

United Soccer of Auburn

“Play-up” Policy

Dated January 9th, 2014

United Soccer of Auburn requires players to participate in the correct age-appropriate division unless special permission is granted by the league. MAYS and most all other soccer clubs determine a player's soccer age group by July 31st, just prior to the start of the soccer year. However, there are several situations where the league will consider play-up requests. Below is the process to be used by the requesting parent, and the criteria that the League will apply. Playing up is not a “right,” but is rather an exception only used under the criteria outlined below. Playing-up exceptions are made by the United Soccer of Auburn Board. The Parents and Coaches will be consulted but the USOA Board will be the final arbiter in playing -up decisions. Playing up must benefit both the child. Concerns about injury, weakening of the league and social aspects should be considered.

Playing Up Definition

A player participating on a team in an older age group than the one corresponding to the player as defined by the league's rules.

Process

The parent/guardian requesting that their child “play-up” should submit an USOA Age Division Exception Form (available from the USOA Board) or submit a written/email request discussing the reasons for their request and citing at least one of the criteria listed below. A Playing Up Consent form must also be submitted. The request should be made to the Area Coordinator and the coach at least 2 weeks before draft and or at registration. Coaches and the Area Coordinator will discuss their observations of the player's ability based upon the player's history and make a recommendation to the Director of Programs and Player Development. The Director of Coaching and Player Development will present the request to USOA Board. The Board is the final arbiter in deciding if a player may move up. All decisions will be communicated to the player's parents/guardians and coaches by the Director of Programs.

The USOA Board makes the final decision on all play up requests.

This policy applies to all divisions and players in USOA.

Criteria

The USOA Board, Coaches and Area Coordinators will consider the following factors in determining whether to approve a “play up” request. These are not all inclusive as other considerations may impact the decision. These are guidelines to assist the Board with their decision.

1. **Exceptionally Skilled Player - Level of play significantly exceeds peer group.** Particularly in the lower age brackets, when only 4 or 5 players are on a side at one time, an exceptional player may dominate play to the extent that the game does not provide the opportunity for skill, strategic and tactical development of the player and or the player’s peers. A player who fits these criteria must dominate play in more than one phase i.e. striking and passing; defending and challenging; etc. Though parents or coaches may often feel that a child is dominant because the child is the best on the team, the exceptionally skilled criteria apply to the child in relation to the entire league and most other children of his or her age, not just the team they are on. The emotional intelligence of the child must be suitable for the increasing intensity of the upper age group as well.
2. **Physical Ability and Above Average Size.** If a child is exceedingly big for his or her age group and has above average soccer skills, the lower age coach may recommend a play-up request – particularly if there is some risk that the physical play of the child may pose a danger to smaller “of age” players. As players get older, there will be growth spurts. These often lead to a loss of coordination as the player becomes accustomed to their "new" body. Their increase size may result in a temporary loss of their above average skills to this consideration will need to be observed closely.
3. **Overall Benefit to the League.** If there is an overall benefit to the league, but never at the expense of what’s best for the player, the two coaches (lower and upper age groups) may jointly promote the request to the board. For example, if the older division needs to fill a coaching vacancy, but the ability of a parent to take on the coaching position is contingent on his or her child moving up, the League may approve it. In unusual situations, the League may request that a grouping of players move up due to overall numbers balancing across divisions. If this is to occur, an overall approval by the Board is required.

United Soccer of Auburn

Age Division Exception Form

Child's Name: _____
Parent (Guardian): _____
Phone Number: _____
Parent's email address: _____
Child's Birth Date: _____
Age at cutoff date (7/31): _____
Division applying to: _____

Prior soccer experience:

Reason for requesting the exception:

Volunteer Commitment:

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Playing Up Consent Form

United Soccer of Auburn (USOA) requires permission from a parent/guardian for any soccer player to “play up” in an older age group as governed by birth year.

I, as parent/guardian, am aware that my child will be playing against older, usually more physically and emotionally developed players whose soccer skills may be more advanced and whose play may be more physical.

As parent/guardian, I give PERMISSION for my child,

Name: _____

Age: _____

To play-up from his/her USOA stated age group. In granting my permission, I fully understand that my child could be injured. The injury could include, but not limited to; cuts, scrapes, sprains, damage to ligaments, broken bones, concussions, or possibly even death.

Before giving your child permission to play up, please consider your child’s maturity, size, coordination, muscular development, attitude, and social development in comparison to the team members of the older team.

_____	_____	_____
<i>Parent/Guardian Signature</i>	<i>Print Name</i>	<i>Date</i>

Approved by:

_____	_____	_____
<i>USOA President</i>	<i>Print Name</i>	<i>Date</i>