



To ensure consistent understanding, the following outlines the most frequently asked questions and FSC's position on each.

**Q: Can my child stay in their current age group?**

**A:** At this time, FSC will allow a player to stay with their current age group. If we feel as though a change is better for a specific player's development, we will have a meeting with that family to discuss the options. If you'd like to see where your player falls under the new age-group calendar, use the official [U.S. Soccer Age Group Calculator](#).

**Q: Why is FSC choosing August 1 – July 31 for the new age groups if PA schools are September 1—August 31?**

**A:** This was not a FSC decision. US Youth Soccer, AYSO, and US Club Soccer collectively made the decision. ~~This decision came after~~ considering a September 1 – August 31 option in March of 2025. Based on additional feedback, data analysis, and expert input, the organizations determined that the August 1 – July 31 cycle would better align players with their school-grade peers, provide a smoother transition across age groups, and reduce the number of “trapped” players.

The associations agreed this approach will be the most inclusive and will help increase player participation nationwide while maintaining consistency across leagues and competitions.

**Q: My child is an August 14 birthday, but they're grade pure when playing up because we sent them to school early (before the Sept. 1 PA cutoff). According to the new dates, they should move down, but we want them to stay with their grade. Can we do that?**

**A:** Yes — families in this situation will have the opportunity to indicate that preference. We want to approach these transitions with flexibility and what's best for each player's development. Players who are “grade-pure” but fall outside the new cutoff can request to remain with their current grade peers.

There will be a place to note this request at tryout registration. These requests will be reviewed by the player's coach & DOC to ensure the placement supports both the player's growth and team balance.

**Q: With the upcoming switch to grade-based groupings for the 2026–2027 season, will FSC be adjusting the Pre-Travel age groups as well?**

**A:** Yes. FSC will transition all programs — including Pre-Travel — to align with the new grade-based structure beginning in the Fall 2026 season. Between now and then, our focus is on helping families and trainers plan for that change in a thoughtful, development-centered way.

**Q: How will the 2026–27 age group change affect U15 and older players?**

**A:** Players in the U15 and above age groups will continue training within their current team environments.

**Q: Are there any upcoming meetings where the board will be discussing where prospective families can attend to hear more details or ask questions?**

**A:** FSC will hold an Age Group Q&A in January for all travel and interested travel families. An email will be sent out after the New Year with details.

After that meeting, any new questions should go directly to your DOC. Team Managers and Coaches can help route questions, but answers will come from the DOC to make sure information stays clear and consistent.

**Q: Will there be opportunities for players to attend some trainings with lower/higher age teams in the winter or early spring to meet trainers and players? Will the league communicate these opportunities or should parents be reaching out to current coaches and potential future coaches to schedule prior to tryouts? Is the club encouraging current players affected to move to new teams?**

**A:** Yes — over the winter/spring, the club will host training opportunities that allow players impacted by the 2026–27 change to connect with potential future trainers and teammates. These opportunities will be organized by FSC (not by individual parents) and communicated through your current team’s trainer or manager.

We are not encouraging players to move teams early. Our goal is to make the transition gradual, developmentally appropriate, and based on ongoing evaluation — not on early roster movement.

**Q: Will my player have to move to a different team?**

**A:** All teams will shift to fit the new calendar. Some players will:

- Remain with their current team because the new structure does not impact them.
- Move to their age-appropriate group: Players will join the age group that matches the new structure (e.g., a player born after August 2013 will be U13 in 2026–27).
- Play up (by approval): Players may be approved to “play up” when it provides the right level of challenge for their technical ability, tactical understanding, physical readiness, and emotional maturity.

If you’d like to see where your player falls under the new age-group calendar, use the official [U.S. Soccer Age Group Calculator](#) to check both their current and new placement.

**Q: Will my child's current team change after winter training and into the Spring?**

**A:** Team changes will be structured at Spring tryouts and will not come into effect until Fall 2026. Players will stay with their current teams for the duration of the Spring 2026 season.

**Q: If my child "plays down," does that mean they aren't improving?**

**A:** Absolutely not. Placement is based on the new grade-year structure. The intent is not for players to "play down," but rather to align to the new age group structure. Considerations for players and families impacted:

**1. Developmental Fit:** A player may benefit from being in an environment where they can build confidence, take on leadership roles, and refine their technical and tactical skills at a pace that suits their growth.

**2. Team Competitiveness:** In some cases, a younger age group may have stronger overall team depth or competitiveness than the next group up. Playing with that younger team can actually provide a more challenging and productive experience than staying with an older team that's still developing.

**3. Positional and Team Needs:** From a tactical standpoint, placement decisions also consider team balance and positional needs.

**Q: Does staying up mean my child is a stronger player than someone who moves down?**

**A:** Many factors influence placement decisions. FSC will evaluate each player based on developmental fit — including technical ability, tactical understanding, physical readiness, and emotional maturity — as well as the overall performance and depth of each age group.

Playing up simply means the player's development is best supported in that environment; it's not a ranking or comparison to others.

**Q: How are players evaluated?**

**A:** Evaluations happen all year long, not just at tryouts. Trainers assess players through training sessions and games. Tryouts simply confirm readiness for the next level.

**Q: Who decides placement?**

**A:** Player placements are made collaboratively by the FSC Team Coach, Philadelphia Union Trainer, and Director of Coaching (DOC).

**Q: When will we know team placements?**

**A:** Final rosters are expected to be shared following the spring tryout cycle in Spring 2026.



# AGE GROUP MATRIX CHART

## BEGINS 2026-2027 FALL SEASON

BIRTH YEAR/MONTH	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
JANUARY	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	U20
FEBRUARY	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	U20
MARCH	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	U20
APRIL	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	U20
MAY	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	U20
JUNE	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	U20
JULY	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	U20
AUGUST		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
SEPTEMBER		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
OCTOBER		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
NOVEMBER		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
DECEMBER		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19