



## ILLINOIS FUTBOL CLUB

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# Illinois Futbol Club – Age Group Transition Overview

## 2026–2027 Season

Beginning with the 2026–2027 season, all major youth soccer organizations, including US Youth Soccer, will return to a **school-year-based age group** formation. This represents a shift away from the current birth-year (January 1–December 31) model that has been standard since 2016. This change will not apply to the Spring 2026 season (March – June 2026); all updates described below will take effect beginning August 1, 2026. Under the new system, age groups will be determined by a school-year calendar, using an **August 1–July 31 timeframe**, replacing the birth-year model.

The rationale for this change is to better align players with their academic grade levels, creating more consistency between the academic and athletic environments. By grouping players according to the school-year calendar, youth soccer organizations also aim to support player retention and social development. Players will train and compete with peers they see daily in school, and this increased social cohesion is expected to enhance retention, particularly during key transition years.

The new age group system will have a direct impact on teams and rosters. Clubs and leagues nationwide will experience roster changes as players shift into different age groups based on the August 1–July 31 cutoff. Some teams may see major realignments, while others will experience minor adjustments depending on the distribution of birthdates. Special considerations include players who started school later or earlier than the typical age. Those with June or July birthdays who entered school later will still fall into the age group determined by the new cutoff, as will players with August or September birthdays who started school early. In both cases, the soccer age group will follow the August 1–July 31 period, even if it differs from school placement.

Illinois Futbol Club's implementation timeline begins with Fall Tryouts in May 2026, which will be the first sessions to align with the new age group cutoff. Teams selected during these tryouts will be rostered according to the August 1–July 31 period. For the Fall season, players born within

the designated age range will be prioritized for roster spots, and players may only be considered for moving up a grade year if space permits and evaluations indicate suitability for playing at the higher level. As a competitive soccer club, roster spots will be awarded strictly based on ability, and considerations such as wanting to play with friends, carpool convenience, or keeping family members together will not factor into roster decisions.

Between now and May 2026, IFC will review roster implications for each age group, communicate specific team impacts to families as information becomes available, and coordinate with leagues to ensure full alignment with the new age group structure.

Starting Fall 2026, all competitive competitions will be done based on a the following school year based age calendar.

**Here are the age groups for competitive competitions for the Fall 2026 – Spring 2027 soccer year.**

<b>Birthdate</b>	<b>Age Group</b>
August 1, 2020 – July 31, 2021	6U
August 1, 2019 – July 31, 2020	7U
August 1, 2018 – July 31, 2019	8U
August 1, 2017 – July 31, 2018	9U
August 1, 2016 – July 31, 2017	10U
August 1, 2015 – July 31, 2016	11U
August 1, 2014 – July 31, 2015	12U
August 1, 2013 – July 31, 2014	13U
August 1, 2012 – July 31, 2013	14U
August 1, 2011 – July 31, 2012	15U
August 1, 2010 – July 31, 2011	16U
August 1, 2009 – July 31, 2010	17U
August 1, 2008 – July 31, 2009	18U
August 1, 2007 – July 31, 2008	19U