MCLEAN YOUTH SOCCER

2025-2026 Age Group Change & Player Placement

VISION

McLean Youth Soccer will be a model club known nationally for developing players at all Levels, creating a culture of inclusion, innovation and excellence, and positively impacting our community.

MISSION

McLean Youth Soccer provides opportunities for all players to reach their full potential in sport and in life through participation in soccer.

PURPOSE OF THE TOWN HALL

- To explain the transition for travel team formation from a calendar year (January 1 to December 31) to school year age grouping (August1-July 31).
- To outline how MYS will manage the travel player placement process fairly and transparently.
- To share plans for school year calendar age group training sessions, ID sessions, and rolling offers ahead of official tryouts.

WHY THE CHANGE?

Following extensive review and discussion, US Youth Soccer, AYSO, and US Club Soccer have collectively decided to move to an age group player formation cycle that runs from August 1 to July 31, starting with the 2026-27 season/registration year. This change was made based on additional critical feedback, data, and expert input to better align players with their school-grade peers. Our associations feel that this age group player formation will be the most inclusive and help increase participation.

usyouthsoccer.org **June 10, 2025**

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PLAYERS

The shift from birth year (January 1- December 31) to school year calendar (August 1- July 31) brings players and teams closer to:

- School-based social and academic alignment.
- Improved connection with classmates and peers.
- Competing on teams where most of their teammates will likely be in the same school grade as them.
- Ensuring all players are placed where they can best develop and enjoy success.

THE GOAL

To keep MYS teams competitive while supporting balanced player development and community.

PLAYING WITH YOUR AGE GROUP

Most players will be placed on teams in their appropriate school calendar age group based on their birth date. This will ensure:

- Fair competition.
- Appropriate physical and emotional development.
- Strong team chemistry with peers in similar life stages.

PLAYING “UP” AN AGE GROUP

Playing up is always a developmentally-based decision, not based on convenience or preference.

A player may be chosen to play up if they are identified by technical staff to have:

- Exceptional technical skill
- Advanced tactical understanding
- Strong physical readiness
- Positive attitude, leadership, consistency, and commitment

METRICS USED TO EVALUATE PLAYING UP

- Player evaluations
- Player statistics
- Coach recommendations
- Technical staff determination - through direct observation or VEO footage

TIMELINE FOR PLAYER PLACEMENT AND TEAM FORMATION PROCESS

- January - Age Group Training Sessions
- February - ID Sessions that will occur at the team's regularly schedules practices for Girl Academy, MLS Next Academy Division, Aspire, NAL teams
- March - Rolling offers
- April/May - Officially scheduled tryouts for all NCSL/EDP level teams

AGE GROUP TRAINING SESSIONS

Prior to ID Sessions and tryouts, MYS will organize training sessions for each new age group. It will be in each player's best interest to attend as many of these scheduled sessions as possible.

The objectives of these sessions are:

- Assist players if there is a need to adjust to the new team
- Give coaching staff an early look at team dynamics and skill levels
- Provide players an opportunity to impress and demonstrate growth

ID SESSIONS DURING REGULAR TRAINING

Coaches will run identification (ID) sessions within their current team trainings with the purpose of:

- Evaluating players transitioning between age groups
- Observing individual qualities in a familiar environment
- Collecting data to support early placement decisions
- Ensuring consistency and fairness in evaluations across teams

ROLLING OFFERS

Players who clearly fit a team's needs and competitive level may receive a rolling offer, during the winter and prior to spring tryouts, for next season. The benefits of these rolling offers are:

- Provides players with clarity and confidence early on.
- Allows players to focus on training and development rather than uncertainty.

Players not receiving an early offer will still have full opportunity to earn a spot during official tryouts.

TRYOUTS

Tryouts will be for current MYS travel players who have not received a rolling offer yet and new players (current MYS recreation and outside the club players) to the travel program. Tryout evaluations will be based on player:

- Technical & tactical proficiency
- Effort, attitude, and commitment
- Coachability and potential

Final team roster selections will follow the spring tryouts, with communication from the coach to parent.

BENEFITS OF THE AGE GROUP CHANGE

- ✅ Aligns players in their appropriate age group with their peers and player development needs.
- ✅ Transparent and fair evaluation for all players.
- ✅ Early engagement and reduced uncertainty for current players and parents.
- ✅ Long term vision for player development.

We all want the best for each player and will support them through this age group change and team formation process together.

SCAN ME