



## Harbor Premier – Play-Up Policy

At Harbor Premier, our goal is to place every player in the environment where they will learn, grow, and enjoy the game the most. Most players remain in their **natural age group**, but occasionally a player may be considered to “play up” with an older age group if it truly benefits their development.

Below is our parent-friendly outline of how the club approaches play-up decisions.

### Why Playing Up Is Rare

We want every player to be:

- challenged,
- confident,
- safe, and
- developing properly for their long-term future.

Playing up is only approved when it supports these goals.

## **What the Club Looks For**

To be considered for an older age group, a player must consistently show:

### **1. Strong Soccer Ability**

They are one of the top performers in their current age group.

### **2. Game Understanding**

They can handle the tactical expectations of the older age group.

### **3. Physical Readiness**

They can safely compete with older, bigger, faster players.

### **4. Emotional Maturity**

They can handle pressure, coaching, feedback, and competitive environments.

### **5. Commitment & Attitude**

They show excellent effort, attendance, behavior, and sportsmanship.

## **What Will Not Be Approved**

Play-up requests will not be approved for reasons such as:

- Playing with friends
- Convenience or scheduling
- Parent preference
- Carpooling

Our decisions always prioritize the *player's long-term development*.

## **How the Process Works**

### **Step 1 – Parent communicate with Age Group Director & DOC**

Parents must notify the Age Group Director and the DOC of any desire for their child to play up **before tryouts begin**. This ensures we can schedule proper evaluations and support an informed decision.

### **Step 2 – Club Evaluation**

The DOC and Age Group Director will assess:

- Training sessions
- Game play
- Physical readiness
- Emotional maturity
- Or we will make sure two directors assess your child at tryouts

### **Step 3 – Final Decision**

The Director team will make the final decision.

We may approve:

- Full-time play-up
- Training-up with potential guest playing opportunities
- Training-up only
- Not yet ready, with feedback on next steps

### **Step 4 – Seasonal Review**

Play-up placements are *not permanent*.

We re-evaluate:

- Summer
- Fall
- Winter/Spring

If the player's needs change, they may need to return to their natural age group.

## **Important Note About Playing Time**

Even when a player is approved to play up:

- **Playing time is never guaranteed**, especially in competitive events such as State Cup.
- Playing up means higher competition and more earned minutes—not equal minutes.

## **Our Promise**

We will always act in the best interest of the child's development—physically, emotionally, and competitively—while maintaining fairness and integrity within all Harbor Premier age groups.

## **The Director team**

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