

SnVYSA Recreational Soccer: Age-Group Change FAQ

Last revision: April 1, 2026

1. How will SnVYSA reconcile the school grade cutoff mismatch between US Soccer of July 31 and Washington state of August 31 for the Fall 2026 Recreational season for player placement?

SnVYSA will use the Washington State Education 2026-2027 Grade Level Birthdate Chart (See Reference Chart below) to place players in the appropriate age group for their grade. Parents understand and expect the August 31 cutoff for grade placement in the state of Washington. SnVYSA feels this is the most parent-friendly approach and keeps the process intuitive.

The categories below explain how the cutoff mismatch of July 31 for US Soccer and August 31 for the state of Washington will be managed for players born between August 1-31.

- Standard Grade Placement: Aligns with US Soccer Age Group Formation.
 - Players born between August 1–31 who are enrolled in a younger grade than the one associated with their birthdate under Washington States Grade Level chart will be placed with the grade they are entering in the 2026-2027 school year. This keeps them with their grade level peers and aligns with the US Soccer age-group cutoff of July 31.
- Automatic Grade Alignment Adjustment: This will be recognized as a play up by US Soccer and WYS for administrative purposes only.
 - Players born between August 1–31 and are entering the grade associated with their birthdate under Washington States Grade Level chart will be placed in the age group associated with their birthdate and grade according to the chart. To reconcile this with US Soccer's July 31 cutoff which would have placed these players in the younger grade than their grade-level peers, this will be recognized as a play up under US Soccer's age group cutoff. In this case, no play up request will be required and will be managed automatically by the association, so players are aligned properly with their grade level peers.

2. Why is Cascade FC's Premier program using the US Soccer age chart with the July 31 cutoff and the SnVYSA Recreational program is using the Washington State Education 2026–2027 Grade-Level Birthdate Chart with the August 31 cutoff for placement?

The two charts differ because the Cascade FC Premier program and the Recreational program meet US Soccer's requirements in different ways. The Recreational program does not have a tryout, all skill levels of players may participate, while the Cascade FC Premier program requires a tryout for team selection and placement, and that difference in process affects how each program will place players in the correct age group. Both programs meet US Soccer 's school grade requirements, but they do so through different team placement procedures.

Recreational Program:

Recreational soccer is using the Washington State Education 2026–2027 Grade-Level Birthdate Chart which aligns with US Soccer’s July 31 cutoff for almost all players and places players in the appropriate age group for their birthdate and grade. It is also the chart parents already know and understand for school-grade placement in Washington state, whereas the July 31 cutoff is unfamiliar.

There is one group of players where the two charts do not align: players born between August 1–31. SnVYSA’s Recreational program will place these players as follows:

- a) Players entering the grade determined by Washington’s August 31 cutoff, which is one grade older than the US Soccer cutoff would place them in, will be placed with their grade-level peers. They will be assigned to the age group that aligns with Washington’s August 31 cutoff for their birth date and grade. This placement meets US Soccer requirements and will be recognized as a “play up” by US Soccer and WYS for administrative purposes only.
- b) Players who are not entering the grade determined by Washington’s August 31 cutoff, and who will be entering one grade lower, will also be placed with their grade-level peers, which is the age group that aligns with US Soccer’s July 31 cutoff for their birthdate and grade.

Cascade FC Premier Program:

Cascade FC Premier will use the US Soccer age chart, so they are aligned with other Premier clubs and leagues they compete with across the state. All Premier teams participate in interleague play with other state clubs, and using the US Soccer chart ensures consistency. Additionally, since Premier uses a tryout-based placement process, player birthdates and grades are verified so they can be evaluated in the correct age group during the tryout. From there, evaluators determine both team selection and age-group placement, which must meet US Soccer requirements.

3. My child was born between August 1–31 and is entering a younger grade than the Washington chart shows. Where will they be placed?

If your child is entering a younger grade than the grade associated with their birthdate on the Washington State chart, they will be placed with the younger grade they are entering. This aligns with US Soccer’s July 31 cutoff and is considered standard placement.

Player	Birthdate	Grade entering in the 2026-2027 School Year	Age Group	Result
Player A	8/5/2015	5 th Grade	U11	Standard Placement

4. My child was born between August 1–31 and is entering the grade shown on the Washington chart. Where will they be placed?

If your child is entering the grade associated with their birthdate on the Washington State grade-level chart, SnVYSA will automatically place your child in that grade and age group

with their grade level peers. This will be recognized as a play up by US Soccer's July 31 age group cutoff which is allowed by WYS league competition rules.

Player	Birthdate	Grade entering in the 2026-2027 School Year	Age Group	Result
Player B	8/5/2015	6 th Grade	U12	Automatic grade alignment -no play up request required.

5. What if my child was held back a grade?

If a child is repeating a grade or was held back, SnVYSA places them according to the grade associated with their birthdate, not the grade they are currently enrolled in.

This keeps placement aligned with both the Washington State Grade level chart and the US Soccer's age-group cutoff chart. This is considered standard placement.

Player	Birthdate	Grade entering in the 2026-2027 School Year	Age Group	Result
Player C	2/18/2020	Kindergarten	U7	Standard placement. Must play with age group of peers entering 1 st grade

6. Will SnVYSA allow returning players to remain with their returning team for the Fall 2026 season with the new age cutoff changes?

SnVYSA's current policy beginning with the U9 age group, is to roster returning players to their returning team, when possible. This group of players and teams is unique because many have established teams, long standing coaches, multi-year peer groups, and strong parent expectations for continuity. SnVYSA would like to continue to keep these returning teams together for consistency and continued player development, however, just like in previous years before the age change, specific criteria and rules must be reviewed and evaluated each season to determine the viability of returning teams. These include the following:

- Coach is registered and returning to the team. If the coach does not return, every effort will be made to keep the players together if another coach can be recruited.
- Play-up requests are reset annually and are only good for one seasonal year. They must be reviewed and approved by the Registrar each season. The Registrar will follow the play-up policy rules when approving a play-up request.
- Placement on a team will follow the age groups for school grade/birthdate.
- There are enough registered players to form a viable team for an age group.
- Players going into a younger grade may opt to play with their grade level peers versus requesting to play up, if there is a team in that age group.

7. My child has been playing up on the same team for several years now, will they be able to continue to play up with their existing team this year?

A play up request is reset annually and only good for one seasonal year. Each season they must be reviewed and approved by the Registrar. The Registrar will follow the play-up policy rules when approving the request. Assuming that there is a coach for the returning team

and the team is viable for the age group the team is moving to, other factors that determine whether a player can play-up on a returning team include the following:

- Your child’s birthdate as it relates to the Washington State Grade Level Birthdate chart for 2026-2027
- The grade your child is entering that is associated with their birthdate on the chart
- The returning teams age group

Example 1: If your child was on a U11 team last year and this year the team is moving up to U12 in Fall 2026 then using the birthdate below, your child may be categorized as Player A or Player B depending on the grade they will be entering in the fall.

Returning U11 team is moving up to U12 in Fall 2026

Player	Birthdate	Grade entering in the 2026-2027 School Year	Age Group	Result
Player A	8/5/2015	6 th Grade	U12	Automatic grade alignment to play with same grade level peers. No play up request is required.
Player B	8/5/2015	5 th Grade	U11	Standard Placement. May stay with the team if the family wants to but a play up request is required, it is not automatic.

Example 2: If your child was on a U11 team last year and this year the team is staying at U11 in Fall 2026 then using the birthdate below, your child may be categorized as Player A or Player B depending on the grade they will be entering in the fall.

Returning U11 team is staying at U11 in Fall 2026

Player	Birthdate	Grade entering Fall 2026	Age Group	Result
Player A	8/5/2015	6 th Grade	U12	Automatic grade alignment. A player may not play down (unless medical/development reason), they must play with their grade level peers and move up to U12
Player B	8/5/2015	5 th Grade	U11	Standard Placement. May stay with the team, no play up request required. Same grade and age as peers.

8. My child’s team is not returning, how will they be placed?

If a team does not return, meaning there is no returning coach and not enough returning players to form a team for an age group, all returning players will be placed according to the grade-level placement rules as outlined above. SnVYSA will place your child with their associated age

group for their birthdate and grade and add new players as needed to form viable and balanced teams.

9. Where will my child be placed if they are a grade ahead of their school grade peers for their birthdate?

If a child is enrolled in a grade above the grade associated with their birth date, they will be placed in the age group according to their school grade using the Washington State Education 2026-2027 Grade Level Birthdate Chart which also aligns with the US Soccer Chart.

If a family would like to request to have their child play up one age group to the grade that their child is enrolled in, this is considered a one-year play-up request and will follow the process outlined in the SnVYSA League policies-2.4(i) [Play up rules-Recreational].

This ensures consistency, safety, and developmental alignment across all teams while still allowing families to request a play up through the established policy and process.

Player	Birthdate	Grade entering in the 2026-2027 School Year	Age Group	Result
Player A	10/5/2016	5 th Grade	U10	Standard Placement. Must request a one year play up to play in the U11 age group.