

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. What are the new age group ranges for the 2026-2027 season?

NEW AGE GROUP CONFIGURATIONS - EFFECTIVE FALL 2026

- August 1, 2017 - July 31, 2018 = U09
- August 1, 2016 - July 31, 2017 = U10
- August 1, 2015 - July 31, 2016 = U11
- August 1, 2014 - July 31, 2015 = U12
- August 1, 2013 - July 31, 2014 = U13
- August 1, 2011 - July 31, 2013 = U14/15*

* U15 players must be in 7th or 8th grade. High school students within the U14/U15 birth range are not eligible for U14 or U15 league play.

2. Will this impact school eligibility or recruiting?

No. This change affects youth soccer age grouping only and does not impact school grade placement, high school eligibility, or recruiting timelines.

3. Why is this change happening?

Youth soccer organizations, such as US Soccer and CJSA, have adopted an August 1st – July 31st age cycle to better align players with their school-grade peers. Research and feedback indicate this alignment better supports social development, participation, and overall player experience.

4. When does this take effect?

There are no changes for Spring 2026. The new age group structure begins with the Fall 2026 (2026–27) season.

5. Does my child have to change age groups or teams immediately?

No. Current teams and age groups remain intact through the Spring 2026 season.

6. What happens if my child was born between August 1st and December 31st?

New Avon Travel Players in the August 1st - December 31st birth range must play in the applicable age group, as defined by the new structure.

Returning Avon Travel Players in the August 1st - December 31st birth range may choose to:

- Remain with their current age group and move up as usual, or
- Shift to the new age-defined group (typically aligning with school grade), which would mean repeating an age group year.

7. When is the decision deadline?

All **returning** Avon travel players born between August 1st and December 31st must submit their decision during tryout registration. Registrations for the 2026-2027 season will open sometime in May.

This decision will determine the age group your child participates in during June tryouts/evaluations. **This selection determines your child's age group for June tryouts and is final, with no changes permitted once registered for tryouts.**

8. What does "repeating an age group year" mean?

It means the player would compete in the 2026-2027 seasonal year in the same age group that he/she played in 2025-2026. So, if a player participated with a U9 team this season, he/she would remain in the U9 age bracket again for the next season.

In many cases, this allows players to compete alongside classmates and peers.

9. What does Avon recommend for the players born in the August 1st – December 31st birth range?

U9 – U10: Avon strongly encourages returning travel players on U9–U10 teams to shift to the new age-defined group, and play with teammates primarily in the same grade. At these younger ages, aligning with school-grade peers supports long-term developmental progression and age group continuity.

U11 – U14: Avon encourages returning travel players in U11–U14 to shift to the new age-defined group if they are in a lower school grade than most of their current teammates. Aligning with grade-level peers may provide social, academic, and physical consistency.

The overall goal of this transition is improved school-grade alignment and long-term developmental stability. Families are encouraged to consider their child's individual maturity, confidence, and readiness when making this decision.

10. What are other towns/programs doing?

Implementation varies. Some clubs are strictly realigning by age. Others are using enrollment metrics or offering limited choice. All clubs are adapting in ways that fit their structure and size.

11. How did Avon decide to approach this age group transition?

Avon will align its age groups with the new August 1st – July 31st age group structure beginning with the Fall 2026 season.

To minimize disruption to age group dynamics and long-standing player relationships, we are allowing **returning** Avon travel players born between August 1st and December 31st the option to remain with their current age group or shift to the new age-defined group.

Our goal is to balance:

- Alignment with national standards
- Stability within teams
- Individual player development

12. What else should players consider about shifting age groups?

While every situation is unique, players born in the later months of the year (October–December) may wish to strongly consider shifting to the new age-defined group for two primary reasons:

Social alignment: Greater likelihood of playing alongside school-grade peers.

Physical parity: Competing within a tighter 12-month age window rather than potentially against players born up to 16 months earlier.

That said, there is no universal answer. Families are encouraged to discuss their child's individual development and readiness with club leadership before making a final decision.

13. Will travel teams be reorganized?

The primary purpose of this transition is to realign age groups, not to predetermine team assignments. As with any seasonal year, roster composition may evolve based on registration numbers, player movement between age groups, and overall enrollment within each cohort.

As any new soccer year, team structures may adjust, both as part of the shift to the new August 1st – July 31st age group cycle, but also due to changes in player ability and development.

14. Does my age-group decision affect my child's team placement when there are multiple teams in the same age bracket?

As always, team placement is based on:

- Player evaluations during June 2026 tryouts
- Ongoing coach and trainer assessments throughout the year
- Comparative evaluation within the selected age group

Placement decisions will be made using the same evaluation standards and developmental criteria applied each year.

15. Will this approach be followed in subsequent years or just for the 2026-2027 travel season?

Our decisions are made with the goal of providing the best possible environment for our players, coaches and families. With that said, we don't know for sure whether or not this "hybrid" approach will result in the best outcomes for all involved. Thus, the Board will revisit this policy over the winter to determine whether or not this approach will continue into the 2027-2028 travel season and beyond.

16. What if we are still unsure which option to choose?

If you still have questions after reviewing this information, please reach out initially to your coach for assistance/recommendations. After that, you can email Kelly Nevins at avontravelsoccer@gmail.com for further assistance.

17. How is the Avon Recreational Program Affected?

Beginning with the Fall 2026 season, all recreational players will be allocated to teams in accordance with the new age group structure.