



Collingwood United Soccer Club

Playing Up Policy

The goal of the Collingwood United Soccer Club (CUSC) is to field competitive teams at all age groups. It is ordinarily in the best interests of the club and the player (and all concerned) if players play at their proper age group. It is rare that a player's growth will be hindered by playing at their proper age group--or significantly helped by playing up (i.e. play for a team in an age group that is older than the player's designated age group). Conversely, allowing players to play up may potentially dilute the talent pool at the older age group, and deplete the talent pool at the younger age group. While it may help a given team to bolster its roster with an under-age player, this is often at a cost.

As a general rule, players are expected to play at their proper age group. Players may play up only with the prior approval of the Club's Playing Up Committee. In all cases, the desire to play up should be driven by the player first and the player's parents second, not by the coach of the team at the higher age group. The decision should be based upon what is in the best interests of the player and the Club. It should not be based on ego, prestige or the particular best interests of any one team. When faced with making the decision whether the player ought to play up, adult leadership must be prepared with sound rationale to support their decision.

Responsibility of the Coach

Coaches may not permit under-age players to register or play with their team without ensuring that the player has followed the procedures set forth herein.

Conversely, coaches should bring to the attention of the Club Technical Director and/or the VP of Travel any player on their team that they feel would be better served by playing at an older age-group. Under no circumstance should coaches exploit the situation by holding players back in their quest for winning team championships, nor should parents push their child in an attempt to accelerate their ascension to the top of the soccer pyramid.

Responsibilities of the Player

Each year, players desiring to play up shall submit a written request to the Club Technical Director and/or VP of Travel prior to Travel Tryouts, even if the player played up in the previous year. Decisions will be made from year to year - no player will be automatically "grandfathered." The request should include all relevant factors that the player would like considered.

If the player who has submitted a request to play up is only willing to consider a roster spot with the higher age group, the player should attend the tryout session(s) for that age group and need not attend the tryout session(s) for the player's proper age group. Otherwise, the player should attend the tryout sessions for both age groups (i.e. the player's proper age group as well as the higher age group). If for whatever reason the player is not named to the higher age group team, every effort will be made to provide opportunity with the proper age group.

Following consideration by the Playing Up Committee, the player may be directed to continue with the older age group or return to the proper age group.

Responsibility of the Playing Up Committee

After consultation with the coach(es) from each age group involved, a committee of the CUSC Board (the "Playing Up Committee") will make determinations regarding all playing-up requests based upon all relevant factors. The Playing Up Committee ordinarily shall consist of the Club President, the Technical Director and the VP of Travel. If any committee member believes that he or she should not participate in any particular playing-up request because of a personal interest in the outcome of any playing up request, he or she may recuse himself or herself from participating in that particular decision, and the CUSC Board may alter or add to the composition of the Playing Up Committee as needed.

In making decisions regarding each playing-up request, the Playing Up Committee shall take into consideration the following:

1. When it is appropriate for soccer development, the opportunity for the exceptional player to play with older players may be approved. Occasionally, a player may have such extraordinary ability that the best thing for that player is to play in a higher age group. In these cases, permission may be granted if it is determined that allowing the player to play up is necessary and/or appropriate to:
 - a. expose the player to levels of competition commensurate with their skills; and
 - b. provide the player with a challenging environment necessary to inspire the player to higher levels of play and thus maintain their interest and passion for the game.
2. If a player's correct age group is unable to provide the player with the training, coaching and/or competition that he or she needs, strong consideration will be given to allowing the player to play at the next higher age group.
3. If a player's correct age group does not have sufficient registered players to field a team.
4. If a player played up last year, strong consideration will be given to allowing the player to stay with that age group.
5. Ontario Soccer Guidelines for Playing UP.
 - a. U7 and U8 players wishing to play with an older age group must complete the U7 and U8 Player Evaluation with the Club
 - b. U9, U10 and U11 players wishing to play with an older age group must complete the U9 – U11 Player Evaluation with the Club

- c. U12 players wishing to play with the U13 team must complete the U12 Player Evaluation with the Club
- d. Grassroots players (U7 to U12) are prohibited from being evaluated to play more than 1 year older
- e. U13 and older players may be registered to play on a team in an older age division, commensurate with their skills and abilities (i.e. they may be permitted to play more than 1 year older)

In addition, the Playing Up Committee may from time to time deem it necessary or appropriate to place player(s) in a higher age group in the best interest of the Club (for example, if the ability to form a team depends on relocating some players from one age group to another or a player on a waiting list can fill a vacancy on a higher age group team). Ordinarily, however, no player will be required by the Club to play at a higher age group. In such cases, the decision will be reviewed from year to year with no presumption that the player is "grandfathered."