

# FAQ

## SMALL-SIDED GAMES

US Youth Soccer Director of Coaching Sam Snow answers some frequently asked questions regarding US Youth Soccer's implementation of Small-Sided Games. For more information on Small-Sided Games, visit <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/smallsidedgames/>.



### **What are Small-Sided Games?**

Anything less than 11-a-side is considered a Small-Sided Game. [More Info](#)

### **What are the differences between Small-Sided Games and 11 v. 11 matches in regards to field size, goal size, etc.?**

The fields are smaller, as are the goals and the ball. The length of the game is also shorter. The rules to play the game are modified for each age group. [More Info](#)

### **What are the benefits of Small-Sided Games for players?**

With fewer players on the field and a smaller field on which to play the game the kids are more directly involved in the action of the game. That equates to more enjoyment in playing, more contact with the ball, more tactical decisions made and executed and more physical movement, which improves the player's physical fitness. [More Info](#)

### **Is this something clubs in the United States already participate in?**

Many clubs, especially those affiliated to US Youth Soccer, have been playing Small-Sided Games in one version or another for years, perhaps even a decade or more.

### **Are Small-Sided Games a fixture in other countries like Brazil, Germany, Spain?**

While Small-Sided Games are not new to American soccer, many other countries around the world also play Small-Sided Games with young players. In fact, Spain plays Small-Sided Games up through the U-15 age group. [More Info](#)

### **What are U.S. Soccer and US Youth Soccer doing to help coaches organize Small-Sided Games?**

Assistance is given to coaches through coaching courses and clinics given by the State Associations and the two national organizations.

### **Where can I find more information on Small-Sided Games?**

Anyone interested in learning more about Small-Sided Games should use the Small-Sided Games Resource Center in the Coaches section of the US Youth Soccer website. [More Info](#)

### **When will these Small-Sided Games be introduced in US Youth Soccer?**

Clubs that are ready may make the change immediately, especially for intramural programming. Others may wait until August of 2016. All clubs must be playing Small-Sided Games by August 2017.

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## CALENDAR YEAR AGE GROUPS

US Youth Soccer Director of Coaching Sam Snow answers some frequently asked questions regarding US Youth Soccer's implementation of calendar year age groups as opposed to school year age groups.



### **Why has the decision been made to switch from grouping teams by the school year to the calendar year?**

To be in line with the other 208 countries that register youth players by their year of birth. The change will also make it easier for American club teams to play internationally.

### **How do I know in which age group a player will participate?**

Players born between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31 of any given year will all play on the same team, unless a player is "playing up" in an older age group. For example, a player born on Jan. 1, 2000, would play on the Under-16 team in 2016.

### **What if a player wants to play with his or her school friends, but is in a different age group?**

Depending on local rules for playing up age groups, a player will be able to play up with an older age group, which has been true for decades. As always, a player may not play down with a younger age group.

### **How will this change impact clubs?**

Clubs will need to adjust the players on team rosters once the club makes the change. Most clubs will accomplish that task by simply adjusting the try-out age groups or how they distribute players to teams in the club.

### **How are age groups determined in other FIFA nations?**

By the year in which a player is born; i.e., calendar year.

### **Which US Youth Soccer programs will be affected?**

The Olympic Development Program will not change since it has grouped players by birth year since its inception in 1977. TOPSoccer will be unaffected since players are grouped by ability and less so by age. All other player programs will be directly affected by the change to calendar year player registration.

### **When will the change to calendar year age groups take effect?**

US Youth Soccer programs will change to Calendar Year beginning with the 2016-2017 season. U.S. Soccer has mandated that all play move to the Calendar Year by August 2017.