



U.S. Soccer has adopted a number of initiatives to promote the safety and development of youth soccer players. These include recommendations concerning protocols to address possible concussions received during practice or games and restrictions on heading the ball by younger players, as well as mandates concerning age groups and small sided play. As a member of U.S. Soccer and U. S Youth Soccer, CJSA is implementing these initiatives over the next two years, consistent with the mandated timeframes. There is considerable information about all these topics on our website.

**The following is the schedule for when the initiatives will become mandatory for CJSA members:**

- **Concussion Protocol and Heading Restrictions**

These player safety recommendations have been adopted by CJSA for all levels – including recreation, travel, premier and elite. Under the new concussion protocol, any player who is suspected of having sustained a concussion must be removed from play and evaluated by a Health Care Professional. Unless the Health Care Professional determines that the player has not sustained a concussion and clears the player to return to play, the player may not be permitted to return to practice or play until the player has successfully completed the return to play protocol and has been cleared to return to play by a physician. This protocol applies to players at all levels and includes practice and competition.

The heading restrictions prohibit a player aged 10 or younger from heading the ball in practice or competitions. This restriction will be enforced in competitions for teams U11 and younger (including combined age brackets including U11 and younger) by award of an indirect free kick for the opposing team. Coaches and parents are responsible for applying this restriction for players who are 10 or younger and playing up. Heading in practice for players age 11 – 13 is restricted to 30 minutes per week, but is not restricted in games for players on teams classified as U12 or older.

Immediate implementation of these changes is recommended. Compliance is mandatory no later than April 1, 2016.

For more information, go to: [http://www.cjsa.org/resource\\_center/concussion\\_information/](http://www.cjsa.org/resource_center/concussion_information/) and <https://usys-assets.ae-admin.com/assets/969/15/3-21NoticeforCJSAWebsiteHeadingandConcussion.pdf>

- **Birth Year Age Groups**

The change to a calendar year basis for age groups will be effective for the 2016-2017 seasonal year. This change is mandatory for teams registered to play in all CJSA sponsored competitions and leagues, including State and District Leagues. The birth year registration will be reflected by the CJSA Registration System. As is the case today, players may play on a team registered as an older age group but cannot play on a team registered for a younger age group.

For Birth Year Matrix, go to:

<https://usys-assets.ae-admin.com/assets/969/15/BirthYearMatrix11-5-15withExplanation.pdf>

- **Small Sided Soccer**

The mandated changes in the size of teams on the field will be effective for the Fall 2017 season. This change is mandatory for teams registered to play in all CISA sponsored competitions, including State and District Leagues. As part of this player development initiative, U. S. Soccer also announced precise requirements for field and goal sizes. Numerous state and national organizations raised objections to the mandated sizes as both impractical and costly. Modifications to these requirements are being considered by U. S. Soccer with input by technical directors representing the various youth soccer organizations. Changes to the field and goal size requirements to reflect the limitations and variations of available fields are anticipated. Changes to the maximum number of players for each age group are not anticipated.

For more information, go to:

Chart breakdown of age, field size, number of players...

<https://usys-assets.ae-admin.com/assets/969/15/StandardsChart-ageandnumberofplayers.pdf>

Diagrams of field layout...

<https://usys-assets.ae-admin.com/assets/969/15/PlayerDevelopmentInitiatives-Approved07052015.pdf>