



MISSOULA STRIKERS
MONTANA, USA



United States Soccer Federation Birth Year Mandate

There were two key initiatives developed by USSF in Aug 2015 and the entire country will adopt this mandate in Aug 2017. These two initiatives are:

1. The standardizing of small-sided game participation and field size based on player age groups.
2. Aligning birth-year registration calendars with the start of the calendar year which will run from January to December as opposed to the Aug 1st school year cutoff.

These initiatives are focused on advancing the development of our youth soccer players.

SMALL-SIDED STANDARDS - This is something Missoula Strikers already has in place.

The small-sided standards are focused at players from the U-6 to U-12 age groups. The field size is based on age groups, providing a more age appropriate environment that will allow players with a better opportunity to develop heightened soccer intelligence and on-the-ball skills.

The field dimensions and number of players on the pitch will increase in size from 4v4 to 7v7 to 9v9 as players age, up until they reach the U-13 age group and begin to play full 11v11 matches.

“In general we would like for players to be able to process information faster, and when they are in this environment they are going to learn to do that over a number of years,” Ramos said. “When you have young players in an 11v11 game there are only so many involved in any one play at a time. By taking numbers away and playing 4v4, 7v7, and 9v9, you are multiplying their chances on the ball, increasing their touches and making it overall more for them by making them an active participant at all times. Fast forward 10 years and there are thousands of game situations added to a player’s development.” - Tab Ramos, US Youth Technical Director.



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BIRTH-YEAR REGISTRATION - New to Missoula Strikers.

Birth-year registration calendars will now align with the start of the calendar year and run from January to December, rather than August to July as it had previously.

The initiative will align registration with the international standard, while simultaneously providing clearer information on player birth dates to combat 'relative age effect'.

Relative age effect refers to the selection bias related to players that are more physically mature than their peers due to being born earlier in the year. U.S. Soccer seeks a balance of players that are born throughout the year so that all players, those born in the earlier months, and those born later have equal opportunity to grow and develop as soccer players.

"It makes the process easier," Ramos said of the birth-year registration initiative. "Over the years you go through coaching youth soccer and you are constantly finding parents and players confused about what age group players belong in. The current August 1 cutoff meant that two players born in the same year could be in different age groups. To make it more confusing, different school systems have different cutoff months for going into the new grades. It was just very difficult for parents to take it all in. This new calendar year system makes soccer easier. If you're born in a certain year you belong in that certain age group. Simple. It also puts our players on the same age-playing calendar as the rest of the world so they will be used to competing in the right age group. That makes it much easier for us to scout for the National Teams and find players ready to compete internationally." - Tab Ramos, US Youth Technical Director.

Who does this effect in our club?

This will partly affect players in our academy program but mostly players on our competitive teams. Many of our teams will see a divide in their current group. For example: Players playing on our U13 boys team in the spring were made up of players born in 2004, 2003 and 2002. The majority of this team are 03' born players and this will now be their rightful age group. Those players that are 02' will be moved to play U15 and those that are 04' will have to be identified as having a developmental need to play up an age group.



Example:

Spring 2016, U13 Premier Boys:

Marcus	Anderson	5/00/2003
Beckett	Arthur	1/00/2003
Hunter	Chatriand	1/00/2003
Tyler	Delridge	4/00/2003
Camdin	Dirnberger	4/00/2003
Reggie	Duce	6/00/2003
Jeffrey	Jacobs	10/00/2002
Wyatt	Keyes	9/00/2003
Jaiden	Klemundt	3/00/2003
Tait	Kuchenbrod	2/00/2003
Brendan	Oberg	11/00/2002
Clayton	Ogilvie	6/00/2003
Maddox	Reimer	2/00/2004
Jonah	Teasdale	12/00/2002
Lars	Thorne-Thomsen	2/00/2004

Spring 2017, U14 Premier Boys:

Marcus	Anderson	5/00/2003
Beckett	Arthur	1/00/2003
Hunter	Chatriand	1/00/2003
Tyler	Delridge	4/00/2003
Camdin	Dirnberger	4/00/2003
Reggie	Duce	6/00/2003
Wyatt	Keyes	9/00/2003
Jaiden	Klemundt	3/00/2003
Tait	Kuchenbrod	2/00/2003
Clayton	Ogilvie	6/00/2003

This team will now have to add players from the teams below and above that were born in 2003. Any older players will not be approved to play down and any younger players must be identified as having a developmental need to play up.



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How will this affect our high school seniors?

The club is likely going to field teams at the U19 level which will still allow for our high school seniors to register and have a place to play.

Will some players skip a whole age group?

Yes, some players will skip a whole age group. For example, there are some academy players that will now miss their U12 season and instead be placed in a U13 age group. Several players in our club and other clubs across the state and the nation are in the same boat.

When will Missoula Strikers implement this initiative?

The mandate is not set to be enforced by USSF until August 2017 but Missoula Strikers will be moving to this format come tryouts at the end of the fall season. Missoula Strikers held open field sessions throughout the summer in order to allow our players to become accustomed to the upcoming change. We have also encouraged players to participate in practices as much as possible with their rightful age group.

How will the club handle this transition come tryouts?

Not unlike any other year the club will evaluate our coaching pool and figure out where best to place our staff. We try to have our coaches for each age group confirmed before tryouts, allowing those coaches the opportunity to select their own teams. All players will be grouped in their birth year pool. Any players wishing to play up will have to be identified by the coaching staff as having a need to do so. Any players moving up must be approved by the club director after a discussion has been had between the staff of both age groups in question.

In closing, the new birth year mandate is a hot topic for clubs across the country. We see this as a great opportunity for us to streamline our age groups and continue to offer our players an environment in which they can face challenges and thrive. Player development is our number one focus and as a club and coaching staff we will continue forward with a growth mindset.

Thank you for choosing Missoula Strikers!