



AGE GROUP CHANGE UPDATE

What Families Need to Know About the New Seasonal Year Model (Aug 1 – July 31)

What is changing in 2026–27?

Beginning with the 2026–2027 season, youth soccer nationwide will transition from the current birth-year model (Jan–Dec) to a seasonal-year model (Aug–July).

This change is supported by US Youth Soccer, US Club Soccer, ECNL, SCCL, Georgia Soccer, and AYSO, and is designed to:

- Align age groups more closely with the school year
- Reduce the number of “trapped players”
- Improve roster continuity and team development
- Create clearer college recruiting timelines for older age groups
- Increase participation opportunities and consistency across all major organizations

Why is this change happening?

National organizations agreed to this change based on research showing that the seasonal-year model:

- Increases participation opportunities
- Aligns all major youth soccer organizations
- Reduces the number of trapped players, who experience limited competition and disrupted training
- Supports more consistent development pathways

What This Means for Players

- All 2026–2027 tryouts and team placements will follow the Aug 1–July 31 age groups
- Players born August–December will be the most likely to shift
- Teams will align more closely with graduation year
- Showcase schedules and recruiting pathways become more consistent for U15–U19 players
- To view the age group matrix: [New Age Group Chart](#)

Which CF Alpharetta programs are affected?

All programs, including:

- Recreation
- Academy
- Competitive (SCCL, ECNL-RL, NPL, etc.)

CF Alpharetta will fully align with this national model beginning with 2026–2027 tryouts.

How Concorde Fire Alpharetta Is Preparing

Our leadership team, Directors of Coaching, and staff have been planning since January to ensure a smooth transition:

- Proactive roster planning based on birthdates and projected team impacts
- Thoughtful coaching assignments (see Coaching Assignments & Team List on our website)
- Age-group training sessions, play dates, evaluations, and tryouts
- Supporting resources, including an Age Group Lookup Tool and updated tryout information
- Ongoing communication as governing bodies release updates

Our goal is to reduce disruption and provide clarity for all families.

Concorde Fire Alpharetta's Player-Centric Commitment

- Individual development drives placement decisions
- All players must register and try out in their correct age group
- Coaches may approve playing up only in specific circumstances
- Any play-up decisions will be communicated before or after tryouts
- Aligning with the new age groups supports long-term growth, competitiveness, and player development

With cooperation from families and the planning already underway, we expect a smooth tryout and team formation process in May.

What happens to the “Trapped Group” (U15)?

“Trapped players” are U15 athletes who, due to birth-year cutoffs, are in 8th grade while many teammates are in high school. The new seasonal-year model significantly reduces the number of trapped players. Any remaining trapped players will still have training opportunities.

Can my child play up an age group?

All players must try out in their correct age group. Playing up may be approved only in specific circumstances, determined by the coaching staff before, during, or after tryouts.

Will teams stay together?

In most cases, teams will not remain the same. Teams will be formed based on the new seasonal-year model. Coaches may ask certain players to play up if it benefits team formation and competitiveness.