



AGE GROUP CHANGE

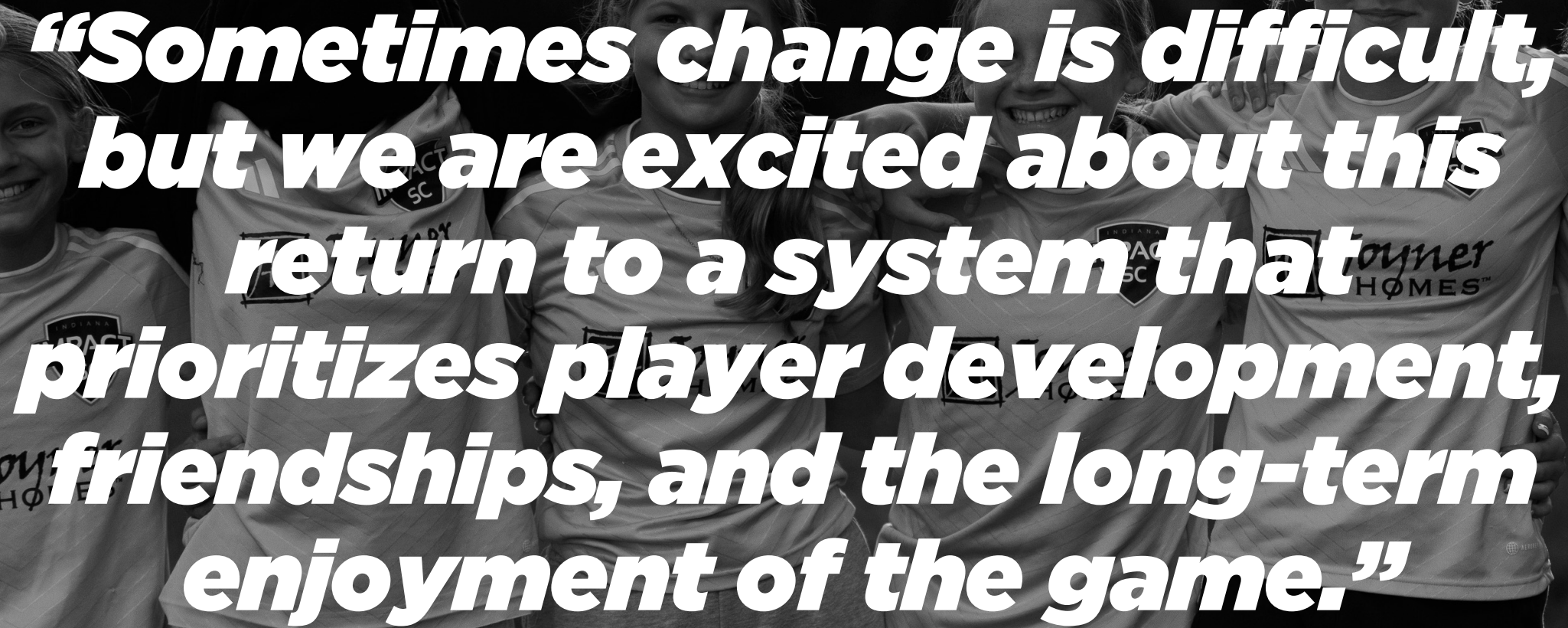
USYS AGE GROUP MANDATE | STARTS FALL 2026



**US
YOUTH
SOCCER**



#TWM1



***“Sometimes change is difficult,
but we are excited about this
return to a system that
prioritizes player development,
friendships, and the long-term
enjoyment of the game.”***

#TWM1



FUZZY STEENO, Executive Director

In reference to the USYS Age Group Mandate for all soccer clubs in the United States.

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Impact Soccer Club is committed to providing the best possible development environment for our players, and we want to keep you informed about a significant change coming to youth soccer age group registration, starting with the upcoming 2026-2027 season.

After extensive feedback from clubs, coaches, parents, and players across the country, US Youth Soccer (USYS), US Club Soccer, and MLS NEXT (Academy Division) have decided **to shift from the current calendar birth year system (January 1 – December 31) back to a seasonal year system (August 1 – July 31)**. This change aims to better align soccer teams with school grade levels, allowing more players to compete alongside their classmates and reducing the challenges faced by "trapped players" (those whose birthdays cause them to be separated from grade-level peers at key transition points like 8th grade or high school senior year). To be eligible to participate in US Youth Soccer, US Club Soccer leagues, MLS Next and competitions, **ALL CLUBS in the United States *MUST* be compliant with this change.**



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The 2025-2026 spring season will remain under the current birth year rules, giving everyone a season to prepare. Starting in Fall 2026, the new August 1 – July 31 cutoff will apply to ALL competitive leagues.

How This Affects Impact Soccer Club by League

Impact Soccer Club competes in a variety of leagues to offer intentional pathways for every level of player and team. Listed below is a breakdown of how the age group change will affect leagues and age groups for the 2026-2027 season and beyond:

IMPACT LEAGUES	SANCTIONING BODY	FORMAT 2025-26	FORMAT 2026-27
National League	US Youth Soccer (USYS)	Birth Year	August 1 - July 31
NPL / ECNL-RL	US Club Soccer (USCS)	Birth Year	August 1 - July 31
ISL (Premier - 4th Div)	Indiana Soccer / USYS	Birth Year	August 1 - July 31
CNC (Academy)	Indiana Soccer / USYS	Birth Year	August 1 - July 31
Tournaments	USYS/USCS/SBD	Birth Year	August 1 - July 31
Cup Play	Indiana Soccer / USYS	Birth Year	August 1 - July 31



DID YOU KNOW?

We have done this before. In 2016 we had to navigate USYS (US Soccer) switching the age-group format from school-year to birth-year, which we have been operating for the last 10 years.

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What This Means for Your Player

Teams will now span two calendar birth years

(e.g., U12 team can include players born August 1, 2014 – July 31, 2015).

TEAM	BIRTH DATE RANGE (2026-27)
U19	Aug 1, 2007 - Jul 31, 2009
U17	Aug 1, 2009 - Jul 31, 2010
U16	Aug 1, 2010 - Jul 31, 2011
U15	Aug 1, 2011 - Jul 31, 2012
U14	Aug 1, 2012 - Jul 31, 2013
U13	Aug 1, 2013 - Jul 31, 2014
U12	Aug 1, 2014 - Jul 31, 2015
U11	Aug 1, 2015 - Jul 31, 2016
U10	Aug 1, 2016 - Jul 31, 2017
U9	Aug 1, 2017 - Jul 31, 2018
U8	Aug 1, 2018 - Jul 31, 2019
U7	Aug 1, 2019 - Jul 31, 2020
U6	Aug 1, 2020- Jul 31, 2021
U5	Aug 1, 2021- Jul 31, 2022
U4	Aug 1, 2022- Jul 31, 2023



**SCAN
TO OPEN
AGE GROUP
CALCULATOR**

OR VISIT DIRECTLY

www.indianaimpactsc.com/agegroup

*Enter your birth date and find out
which age group you will be placed.*



Seasonal Year Format...

+ NEW TEAMS
+ NEW OPPORTUNITIES
+ SAME FAMILY

#TWM!



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MAKING IT EASIER!

Impact Soccer Club is already planning tryout processes, and team placements for 2026-2027. We will share detailed player-specific information in early 2026 so families can see the age group where their player will be placed. Further, we will have many other ways to allow players get familiar with their new teams throughout the Spring like activities and group play opportunities.

Although we understand the unease to move players from teams and the teams may look different, we also understand the necessity of the move to keep classmates together and we must follow the US Soccer Mandate. We are a tight club and confident that every player will be thoughtfully placed and seen. Sometimes change is difficult, but we are excited about this return to a system that prioritizes player development, friendships, and the long-term enjoyment of the game. Impact Soccer Club directors and coaches are here to answer any questions and make this transition comfortable – please reach out to your coach with questions or concerns, or email directors@indianaimpactsc.com

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE IMPACT FAMILY!





#TWM1

THANK YOU

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US
YOUTH
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FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions

Why is August 1 the cutoff date?



A: Initially, US Youth Soccer had determined to use a Sept. 1 age group cut-off instead of Aug. 1. After receiving significant feedback and identifying missing information in Department of Education school year cut-off lists, it has been determined that the Aug. 1 cut-off best reduces misalignment between age and school year. The Aug. 1 cut-off reduces not only the trapped player effect, but it also reduces the number of “force-ups,” a term referring to players in a younger soccer age group but older school year who must play up an age group in order to be with their school-year friends.

USYS believes:

An Aug. 1 age group cut-off best balances the desire to reduce both the number of “trapped” players and the number of “force-ups” in youth soccer.

A Jan. 1 age group cut-off creates the highest number of trapped players and negatively impacted youth players.

No age group cut-off will eliminate all trapped players or force-ups. States and counties throughout the country have widely different school year cut-offs, and this variance will always result in some number of trapped players or force-ups regardless of age group cut-off date.

There is no soccer developmental benefit to any specific age group cut-off, and no age group cut-off reduces concerns of relative age effect or changes the number of players impacted by relative age effect. Relative age effect is the phenomenon of players born in the first three months after an age group cut-off to be over-represented in identification programs due to early maturation compared to their age-group peers.

Age group cut-offs have no correlation or relationship with level of play or level of soccer aspiration. Various soccer age group cut-offs are used across the world in youth soccer, in both amateur and professional programs.

FAQ

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*Why is this
change
happening?*



A: U.S. Youth Soccer, US Club Soccer, and Indiana Soccer agreed to this change based on extensive research and feedback.



US YOUTH SOCCER RESPONSE

<https://www.ussoccer.com/ecosystem-review/player-registration>



US CLUB SOCCER RESPONSE

<https://usclubsoccer.org/age-group-cut-off-update-for-2026-27-season/>

FAQ

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What is changing?



A: Starting with the 2026-27 season, youth soccer will move from the current calendar-year (January-December) model to a seasonal-year (August-July) model for age grouping.

✦ Current System: Birth year (January 1 - December 31)

✦ New System: Seasonal year (August 1 - July 31)

FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions

***When does
this take
effect?***



A: The new August 1 – July 31 system will start with the 2026-2027 seasonal year (summer 2026 tryouts and registration). The entire 2025-2026 season remains under the current birth year rules.

FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions

*Where can I see
where my
player is placed*



A: Use the age group calculator or table on this page. We use August 1 - July 31 seasonal year (aka: school-year) starting in the Fall of the 2026-27 soccer year.



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**Will my players
have to skip or
repeat an age
group?**



A: Most players will simply shift into the new grouping without repeating or skipping a full year of soccer. For example, a player born in September who is currently on a "younger" birth year team will likely join classmates they already know from school.

FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions

**Can my player
be on a team
outside of their
age group?**



A: We prefer players to continue to play in the **appropriate age group**. We have only had a few players, out of the thousands of players, play outside of their age group because of level of play or size. While exceptions can be made, they are reserved for exceptional circumstances and must be approved by an unbiased committee.

FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions

**Can my player
play on the
former team if
her/his friends
are younger?**

A: No. Your player **MUST** play in their appropriate age group. If you feel your player cannot handle the level of play that is their own age group, we need to revisit their development plan and ensure that we create a pathway best suited for your player.



FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions



***Will this affect
my high school
eligibility?***



A: No. High school eligibility is determined by your state's athletic association (IHSAA) and school grade/age rules, not club soccer age groups.

FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions

***How will Tryouts
and team
selection work in
Summer 2026?***



A: Tryouts in 2026 will form teams for the 2026-2027 season under the new seasonal year age groups. Tryouts will be Monday, June 8th. Times for each age group will be announced during the spring season.

FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions

***My child has a
late birthday and
struggled with
being the
youngest; will this
help?***



A: Yes! The seasonal year (August 1st - July 31st) alignment is designed to reduce the "relative age effect" and "trapped player" issues that have impacted many families under the birth year system.

FAQ

Here are some of the most
Frequently Asked Questions

***How will we
handle new jersey
numbers if players
are duplicate
numbers?***



A: Duplicate jersey number conflicts may happen as players transition to new age groups. Luckily, we are beginning our new uniform cycle for 2026-2028. We will handle each duplicate jersey number case by case..