

FAQs for Families – U.S. Soccer Age Group Change

1) What exactly is changing?

Beginning in May (the 2026–27 season), age groups will now be formed using August 1st as the cut off date, which most closely aligns with school grade cut offs. This will mean that players born Aug 1st of one year through Jul 31 of the next year will be in the same “U-” age group. (Example: U10 = Aug 1, 2016 – Jul 31, 2017.)

2) Does anything change for the 2026 spring competitive season?

No. The 2025–26 season remains birth-year based. The same system you have been using will continue through the end of spring of 2026.

3) Why is the system changing in 2026–27?

Major youth soccer bodies reviewed participation and education data and concluded that aligning soccer age groups with school grades helps more kids play with classmates, improves social fit, and reduces the number of “trapped players” (kids whose soccer age group doesn’t match their grade).

For example, this year there were a number of 2011 born players left with no team to play on over the winter because the majority of their teammates were now in High School. Also, a number of 2008’s were left behind to squeeze into an existing younger team, as their teammates left for college.

4) Who decided this change?

U.S. Soccer no longer mandates a single national cutoff and has given its Organization Members flexibility. US Club Soccer, US Youth Soccer and AYSO have each announced they will use the Aug 1–Jul 31 school-year cycle beginning in 2026–27. As a member of US Club Soccer, Prospector must follow the decision made at the national level.

5) Will my child “repeat” an age group in 2026–27?

Some will, some won’t:

- Players born Aug–Dec: May stay in the same U-age in 2026–27 (a “repeat”).

- Players born Jan–Jul: Must advance to the next U-age as usual.

6) Can my child “play up” to stay with teammates?

As always, players may play in any team older than the age group of the player. This is typically determined by the skill level of the player and is discussed by both the player’s family and Prospector during registration.

7) Can my child “play down” to stay with teammates?

Unfortunately, no. AYSO (American Youth Soccer Organization) and Prospector do not permit players to play on a younger team.

8) What should families do right now?

Nothing. Prospector will post the new age group matrix on the website, on social media, and will email out to families prior to fall registration starting on April 1st. Just reassure your child that they will continue to have an excellent soccer experience going forward.

9) 2026-27 Age Group Matrix

Age Group	Players Born on or After:
U19	08/01/2007
U17	08/01/2009
U16	08/01/2010
U15	08/01/2011
U14	08/01/2012
U13	08/01/2013
U12	08/01/2014
U11	08/01/2015
U10	08/01/2016
U9	08/01/2017
U8	08/01/2018
U7	08/01/2019

U6

08/01/2020