

## Playing Up Policy

As an organization, Woodstown Soccer Club's primary approach is for players to play within their natural age group which is defined by the age matrix established by US Youth Soccer. It is our belief that most players develop best at their age-appropriate level. The WSC recognizes that there are times in which there are exceptions and WSC reserves the right to assign individual players to teams that are not age appropriate.

A WSC Head Coach or a WSC Trainer can submit a written request for a player to "play up" by the halfway point of the previous season to the Woodstown Soccer Club Board. The decision regarding "playing up" will be made in conjunction with WSC Board, WSC Head Coach, and WSC Trainers. This is **not** a parent request. The WSC Board reserves the right to decline requests to ensure that there are enough players in an age group to field a team, and conversely to ensure a team is not over rostered. "Playing up" players will not displace age-appropriate players.

"Playing up" is for in the rare cases in which the player is not benefiting by staying in their age group because of their exceptional skill. The following guidelines will be used when evaluating a player to "play up." Failure to account for all these factors can be detrimental to the development of the player and his or her teammates. WSC reserves the right to request additional verifications by an objectional player evaluation of the players ability before a decision will be made.

- Technical ability
- Physical ability
- Cognitive and psychological ability
- Social and emotional ability
- Player commitment
- Player dedication
- Player effort
- Available space on new team, as not to displace age appropriate players
- Recommendation from current coach, new coach, and trainer

The WSC also understands that some players may need to be given additional opportunities to develop in age groups that are younger than their natural age group. Therefore, players may be afforded additional opportunities to learn and develop with a younger age team.

The request to "play up" can occur in several forms: by practicing/training up, by guest playing up, and by rostering up. Only a Head Coach or a Trainer may invite a player to train up or guest play up an age group with his/her team if they determine that a player would benefit substantially and so long as it does not conflict with that player's primary team training.

The WSC "Playing Up" Agreement must be signed by the player, both parents/guardians, head coach and any two members of the Woodstown Soccer Club Board before the "playing up" opportunity takes effect. The term for a player to play up on a team is given for one season at a time, with no automatic renewal of this consent. The WSC reserves

the right to reverse any decision, at any time. This policy only applies to players and families who are meeting the WSC Code of Conduct.

### Notes from WSC about “playing up”:

- Youth Soccer is organized by age groups for a reason. They are created to ensure that players participate with peers of similar development- skill wise, physically, mentally, and socially.
- We understand that this is not always the case and should not be considered a “box” that kids must fit in since players do develop at different rates, however there are needs to be an understanding of **players excelling vs. players competing**.
  - A player who is being considered to “play up” should be **excelling**. They must possess great skill and knowledge and confidence and be able to make an immediate and strong impact on the game. If a player is merely **competing** equally by playing up, they are losing important opportunities to develop at their fullest potential and ultimately could stunt their growth.
- A common rationale to justify a player playing up is some players wish to play up to be with their school mates or a previous teammate, as defining age groups by birth year results in formation of teams with multiple grade levels on the roster. It is important to note that this could stunt their soccer development and fail to achieve success.
- An educational comparison: Often, some students in the same grade study calculus while other are studying trigonometry or algebra. You could move a student from an algebra class to a calculus class, so they are in the same class as their friends. The student likely could keep up in the class, but ultimately that student’s comprehension will be underdeveloped, and their success and enjoyment would be limited.
- “Playing Up” is more appropriate at older ages.
- If a player has been selected to “play up” he/she may continue to play up without any additional approval or unless the Head Coach deems that player unfit to continue to play at the current level.