



AGE GROUP CHANGES FOR 2026-2027

We want to share important information about a nationwide change in age groups. This will affect all youth clubs across the U.S., including Mandeville Soccer Club.

US Club Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and AYSO have announced that, effective August 1st, 2026, age group formation will be August 1st - July 31st, more closely matching school grades.

In youth soccer, players are traditionally grouped by birth year (Jan 1-Dec 31), but organizations, including US Youth Soccer and US Club Soccer, are shifting to grade year/seasonal year (Aug 1-Jul 31) for the 2026-27 season to align with school grades.

Starting with the 2026–2027 season, the Louisiana Soccer Association will adopt this new age-group formation model for all youth soccer programs across the United States. Mandeville Soccer Club will be compliant with this change beginning in the 2026–2027 season and is committed to supporting our players, families, and coaches throughout this transition.



WHAT IS CHANGING?

Beginning with the 2026–2027 season, age group formations will shift from a calendar-year model (January 1–December 31) to a seasonal-year model (August 1–July 31).

Players will now be grouped based on birthdates that more closely align with school grade levels and social peer groups.





WHY IS THE SYSTEM CHANGING?

Following a multi-year review, U.S. Soccer and its affiliated organizations identified challenges with the calendar-year model related to player experience and long-term development. The return to a seasonal-year (August–July) model aims to promote:

- **More Cohesion Among Peers**-Many players will now be able to stay with their school classmates, improving team chemistry and social connections.
- **Smoother Development Pathways**-Players who were previously “aged up” due to the birth-year cutoff may now return to more balanced competition levels, allowing for more appropriate development opportunities.





Potential challenges MSC will face:

Team and Roster Adjustments

MSC will need to reorganize rosters again, potentially resulting in players switching teams. Ultimately, this change should bring long-term stability to the youth soccer system in the U.S. by aligning it more naturally with school-aged progression. As we move into the next few months, we, as a club, are excited about the changes that will allow players to remain with their friends from the same grade throughout their youth soccer career.

MSC believes this will be a big step in players keeping their passion for the game and continuing to play. While there will be team disruptions in the short term, the long-term benefits will outweigh them.

Please be patient with our club as we navigate these upcoming changes. We are excited to improve players' and families' experiences moving forward.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Over the coming months, Mandeville Soccer will take the following steps:

- Lakers Coaches and Directors will conduct meetings to begin reviewing team formations and discussing individual players.
- Lakers Parent Meeting – We will host a parent meeting to explain the change in more detail and answer questions. **Details coming soon**
- Ongoing communication – Additional information will be shared in January 2026.
- Seasonal-year (Grade Year) pool trainings – We will have training days during the spring season. Players will participate in age-group pool trainings based on future seasonal-year groupings.
- These sessions are designed to: Introduce players to future teammates, create familiarity in a low-pressure environment, and support smooth roster planning ahead of tryouts.





FAQ


Does the change apply to all age groups?

Yes, the change applies to all age groups and programs:

- Recreational**
- Academy**
- Lakers**

HOW IS MSC PREPARING FOR THE CHANGE TO ENSURE THAT ALL PLAYERS ARE PLACED APPROPRIATELY?

The club is working diligently to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible for all players and coaches. We are taking the following steps to prepare for the change.

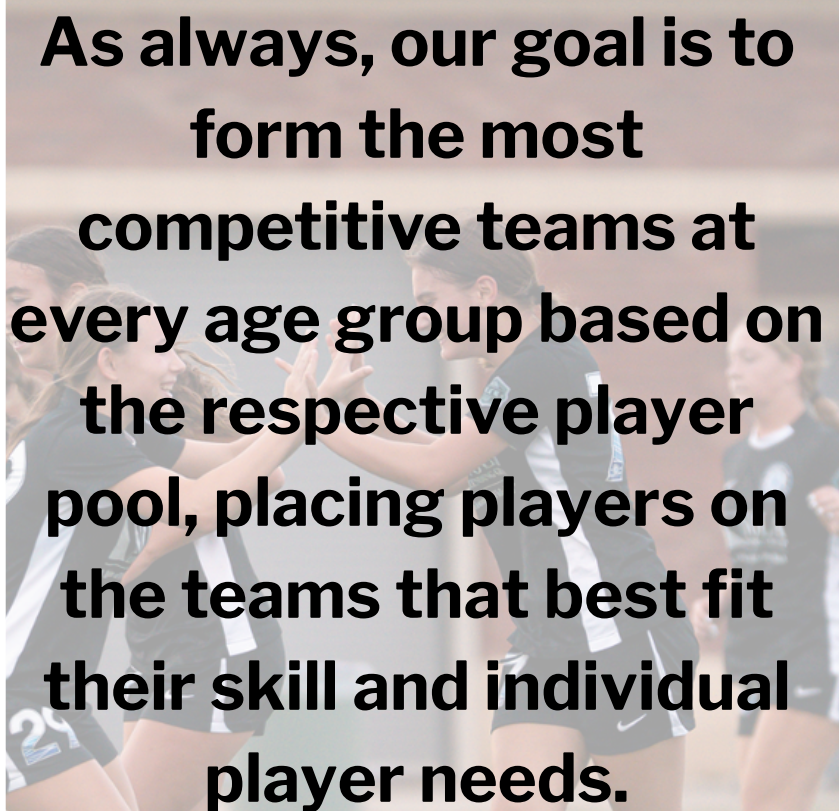


Internally, we will review all rosters to confirm which age group each player could fall into next year.



Scheduling age group training sessions with the new age groups to help players and coaches get familiar with the new player pools.

(more information to follow)



As always, our goal is to form the most competitive teams at every age group based on the respective player pool, placing players on the teams that best fit their skill and individual player needs.



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE IN-HOUSE POOL TRAINING SESSIONS?

Seasonal-year (Grade Year) Pool Training sessions – We will have training days during the spring season. Players will participate in age-group pool trainings based on future seasonal-year groupings.

These sessions are designed to: Introduce players to future teammates, create familiarity in a low-pressure environment, allow all Lakers coaches to observe new player pools in advance of tryouts, and support smooth roster planning ahead of tryouts.



Fundamentals for young kids



Future Teammates



Team-building activities





FAQ

What is the club policy for playing up?

Regardless of age-group cut-offs, opportunities to “play up” will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be at the discretion of the coaches and directors.

Decisions will be based on our professional assessment of what is in the individual player's best interest. Decisions regarding “play ups” will be discussed with parents individually and made in advance of tryouts.

We are reviewing all rosters to understand which age group each player will fall into next year, and to guide decisions regarding which age group will be the best fit for each individual player and will benefit the team as a whole

The philosophy is based on physical, social, and psychological factors. Players will have to display “exceptional” abilities for their age group to be considered a “play-up.”



*Will teams be
“grandfathered”
in for next year?*

**No, Mandeville Soccer
Club will comply with the
new age-group change for
the 2026–2027 season.**





How are coaches involved in the process?

Coaches will be very involved in the age group formation process.

They are closest to the players and know their abilities better than anyone.

Individual coaches and Coaching Directors will meet and discuss each player.



WHAT IS THE AGE GROUP CUT-OFF FOR TEAM REGISTRATION FOR FALL 2026, AND HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?

Effective with the 2026-2027 season, age-group cut-offs will shift. The new standard uses an August 1 to July 31 cutoff, aligning with seasonal years.



- Example: For the 2026-27 season, a U11 player would have been born between August 1, 2015, and July 31, 2016
- A U13 player would have been born between August 1, 2013, and July 31, 2014.





LAKERS TRYOUTS

U11 BOYS & GIRLS 4/13, 4/15 5:30-7:00PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2015- JULY 31, 2016

U12 BOYS & GIRLS 4/14, 4/16 5:30-7:00PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2014- JULY 31, 2015

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#LAKERNATION



LAKERS TRYOUTS

U13 BOYS & GIRLS 5/26, 5/28 5:30–7:00PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2013– JULY 31, 2014

U14 BOYS & GIRLS 5/27, 5/29 5:30–7:00PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2012– JULY 31, 2013

U15 BOYS & GIRLS 5/27, 5/29 7:00–8:30PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2011– JULY 31, 2012

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#LAKERNATION



LAKERS TRYOUTS

U16 BOYS & GIRLS 5/26, 5/28 7:00–8:30PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2010– JULY 31, 2011

U17 BOYS & GIRLS 5/27, 5/29 4:00–5:15PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2009– JULY 31, 2010

U18 BOYS & GIRLS 5/26, 5/28 4:00–5:15PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2008– JULY 31, 2009

U19 BOYS & GIRLS 5/26, 5/28 4:00–5:15PM

PLAYERS BORN BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 2007– JULY 31, 2008

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AS A SOCCER PARENT, HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD WITH THE TRANSITION CHANGES?

As competitive soccer transitions to a grade-year-based tryout model, many players and families will experience change—new teammates, new competition, and new outcomes. While change can feel unsettling, it also presents powerful opportunities for growth, resilience, and learning lessons that extend far beyond the field.

Change Is Part of the Game—and of Life

In soccer, just like in life, teams change. Roles change. Outcomes don't always go as planned. Learning how to navigate uncertainty is one of the most valuable skills a young athlete can develop. This process helps players understand that their journey is not defined by a single tryout, team, or season.

Making a team—or not—does not define their value, potential, or future success.

What matters most is how they respond.

Normalize Setbacks and Adversity.

Every high-level athlete faces disappointment. Being cut, moved, or challenged is not failure—it's feedback. Setbacks are part of growth, not a sign to quit.





AS A SOCCER PARENT, HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD WITH THE TRANSITION CHANGES?

Help your child understand:

- » Adversity builds resilience**
- » Struggles reveal areas to improve**
- » Confidence comes from overcoming, not avoiding, challenges**

Keep Perspective

Soccer is an important part of your child's life—but it's not their whole life. The lessons learned through sport—discipline, teamwork, perseverance, accountability—are what truly last.

Remind them:

“This experience is shaping who you are becoming, not just what team you're on.”





AS A SOCCER PARENT, HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD WITH THE TRANSITION CHANGES?

Model the Behavior You Want to See

Children often take emotional cues from parents. Staying calm, supportive, and positive—even when outcomes are disappointing—teaches them how to handle pressure and disappointment with maturity.

The Bigger Picture

Competitive soccer is about more than wins, losses, or team placement. It's about learning to:

Work hard when things are difficult

Handle disappointment with grace

Stay committed to improvement

Believe in yourself during uncertain moments

These lessons prepare players not just for the next season—but for school, careers, relationships, and life.

Change is challenging—but it's also where growth begins.

With the right support, your player can emerge stronger, more confident, and better equipped for whatever comes next.



FAQ'S

How is MSC preparing for the change to ensure that all players are placed appropriately?

**The club is working diligently to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible for all players and coaches.
We are taking the following steps to prepare for the change.**

- » Internally, we will review all rosters to confirm which age group each player could fall into next year.**
- » Scheduling age group training sessions with the new age groups to help players and coaches get familiar with the new player pools. (more information to follow).**
- » As always, our goal is to form the most competitive teams at every age group based on the respective player pool, placing players on the teams that best fit their skill and individual player needs**

MSC Leadership Team

Pere Bascu, Lakers Director
pbascu@mscsoccer.org

faith Mitternight, Director of Operations
admin@mscsoccer.org

Betsy Jacketti, Recreational Director
betsy@mscsoccer.org

Glenn “Benji” Benjamin, Academy Director
benji@mscsoccer.org

Shane Jeanfreau, Executive Director
director@mscsoccer.org

MSC Office

Phone number
985.624-8080

***THANK
YOU***



