



## New Jersey Youth Soccer US Soccer's Player Development Initiative Implementation

This past September 2015, the US Youth Soccer Board of Directors approved US Soccer's Player Development Initiatives, which were made public in late August 2015. US Youth Soccer reaffirmed this registration mandate in an announcement to State Association Presidents on January 26, 2016.

To coincide with these developments, in the fall 2015 NJ Youth Soccer (NJYS) formed a Technical Committee to review the new guidelines and make specific recommendation for board approval along with an implementation plan. Through a phased approval process, the NJYS Board and, subsequently, NJYS Member League Presidents have adopted the US Soccer's Player Development Initiatives. During the approval process slight revisions and guidelines were made to aid member clubs through the transition that will impact over 100,000 NJ Youth Soccer registered players. Below is a brief table of the NJYS timeline of events in connection with the US Player Development Initiatives and the anticipated implementation.

### NJSYA Timeline (subject to change as new information is made available)

- ✓ **October 2015** – Phase I released and voted on (October 23, 2015)
- ✓ **November 2015** – Phase II released and voted on (November 20, 2015)
- ✓ **December 2015** – Core requirements of Phase I and II refined
- ✓ **January 2016** – Implementation plan released (along with initial FAQ's)
- February 2016** – Revisions to NJYS handbooks/bylaws
- March 2016** – Full implementation plan released
- April 2016** – Clubs run tryouts that align with new policies
- May 2016** – Leagues' Implementation plans reviewed
- June 2016** – Final policies come to vote at the Annual AGM

NJYS review and approval of the US Soccer's Player Development Initiatives can be described as Phase 1 and Phase 2 changes. Phase 1 primarily addressed the **moving to a calendar year registration for the 2016-2017 season** (aka birth year standard), changes in field sizes, goal sizes, and the number of players on the field. Phase 2 dealt with playing rules, such as roster sizes, transfers, playing up, majority rule, and goalie punts.

**These new policies go into effect beginning with player registrations beginning on August 1, 2016** and for the new (due to the inconsistency of field sizes throughout the state) seasonal year of September 1, 2016 through July 30, 2017. None of these changes will go into effect prior to August 1, 2016. However, we highly recommend that clubs begin to plan now.

Spring tryout dates and team selections will require attention. Educating players and their families will be necessary. Leagues and tournaments should begin to prepare for the adjustments. An important note is that **these policies will be firmly applied to travel soccer for the 2016-2017 season**. *There may be some league variances and your leagues will communicate those to you.*

For intramural and recreational leagues, we will continue to work with those groups to find solutions that progress towards the US Soccer standards. We believe that variances may be applied in certain instances to meet local needs while continuing to maximize developing players and growing the game.

Throughout this process, NJYS maintained multiple overarching goals in each phase of the implementation plan:

- Full support, notification, and high level implementation plan for the US Player Development Initiatives
- Timely decisions on the core tenets of the plan
- Provide guidance to member leagues on adoption and implementation progress
- Expand upon the US Soccer foundation provided
- Consideration of competition level modifications of the Laws of the Game
- Guidelines that allow players to stay with their current team
- Develop enhancements to NJYS policies to assist administration and implementation

The NJYS Board, Technical Committee, and Member Leagues have been working collaboratively to ensure that these changes mandated by US Soccer are implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible. This ongoing collaboration provides continuous feedback as we move through the NJYS event timeline mentioned above and future communications. To assist our clubs to understand, prepare for and communicate the pending changes, we have laid out a series of FAQs to assist clubs in the understanding of the changes forthcoming and help them prepare. Keep in mind this is a working document that will be updated as new information is released from US Soccer and as incrementally needed for clarification. Following the FAQs is a summary of NJYS age specific policies for the 2016-2017 season.

If you have questions regarding NJYS implementation or recommendations on the use of the FAQ information provided please email;

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- Rick Meana, NJYS Director of Coaching Education at [coach@njyouthsoccer.com](mailto:coach@njyouthsoccer.com)



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about the US Soccer Player Initiatives & NJYS Decisions

### ***When will the changes take effect?***

NJYS policies to implement US Soccer's Player Development Initiatives will **take effect on August 1, 2016** for the 2016-2017 seasonal year. Fundamentally, these policies are meant to focus on a player's long-term development.

### ***What is the birth-year standard?***

Beginning August 1, 2016, NJYS sanctioned travel competitions will be based on age group cut-offs of January 1 – December 31 for each age group (aka birth-year standard). These changes will take effect for the 2016-2017 seasonal year. In short, all players born the same calendar year will play together, unless playing up.

### ***What are the birth-year "labels" for competition?***

Due to additional interpretive changes by US Soccer since the announcement in how completion age groups are labeled, US Youth Soccer and NJYS are now clarifying the age group structures for the 2016-2017 season. Beginning August 1, 2016, NJYS will use US Youth Soccer's birth-year "labels" for competition, based upon the season in which competition ends. For example:

Age Group	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
Season														
2016-17	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998

- Players born from August 1, 1997 – December 31, 1998 will be labeled as Under-19/20s.
- Players born from January 1, 1999 – December 31, 1999 will be labeled as Under-18s.
- Players born from January 1, 2000 – December 31, 2000 will be labeled as Under-17s.
- Players born from January 1, 2001 – December 31, 2001 will be labeled as Under-16s.
- Players born from January 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002 will be labeled as Under-15s.
- Players born from January 1, 2003 – December 31, 2003 will be labeled as Under-14s.
- Players born from January 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004 will be labeled as Under-13s.
- With the exception of the US Youth Soccer Under-19/20s the age group "label" will be determined by subtracting the year in which the players participating in the competition were born from the year in which competition ends. Example: Player born in 2002 (Season ends Spring 2017 – birth year 2002 = Under 15)

The change to birth year age groups and to the "labels" for naming each age group has been made by U.S. Soccer. You may [view the U.S. Soccer matrix here](#), please note the definition for US Youth Soccer Under-19/20s competitions above.

Click [here](#) for US Soccer's FAQs on the Player Development Initiatives

Click [here](#) for the US Soccer chart for specific details and standards.

***Will existing teams be "grandfathered" in?***

No. All travel teams registered with NJYS, regardless of how long they have existed, must comply with the new guidelines. We understand this means several clubs may choose to have teams with a new makeup and keeping teams together is one of the chief concerns of players and coaches. Accordingly, players and teams will still have the option of playing up to the age of the oldest player on the roster.

***Will existing players be permitted to "play up"?***

Yes. Players will be permitted to "play up" in accordance with the following NJYS table:

- U6 Team – U5 Not permitted on a U6 team
- U7 Team – U6 Player(s) permitted on a U7 team
- U8 Team – U7 Player(s) permitted on a U8 team
- U9 Team – U8 Player(s) permitted on a U9 team
- U10 Team – U8 & U9 Player(s) permitted on a U10 team
- U11 Team – U9 & U10 Player(s) permitted on a U11 team
- U12 Team – U10 & U11 Player(s) permitted on a U12 team
- U13 Team – U11 & U12 Player(s) permitted on a U13 team

Players may not play up on a higher age team other than as specified above.

*\*Be advised that many clubs may be more restrictive with local policies for "playing up" that are not governed by NJYS or Member Leagues.*

***Will there be a "majority rule"?***

No. NJYA will not have a majority rule at any team age groups. Old majority rule policies will not continue past the spring 2016 season. Be advised that U6 is the first year of travel soccer and U5 players are not permitted to be rostered.

*\*NJYS Member Leagues may adopt league specific policies that require the number of players on a roster to include a majority of age appropriate players vs. those "playing up" (i.e., greater than 50% of the players are age appropriate).*

**What does this mean for the 2015-16 New Jersey Youth Soccer State Cups (National Championship Series and Presidents Cup)?**

All cup competitions will abide by the current rules as it pertains to registration. US Youth Soccer will move to the birth-year registration standard starting with the 2016-17 Cup Season.

**How does this affect August 2016 tournaments?**

August tournaments will remain the same, meaning new 2016-2017 season rosters and passes will be accepted for "pre-season" tournaments beginning August 1, 2016.

***Do Intramural and Recreational Leagues and programs need to comply with the US Soccer initiatives?***

Yes, as all of our member organizations are affiliated with US Soccer. Our goal is for everyone to eventually reach the standards set forth in the US Soccer's Player Development Initiatives. However the fall 2016 implementation mandate is limited to member travel leagues and NJYS sanctioned competitions. Our intent is to allow for variances as needed in the best interests of the game and the children in those programs for the 2016-2017 season. The NJYS Board will reconvene in spring 2016 to determine implementation on a broader level to include a similar phased in approach for full adoption regarding the 2017-2018 season year.

**What is the number of players on the field at each level?**

NJYS will fully implement the US Soccer Standards Chart at the League and State Cups level starting with Fall 2016 registrations with modification for U8.

U6-U7	4v4	4 with no goalie
U8	4v4 (7v7*)	4 with no goalie
U9-U10	7v7	6 with a player identified as a goalie
U11-U12	9v9	8 with a player identified as a goalie
U13-U14	11v11	10 with a player identified as a goalie

\*one year moratorium to permit leagues to allow U8 to play 7v7 or 4v4 for the 2016-2017 season year

**How will the changes affect roster sizes on game day?**

This is one of the specifics that we, along with US Youth Soccer, are still working out. Given the changes to age 12 and under play, we can expect roster limits to change as well. To assist with pre-planning, NJYS has approved the following roster sizes:

- 4v4 – 14\* players
- 7v7 – 14 players
- 9v9 – 16 players
- 11v11 – 18 players

*Clubs and teams remain responsible for verifying National and State Cup policies when developing their roster for the seasonal year (i.e. fall through spring)*

*\*This figure allows players to train in an academy environment to reduce the temptation for designation of team “A” and “B” players. NJYS Member Leagues are encouraged to permit teams to split into two for match play.*

**How will the changes affect roster sizes in GotSoccer (NJYS team roster system)?**

NJYS has approved the following roster sizes within the GotSoccer registration system:

- 4v4 – 14\* players
- 7v7 – 14 players
- 9v9 – 18 players
- 11v11 – 22 players

*Clubs and teams remain responsible for verifying National and State Cup policies when developing their roster for the seasonal year (i.e. fall through spring)*

*\*This figure allows players to train in an academy environment to reduce the temptation for designation of team “A” and “B” players. NJYS Member Leagues are encouraged to permit teams to split into two for match play*

**What is the maximum number of roster spots permitted to be used during a season?**

- 4v4 – 20 players
- 7v7 – 20 players
- 9v9 – 24 players
- 11v11 – 28 players

***What is the maximum number of players permitted to transfer into a roster from outside of a club?***

- 4v4 – 3 players
- 7v7 – 5 players
- 9v9 – 5 players
- 11v11 – 5 players

***What is the maximum number of players permitted to transfer into a roster from inside of a club?***

NJYS permits unlimited\* movement of players within the club subject to the roster maximum policy. This new policy permits clubs to recalibrate rosters permitting individual players to move “one-time” from one team to another within that same club.

\*Not restrictive to the 3 or 5 maximum transfers, this allows for intraclub movement of players during a season year (permitting movement of players within the club)

***Will there be a transfer penalty for moving between clubs?***

NJYS recommends that all Member Leagues continue to require a 3-game\* sit to be administered by the NJYS Member League into which the player transfers.

\*The local NJYS Member Leagues may develop policies to waive the penalty for transfers and/or increase the number of games the player sits in a seasonal year.

***Will secondary carding be permitted?***

Yes, NJYS will continue to permit secondary carding at the 9v9 and 11v11 ages and administration of secondary cards by the NJYS Member Leagues.

\*Not permitted at 4v4 and 7v7 levels.

***Build out lines?***

NJYS has approved the US Soccer Player Development Initiative as outlined for **no goalie punting** and use of buildout lines at the 7v7 level (i.e., U9 and U10)

***Will goalie punting be permitted at the 9v9 level?***

Recommendation from the NJYS Technical Committee\* is that goalie punting is permitted at the 9v9 level, but not into the opposing team’s penalty area (due to the inconsistency of field sizes throughout the state).

\*Goalie Punting at 9v9 has been tabled for a later discussion by the NJYS Board. There is a strong commitment to implement by fall 2017 the entire US Soccer Player Development Initiative as mandated. NJYS will pick up discussion of this topic during the spring 2016 meetings and will advise member leagues at a later date.

***Use of goalkeepers?***

NJYS has fully adopted the US Soccer Standards Charts at the League and State Cups level starting with fall 2016 competitions.

Click [here](#) for US Soccer’s FAQs on the Player Development Initiatives

Click [here](#) for the US Soccer chart for specific details and standards.

***What are the field sizes?***

NJYS is considering the US Soccer Standards chart(s) as guidelines with anticipated rerelease of standards charts for which NJYS can make modifications. Clubs are advised to make their best effort to adapt to the standards when planning fields and when purchasing equipment. See the US Soccer .pdf for details on field size layouts and when in doubt consider the dimensions for 4v4, 7v7, and 9v9 as maximum dimensions.

***What are the goal sizes?***

NJYS is considering the US Soccer standards chart as guidelines with anticipated rerelease of standards chart for which NJSYA can make modifications. Current considerations at the NJYS level are to maintain 3 goal sizes across all age groups:

4v4	4x6
7v7	6x18 (7x21*)
9v9	6x18 (7x21*)
11v11	8x24

*\*7v7 and 9v9 guideline will be 6x18 with permission for 7x21 goals on a club by club basis with flexibility provided by the NJYS affiliated league or competition committee*

**Do our facilities need to change their goal and field sizes immediately on September 1, 2016?**

No, but organizations and leagues should make an effort to adapt to the standards when purchasing new goals or designing new fields.

***Playing Time?***

NJYS has considered the US Soccer Standards chart as guidelines starting with fall 2016 competitions with flexibility for member NJYS Leagues to make recommendations with guidance of the NJYS Technical Committee.

***What size ball will be used?***

NJYS has fully adopted the US Soccer Standards chart at the League and State Cups level starting with the fall 2016 season.

***Will offside be called at the small sided level (U6 through U12)?***

NJYS has fully adopted the US Soccer Standards chart at the League and State Cup level starting with the fall 2016 season, a one year moratorium has been granted to permit league level modifications to the “Laws of the Game” (LOTG) for the 2016-2017 season.

Click [here](#) for US Soccer’s FAQs on the Player Development Initiatives  
Click [here](#) for the US Soccer chart for specific details and standards.

**Table 1 Summary of NJYS age specific policies for the 2016-2017 Season<sup>1</sup>**

Team Age Birth Year	U6 Team 2011	U7 Team 2010	U8 Team 2009	U9 Team 2008	U10 Team 2007	U11 Team 2006	U12 Team 2005	U13 Team 2004
<b>Birth Year</b>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> through December 31 <sup>st</sup> at all levels U6 through U19							
<b>Division</b>	Div. 6	Div. 6	Div. 6	Div. 5	Div. 5	Div. 4	Div. 3	Div. 3
<b>Players playing up<sup>2</sup></b>	Not permitted	U6 players permitted on a U7 Team	U7 players permitted on a U8 Team	U8 players permitted on a U9 Team	U8-U9 players permitted on a U10 Team	U9-U10 players permitted on a U11 Team	U10-U11 players permitted on a U12 Team	U11-U12 players permitted on a U13 Team
<b>Majority rule</b>	NA	NJYS Member League policies may dictate if the number of players on a roster have to have a majority of age appropriate players vs. those “playing up” (i.e. greater than 50% of the players are age appropriate)						
<b>Field Players</b>	4	4	4	7	7	9	9	11
<b>Game Day Roster (Member League)</b>	14	14	14	14	14	16	16	18
<b>Team Roster Size (in GotSoccer<sup>3</sup>)</b>	14 <sup>4</sup>	14	14	14	14	18	18	22
<b>Maximum Roster spots in a seasonal year</b>	20	20	20	20	20	24	24	28
<b>Transfers within a club</b>	Unlimited number of player transferring 1-time within a club							
<b>Transfers into a roster from outside of a club</b>	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5
<b>Penalty for transfers<sup>5</sup></b>	3-game sit to continue to be administered at the level of the local NJYS Member League the player transfers into							
<b>Secondary Carding<sup>6</sup></b>	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Buildout lines</b>	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	NA

<sup>1</sup> Not inclusive of recreation competition and leagues as of 11/20/15. Policies for US Youth Soccer Recreation leagues will come at a later date.

<sup>2</sup> NJYS Policy. NJYS League and Club can develop restrictions for playing up with guidance from the NJYS Technical Committee

<sup>3</sup> Clubs and teams remain responsible for verifying State Cups policies when developing their roster for the season year

<sup>4</sup> This figure allows players to train in an academy environment to reduce temptation for designation of team “A” and “B” players. NJYS Member leagues are encouraged to permit teams to split into two in match play

<sup>5</sup> The NJYS Member League may develop policies to waive the penalty for transfers and/or increase the number of games the play sits in a season year

<sup>6</sup> Permitted by NJYS Member Leagues at the U11+ Team ages