

From: [Cal South](#)
To: solanabeachsoccer@gmail.com
Subject: Cal South Announces Youth Heading Policy and Implementation Timeline for Small-Sided Games
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CAL SOUTH ANNOUNCES YOUTH HEADING POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE FOR SMALL-SIDED GAMES



Fullerton, California. (September 1, 2016) The Cal South Board of Directors and the Technical Staff announced today the adoption of its new Heading Policy and Implementation timeline for youth players playing in the small-side game environment. The policy prohibits players who are 10 years old and younger from heading the ball in games or in practice beginning with the **2016-17 playing season**. It establishes provisions for heading during competitions, practice and training sessions for other aged players and age group classifications and will be implemented in conjunction with recent US Soccer Federation (USSF) and US Youth Soccer (USYS) requirements and recommendations for player safety and the well-being of children who play soccer in the youngest age groups or Small-Sided Game environment. The Policy supersedes all other Policies employed by Cal South affiliates which are or may be less stringent.

The policy is effective beginning September 5, 2016 for all competitions, including League play, tournaments and State Cup competitions.

Cal South's heading policy adopts US Soccer recommendations for heading in practice and training environments for players who are 11, 12 and 13 years old. Players in these age classifications are allowed to participate in heading related activities in practice and training sessions in accordance with the Federation's recommended provisions of no more than a maximum of 30 minutes per week with no more than 15-20 headers per player per week. The enclosed chart provides a quick reference guide for how these new requirements are applicable to specific age groups:

Cal South TEAM Age Group Classification	Heading
13 year olds	1. Allowed in Games and Practice
12 year olds	1. Allowed in Games 2. Allowed in practice no more than a maximum of 30 minutes per week with no more than 15-20 headers per player per week
11 year olds	1. Not allowed in Games 2. Allowed in Practice no more than a maximum of 30 minutes per week with no more than 15-20 headers per player per week
10 year olds & younger	1. Not Allowed in Games 2. Not Allowed in Practice

There will be no attempt by Referees to identify players playing up on older teams.

The policy and recommendations are applicable to all competitive, recreational and tournament play or competitions, including friendlies. Recreational leagues and programs may extend the No Heading policy to include the 12 year old and younger age classification for league purposes at their discretion, but may not diminish or otherwise dilute the requirements associated with Cal South's policy. Cal South will coordinate with the State Referee Committee and Local Referee Associations to ensure compliance with this policy and requirements.

US Soccer recently provided additional information related to these requirements along with changes to the Laws of the Games required to facilitating implementation. These include restart modifications for deliberate heading within the penalty area. For the upcoming 2016-17 season, the restart for a deliberate header occurring within the penalty area will be an indirect free kick to be taken on the penalty area line parallel to the goal line at the

nearest point to where the infringement occurred. Referees should enforce these modifications and restrictions by age group according to the specified rules. Referees will not be assessing the age of individual players on the field.

Changes to the Laws of the Game, along with updated information associated with the Player Development Initiatives (PDI) announced earlier in the year, are also provided in the attached briefing template provided by the Federation.

**[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD US SOCCER'S
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES \(PDF FILE\)](#)**

**[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD CAL SOUTH'S
2016-17 SEASON SMALL-SIDED GAMES CHART \(PDF FILE\)](#)**

Cal South will incorporate these changes into future Coaching and Referee Education curriculum and courses and has established an email inbox for questions and/or inquiries regarding the USSF Initiatives for affiliates, members, and parents. Questions regarding the new policies or Cal South's implementation timeline may be referred to Cal South at initiatives@calsouth.com. Please allow 24-48 hours for a reply.
