

The 2016-2017 playing year will be a time of significant changes for PDA Florida as well as all other clubs. US Soccer, our governing body, recently announced changes for youth soccer that will impact us going forward. Most importantly is that teams will now form based on actual birth years, instead of calendar years.

The change in team formation from a calendar school year (August 1st - July 31st) to a birth year (January 1st - December 31st) will be implemented beginning with PDA Competitive Team Tryouts in May 2016. US Soccer Federation, the governing body of all soccer in the US, US Youth Soccer, and US Club Soccer are all mandating this change effective August 2016. As a member of US Soccer, it is our responsibility to support this decision through the implementation of these changes and initiatives. At PDA Florida, we are asking for the support of our families, our players and our coaches as we follow and implement US Soccer directives.

What is Calendar School Year (School Year August 1st-July 31st)?

Calendar year is the current soccer calendar that is based on the school year calendar that most leagues in the United States use to form teams. The current "Calendar Year" runs from August 1st to July 31st.

What Does Birth Year Mean?

"Birth Year" registration means a player will play in the age group of the actual year of their birth beginning with the Fall 2016 season. The birth year calendar dates run from January 1st to December 31st. For example, if you are born between January 1, 1999 - December 31, 1999, you will play in the 1999 birth year age group. If you are born between January 1, 2002 - December 31, 2002, you will play in the 2002 age group.

Why is US Soccer Going to Birth Year Registration?

US Soccer is adopting this change to align with youth soccer across the world. Except for the US & Canada, all other countries are already birth year based. This change also aligns with current player identification programs which identify top players based on birth year (i.e. Olympic Development Program, US Soccer Training Centers, US Club Soccer id2, etc). US Soccer's goal is the development of players with greater skill, creativity, and confidence. This focus on the development of the individual player versus the success of a particular team should result in developing better players faster.

Why is the PDA Moving to Birth Year Registration?

We are moving to birth year because US Soccer -- the governing body for all youth soccer in America -- is mandating birth year registration for all leagues sanctioned under the US Soccer Association. Also, the US Youth Soccer Association and US Club Soccer, our immediate governing bodies, will be implementing these changes effective Fall 2016, so we must follow suit.

Are There Any Benefits to Playing Birth Year?

The main benefit of playing birth year is for developmental purposes. At the local level throughout our state, it will allow for better development because it will push individual players, raise the competitive standards, improve team competition, and create more meaningful league games.

Can Players Play on a Younger Age Group?

No, players CANNOT "play down" with younger players. For example, a player born in 1999 CANNOT play with the 2000 birth year age group.

Can Players Play in an Older Age Group?

Yes, as in the past, based on player ability and team need, a player may “play up” an age group. For example, a player born in 2000 can play in the 1999 birth year age group. “Playing up” is a RARE exception and will be considered by PDA Florida staff on an individual basis; focusing on the player’s development as our first priority.

Will Other Area Clubs Be Making These Same Changes?

Yes, all clubs affiliated with US Soccer are mandated to make these changes.

Links to Further Resources:

US Soccer Video Explaining Player Development Model & the New Birth Year Changes
<http://www.ussoccer.com/coaching-education/resources/2015-player-development-initiatives>

Further Questions?

If you have any further questions concerning the above changes, please email us at: info@pdaflorida.org