
- In a match, would the player be considered to be in the top half of the roster in the older age group? Matches show a more accurate picture of how the player is doing in the 4 pillars of soccer (Psychological/Social, Tactical, Technical, Physical) vs team training.
- Psychological/Social = For many players, their success in soccer will depend on these two elements. In an older age group, are they comfortable expressing themselves and involved in the "team"?
- Tactical = Does the player have the tactical ability to understand the game at an older age group? Freedom to experiment and learn tactics on a level they can process.
- Technical = Will the play up be able to progress technically at an appropriate pace? Things like using the weaker foot in situations because it is the right choice or will the player have to rely on their stronger foot all the time and limit making the right choices in situations.
- Physical = Is the player physically strong enough to endure playing at an older age group? Just running and kicking a ball are easy to see. As players approach high school and play at older age groups, physical play gets more intense. Grabbing, pushing, pulling, tackling will increase. How will the play up react to these situations and will they still feel freedom as a player?

Most Common Reasons

- Carpooling – Can a new carpool form?
- Best friend is on the older team – Will they remain best friends?

- Player plays up in other sports – If you are advanced at math, does that also make you advanced at reading?
- Player's favorite coach is at the older age group? Will the player benefit from having multiple coaches in their life?
- The player's siblings all played up – Every player is unique