

SPORTS

TRYING SOMETHING NEW:

WHY CHANGE IS NOT ALWAYS AS SCARY AS IT FEELS



BY NEIL MCNAB,
RUSH UNION SOCCER

CHANGE HAS A WAY OF GIVING US PAUSE.

In youth sports, and particularly in soccer, moments of transition often bring questions and uncertainty. This summer, U.S. Soccer's age group realignment is one of those moments. It will change how teams are formed and how players progress year by year, and it's natural for players and families to wonder what this means for them.

At Rush Union, we see this moment not as a disruption, but as an opportunity that aligns closely with how we already approach player development.

GROWTH OFTEN LIVES JUST OUTSIDE COMFORT

One of the core principles we believe in at Rush Union is that development doesn't happen by staying the same. Players grow when they are appropriately challenged, by new teammates, new roles, and new expectations.

While the upcoming age group changes may feel unfamiliar at first, they also create environments where players learn to adapt, communicate, and solve problems. These experiences help players develop confidence and resilience, both

on and off the field. Over time, it's often these moments when things felt new or uncertain that players point to as important steps in their journey.

DIFFERENT DOESN'T MEAN WORSE, JUST DIFFERENT

It's easy to assume that change automatically means something is being taken away. In reality, the age group realignment is designed to better align youth soccer with long-term development standards, school calendars, and international norms.





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At Rush Union, our focus remains the same: creating positive, challenging environments that support each player's growth. Teams may look different, and pathways may feel new, but the underlying commitment to development, learning, and enjoyment of the game does not change.

A MOMENT TO RECENTER ON WHAT MATTERS

Transitions like this invite us to step back and reflect on why we play and coach the game in the first place. Success in youth soccer isn't defined by avoiding change, it's defined by how players grow through it.

This shift gives us an opportunity to reinforce our values:

- Prioritizing long-term development over short-term outcomes
- Supporting players as individuals, not just athletes
- Creating environments where learning, effort, and character matter

For players, it's a chance to meet new teammates, take on new challenges, and

discover more about themselves. For families, it's an opportunity to support that growth with patience and perspective.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Questions and conversations are a healthy part of any transition, and we welcome them. What matters most is that we approach this moment with openness and trust in the process.

At Rush Union, we remain committed to guiding players through change with care, clarity, and purpose. While this summer marks the beginning of something new, it also reflects something familiar: our belief that growth happens when we are willing to step forward, even when the path looks a little different than before.

Sometimes, doing something new isn't about changing who we are. It's about continuing to grow into who we want to become.

If you have questions about the upcoming age group changes or would like to learn more about how Rush Union supports players through each stage of their development, we're always happy to connect. Whether you're seeking information, clarity, or simply want to explore one of our programs, we encourage you to reach out and start a conversation. Our goal is to provide a positive, supportive environment where players and families feel informed, welcomed, and confident in the journey ahead.

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