Keeping Development First: Navigating the 2026/2027 Soccer Age Group Transition

A Brief Explanation for Parents

Starting in the **2026/2027 seasonal year**, youth soccer governing bodies nationwide—including US Youth Soccer, US Club Soccer, AYSO, and the Florida Youth Soccer Association (FYSA)—are officially transitioning to a **school-year age group cutoff (August 1 – July 31)**. This replacement of the calendar-year format ensures players align directly with their school-grade peers, making social and competitive environments much more natural for families. Changes like this can feel disruptive at first, but youth soccer has always evolved to support player growth.



Understanding the Shift: Examples of Age Charting

Under the new school-year age matrix, divisions are determined by specific birth date ranges running from August 1st of one year through July 31st of the next, rather than grouping everyone born in the same calendar year together.

Birth Date	New School-Year Group (2026/27 Season)	Placement Verification (From Charts)
Player A: Born March 15, 2018	**9U (U-9)**	Falls in the *Aug. 1, 2017 – July 31, 2018* bracket.
Player B: Born October 22, 2018	**8U (U-8)**	Falls in the *Aug. 1, 2018 – July 31, 2019* bracket.

As shown in the official charts, children born in the same calendar year (2018) will now cleanly split across two separate age divisions depending on whether their birthday falls before or after the August 1st cutoff line.

ADD BELOW PARENTS CALCULATOR

Player Age Group by Player Birth Date and Seasonal Year

Birth Year	2026/27 Seasonal Year Age Chart (Team Age Banding)											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2007	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19U	19U	19U	19U	19U
2008	19U	19U	19U	19U	19U	19U	19U	18U	18U	18U	18U	18U
2009	18U	18U	18U	18U	18U	18U	18U	17U	17U	17U	17U	17U
2010	17U	17U	17U	17U	17U	17U	17U	16U	16U	16U	16U	16U
2011	16U	16U	16U	16U	16U	16U	16U	15U	15U	15U	15U	15U
2012	15U	15U	15U	15U	15U	15U	15U	14U	14U	14U	14U	14U
2013	14U	14U	14U	14U	14U	14U	14U	13U	13U	13U	13U	13U
2014	13U	13U	13U	13U	13U	13U	13U	12U	12U	12U	12U	12U
2015	12U	12U	12U	12U	12U	12U	12U	11U	11U	11U	11U	11U
2016	11U	11U	11U	11U	11U	11U	11U	10U	10U	10U	10U	10U
2017	10U	10U	10U	10U	10U	10U	10U	9U	9U	9U	9U	9U
2018	9U	9U	9U	9U	9U	9U	9U	8U	8U	8U	8U	8U
2019	8U	8U	8U	8U	8U	8U	8U	7U	7U	7U	7U	7U
2020	7U	7U	7U	7U	7U	7U	7U	6U	6U	6U	U6	U6
2021	6U	6U	6U	6U	6U	6U	6U	5U	5U	5U	5U	5U
2022	5U	5U	5U	5U	5U	5U	5U	4U	4U	4U	4U	4U
2023	4U	4U	4U	4U	4U	4U	4U	3U	3U	3U	3U	3U

Rec Banding		
	6U = 6U and 5U	8/1/2020-7/31/2022
	8U = 8U and 7U	8/1/2018-7/31/2020
	10U = 10U and 9U	8/1/2016-7/31/2018
	12U = 12U and 11U	8/1/2014-7/31/2016
	14U = 14U and 13U	8/1/20012-7/31/2014
	HS = 15U 16U 17U 18U 19U	8/1/2007-7/31/2012
	HS High School	



The DC Sports Strategy: Flexible Roster Pooling & Case-by-Case Evaluations

At DC Sports, **decisions will always be made based on player development first.** Rather than forcing every athlete into their new August 1st cutoff matrix automatically, our coaches and directors will be implementing comprehensive, individualized evaluations.

- **Development First:** Roster spots are being viewed as fluid spaces to ensure a child is neither physically overwhelmed nor developmentally bored.

- **Flexible "Play-Up" Rules:** If a player has a late-summer or fall birthdate but is physically, technically, or mentally thriving with an older group, our club will actively utilize flexible "play-up" guidelines. We will make sure that the competitive environment matches each player's true readiness level.



How to Prepare Parents and Players for This Transition

We are fully committed to making this structural shift a smooth and positive experience for our entire soccer community. Here is how we will prepare together:

1. 💻 **PlayMetrics Roster Updates:** Our administration will be actively updating the **PlayMetrics** system with the new seasonal parameters. Parents will receive automated notifications regarding updated team pools and training slots well ahead of the official season kickoff.
2. 📋 **Director Consultation Windows:** We will be fully available to host individual, one-on-one virtual and in-person consultation sessions for parents who would like a closer look at their child’s specific developmental assessment.

3. ⚽ **Intra-Squad Scrimmage Blending:** During our training blocks, coaches will run blended training sessions to help players build immediate chemistry within new roster pools and enhance overall squad adaptability.

At the end of the day, our mission remains exactly the same: assessing soccer **environments** and identifying **each player's individual needs** to provide the exact tailored support they require to thrive both on and off the pitch.

Let's embrace this new chapter together and keep pushing youth soccer growth forward in Central Florida!

Let's go to DC! ❤️💙🤍

