



Birth Year Question & Answer Fact Sheet

1. How does this impact my child?

Naugatuck Youth Soccer plans to fully transition to the Birth Year model for all of its age groups. Again, this change is being mandated by US Soccer, US Youth Soccer and CJSA, and we must comply. This is not a decision that was made at the Club level.

Specifically, players born between January 1 and July 31 will move up one age group for the Fall 2016 season, exactly as under the current model (e.g. current U10 will move to U11). However, players born between August 1 and December 31 will be reclassified to a different age group (e.g. current U10 will move to U12). In short, some players will experience minimal change, where others may change age groups and team levels.

2. Why is birth year registration going into effect for all levels of play and all age groups?

Having players train and play according to their age and developmental stage supports the objectives of the small sided standards by focusing on the physiological and developmental needs of the player. This change is meant to better safeguard the development of youth players at all ages and levels.

3. My child wants to play with his/her friends. Can't we just keep our "school year" team together?

For the best interest of most if not all players – the answer is "No."

Maintaining our current school year grouping and ignoring the transition to Birth Year age groups – essentially having most of the roster "play up" an age group — would help preserve current relationships between players and families. However, it would result in our players and teams competing against players significantly older (as many as 18 months), which is likely harmful for both the player's skill development and enjoyment of the sport.

We recognize the importance of friendships made and the bonds formed as teammates; we also recognize that children are more resilient than we give them credit for, and the transition to this new model will permit players to forge new friendships and bonds, while still treasuring previous relationships. Preservation of existing social relationships is not reason enough to keep teams together.

Our objective regardless of age group definition is and always will be to place players onto teams that are appropriate for their development and competitive levels; following the Birth Year model will allow us to do that, as our leagues, tournaments and competitions will also follow that model.

4. **My son or daughter has a December birthday. She was born in 2006 and is currently playing U9. Since she'll be 10 in December, will she jump from U9 to U11 for the fall season?**

Yes. In Fall 2016, the U11 (2006) Age Group will be for all players born in the year 2006. That will be the Age Group regardless of her birth-month. What this means is whereas your child may currently be one of the older players in her age group, she will now be one of the younger players in her age group next year. However, she will not be losing a year of soccer – instead she will lose a year of small-sided games to gain a year of playing 11v11.

5. **If she has to play as a U11, that's a big jump from where she currently is at U9. As a parent, I'm concerned whether she will fit into this team of players, many of them having already been playing together as U10s.**

All players will be playing against players from the same year of birth, a 12-month range. The first year of this transition to birth year mandate will, indeed, present some challenges as all children born between August and December will find themselves “skipping” a developmental year, i.e. moving to a larger field or playing with eleven players on the field for the first time. By the second year of the age mandate the playing field will have leveled. Some coaches will also find themselves moving up directly from U9 to U11, for example. But it will be the same for all teams in the age group and we believe that both players and coaches will adjust quickly.

6. **Don't you realize that you're breaking up my existing team?**

U.S. Soccer and NYS recognize that making these changes can impact existing teams in the short-term. However, players joining and leaving teams is something that already happens regularly throughout this association. There are a variety of factors that require teams to evolve and adapt including player maturity rates, moving away, focusing on new interests or their soccer abilities differentiating from their peers. Again, both small sided standards and birth year registration support the development of the individual player as a priority over a team success.

7. **What are the teams and Age Groups going to be called when the Age Group is moving to a Birth Year e.g. U9 or 2008?**

Players, parents and coaches of NYS will need to be prepared to use both options in terms of terminology e.g. U9 and/or 2008. NYS will retain the “U” system for Recreational Soccer but it may become more common to also talk and communicate with year of birth in addition.

