



North Pocono Youth Soccer League

How U.S. Soccer's recent coaching initiatives affects upcoming US Club Soccer programming

March 3, 2016

On Aug. 24 2015, the U.S. Soccer Federation announced significant changes to the youth competition environment to be implemented in the coming years.

Fundamentally, these changes have been made in the interests of long-term player development and can be placed into two major categories: (i) player age group cut-off dates; and (ii) small-sided game structures and sizes.

As a national member of U.S. Soccer, SAY Soccer and NEPSAY, North Pocono Youth Soccer League is required to follow the rules, regulations and policies of U.S. Soccer – including these new mandates.

As a developmentally focused organization, NPYSL also supports all attempts to create a better environment for youth players.

The recent U.S. Soccer mandates will have an impact on almost every facet of youth competition in this country. This memorandum is provided to help our players, coaches and families understand and implement these changes as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Birth Year Registration – EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2016

Effective Aug. 1, 2016, youth soccer teams at all age groups will be formed using a new age group cut-off date of January 1. This will result in significant changes in team composition for all youth teams and age groups in the future.

- The current age group cut-off of August 1 (players born on or after August 1 are age eligible) was designed to keep teams on a school-year basis – so that teams were created generally of players within the same academic grade. For this reason it was referred to as “school-based” registration.

- The new age group cut-off of January 1 (players born on or after January 1 are age eligible) is consistent with the dates used internationally in forming youth teams. This cut-off is referred to as “calendar-based” registration.

The change to calendar-based registration will create multiple changes in youth soccer:

- **Teams will generally consist of players in two different school years.** This is because, generally, players born from January 1 to July 31 will be a year older in school, than the players born from August 1 to December 31.

- To help with the transition, NEPSAY has changed the U17 age group into two age groups, U16 and U18.

After Aug. 1, 2016, all age group competitions sanctioned by NEPSAY and NPYSL – including tournaments and leagues – will be mandated to be calendar year-based moving forward.

Small-Sided Games – STARTING AUGUST 1, 2016

U.S. Soccer has announced additional mandates regarding youth competition to begin on Aug. 1, 2017. These mandates involve the size of the playing field and the number of players on the field from U-6 through U-12 age groups. NPYSL has decided to implement the small-sided mandate for interplay age groups, U6, U8 and U10, starting August 1, 2016. Age divisions U12 – U18 will be decided by NEPSAY in the next few months.

These changes are designed to create a better development environment by providing players more touches on the ball, more involvement in the game, and more opportunities to make decisions. These changes also help coaches and teams have smaller number of players per team.

You can read more about the changes [here](#).

Additional updates and mandates will be posted once information becomes available