



ORU Age Group Placement

In 2017, US Soccer officially switched youth player registration to birth year in place of academic year. The primary reasons were to bring the US in line with the rest of the world when determining age groups and simplify the eligibility criteria for parents/guardians.

For the vast majority of players, it is developmentally appropriate to play within the proper birth year age group. With that said, there are two scenarios when playing in a non-birth year group is allowed:

1. Roster Adjustments: For town programs, like ORU, whose mission is to provide an opportunity to our OR community members, we do our best to provide a place for as many local players as possible. To do so, we often have to shuffle players around to maximize rostering. As an example, if too many players register for one age group, we may move a player or two up to an older age group instead of cutting them.
 - These decisions are only season-specific, and players requested to move out of roster size necessity are required to register at their birth year the following season.
 - Decisions on which players move up are most often made internally via conversations with previous or existing coaches and the parents affected.
 - If more players than usual are needed to move (4 or more) a 3rd party evaluation may be held.
2. Special Ability: For players who stand out as head and shoulders above the abilities of the rest of their age group, they may be recommended to play in an older group. Factors such as technical ability, tactical decision making, athleticism, coachability, maturity and roster sizes can all be factored into this decision. This decision is made season by season since all players develop at different rates both technically and physically.
 - a. ORU coaches should know quickly if a player is playing at a level head and shoulders above the rest of their age group and, if so, should initiate a move to an older group by communicating with the AG.

In the event there are special circumstances outside of the two reasons stated above, the current Soccer Advisory Group (AG) will approve or deny non-birth year requests with a yes or no vote.

- The decision must adhere to ORYA's mission to provide fair, diverse and developmentally appropriate programs to the youth of the Durham, Lee and Madbury communities.
- Local, age-appropriate players will not be displaced for a non-age-appropriate player.
- If any AG members are directly involved in the decision in question they should abstain.
- If there is a tie, the deciding vote will be cast by the Lead Coordinator.
- If the Lead Coordinator abstains, the deciding vote will go to the Travel Coordinator overseeing the teams in question (Boys Travel / Girls Travel).