



# Chatham Soccer League “Play-up” Policy



Dated November 30, 2009

Chatham Soccer League requires players to participate in the correct age-appropriate division unless special permission is granted by the league. NCYSA and most all other soccer clubs determine a player's soccer age by that player's age on July 31<sup>st</sup>, just prior to the start of the soccer year. However, there are several situations where the league will consider play-up requests. Below is the process to be used by the requesting parent, and the criteria that the League will apply. Playing up is not a “right,” but is rather an exception only used under the criteria outlined below. Playing-up exceptions are made by the Chatham Soccer League Board. The Parents and Coaches will be consulted but the CSL Board will be the final arbiter in playing -up decisions. Playing up must benefit both the child and the league. Concerns about injury, weakening of the league and social aspects should be considered.

## **Definition**

Playing up is defined as requesting to play on a team in an older age division when there is a team in that player's appropriate age division.

## **Process**

The parent requesting that their child “play-up” should submit an CSL Age Division Exception Form (available from the CSL Board) or make a written/email request discussing the reasons for their request and citing at least one of the criteria listed below. A Playing Up Consent form must also be submitted. The request should be made to the Area Coordinator and the coach at least 2 weeks before the opening game of a season. Normally, this will be done by mid-August, but can also be done in between seasons (early February). One week before the season begins, Coaches and the Area Coordinator will discuss their observations of the player's ability based upon the previous season and make a recommendation to the Director of Coaching and Player Development. The Director of Coaching and Player Development will present the request to the Chatham Soccer League Board. The Board is the final arbiter in deciding if a player may move up. If the lower age coach and/or area coordinator is not familiar with the player (e.g., a new player to the league), the player shall play in the first game of the lower age bracket league. The Director of Coaching and Player Development and the lower age coach and/or area coordinator will observe the player and may make a recommendation to the upper age coach. If the lower age coach does not recommend moving up, the request will be deferred until two weeks before the beginning of the following season. All decisions will be communicated to the player, players parents and coaches by the Director of Coaching and Player Development.

**The CSL Board makes the final decision on all play up requests.**

**This policy applies to all divisions and players in the Chatham Soccer League.**

## Criteria

The CSL Board, Coaches and Area Coordinators will consider the following factors in determining whether to approve a “play up” request. These are not all inclusive as other considerations may impact the decision. These are merely guidelines to assist the Board with their decision.

**1. Exceptionally Skilled Player - Level of play significantly exceeds peer group.** Particularly in the lower age brackets, when only 4 or 5 players are on a side at one time, an exceptional player may dominate play to the extent that the game is no longer competitive for the opposing team. A player who fits these criteria must dominate play in more than one phase i.e. striking and passing; defending and challenging; defending and striking, etc. Though parents or coaches may often feel that a child is dominant because the child is the best on the team, the exceptionally skilled criteria apply to the child in relation to the entire league and most other children of his or her age, not just the team they are on. The small-sided games used by Chatham Soccer League are a way for the coaches to control the players domination in a match. The coaches have the flexibility to pair like players on one of the two fields. Consideration of this will be taken only if coaches have exhausted every option to balance the matches. Typically, a player who is approved for this reason has extensive tournament or competitive soccer experience beyond the house league. The emotional intelligence of the child must be suitable for the increasing intensity of the upper age group as well.

**2. Physical Ability and Above Average Size.** If a child is exceedingly big for his or her age group and has above average soccer skills, the lower age coach may recommend a play-up request – particularly if there is some risk that the physical play of the child may pose a danger to smaller “of age” players. As player get older, there will be growth spurts. These often lead to a loss of coordination as the player becomes accustomed to their "new" body. Their increase size may result in a temporary loss of their above average skills to this consideration will need to be observed closely.

**3. Overall Benefit to the League.** If there is an overall benefit to the league for moving a player up, the two coaches (lower and upper age groups) may jointly promote the request to the board. For example, if the older division needs to fill a coaching vacancy, but the ability of a parent to take on the coaching position is contingent on his or her child moving up, the League may approve it. In unusual situations, the League may request that a grouping of players move up due to overall numbers balancing across divisions. If this is to occur, an overall approval by the Board is required.



# Chatham Soccer League Age Division Exception Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent (Guardian): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Age at cutoff date (7/31): \_\_\_\_\_ Division applying to: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior soccer experience:

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Reason for requesting the exception:

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Volunteer Commitment:

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## Chatham Soccer League Playing Up Consent Form

The Chatham Soccer League (CSL) requires permission from a parent/guardian for any soccer player to “play up” in an older age group as governed by birth year.

*I, as parent/guardian, am aware that my younger player will be playing against older, usually more physically and emotionally developed players whose soccer skills may be more advanced and whose play may be more physical.*

*As parent/guardian, I give MY PERMISSION for my child,  
\_\_\_\_\_, (\_\_\_\_\_) to play-up above his/her  
Name Age*

*CSL stated age group. In granting my permission, I fully understand that my child could be injured. The injury could include, but not limited to; cuts, scrapes, sprains, damage to ligaments, broken bones, concussions, or possibly even death.*

Before giving your child permission to play up, please consider your child’s maturity, size, coordination, muscular development, attitude, and social development in comparison to the team members of the older team.

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<i>Parent/Guardian Signature</i>	<i>Print Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
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*Approved:*

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<i>CSL President</i>	<i>Print Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
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<i>CSL Director of Coaching and Player Development</i>	<i>Print Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
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