

US Youth Soccer, US Club Soccer. and AYSO Returning to Seasonal-Year Age Group Formation in 2026

FRISCO, Texas (March 5, 2025) – US Youth Soccer (USYS), US Club Soccer, and American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), today announced that they have agreed to adopt the seasonal year age group formation cycle for its players starting with each’s 2026-27 season. USYS Board Chair Tina Rincon, U.S. Club Soccer CEO Mike Cullina, and AYSO National President Doug Ryan made the announcement.

The cycle, which will run from September 1 to August 31, represents the opportunity for more players in the each’s system to play club-based soccer with their classmates.

Rincon, Cullina, and Ryan offer the following statement:

“The three organizations coming together to put our nation’s youth soccer players first is a positive move. Soccer, regardless of the level of competition, is meant to be fun – and it is more fun when players can play with their friends and classmates. This decision is the right move for the millions playing in each of our respective systems and we are thrilled to establish this standard and find common ground.”

The decision stems from a U.S. Soccer Federation [policy](#) put in place late in 2024 empowering member organizations to be the decision-maker on the registration choices for leagues and competitions that they sanction and/or run.

Rincon, who also serves as the US Soccer Youth Council Chair, detailed the following on behalf of the council:

“We are excited that the three largest member organizations have aligned to make a decision that will bring the youth soccer landscape together, rather than further fracturing it. We received input from a variety of sources that helped us reach this decision and meet our goal of increasing participation in our sport. We look forward to continuing to work with other member organizations to make the best choices for youth soccer players and continue collaborating with clubs and leagues to ensure a smooth transition next year.”

The three organizations’ registration parameters will not change for next season (2025-26) and will affect rostering beginning in August 2026.

Aligning with the school-year calendar is a return to a policy in place prior to a 2016 U.S. Soccer decision to move to birth-year registration (January 1 – December 31). The change was made in effort to align with international soccer standards.

Youth players born before September 1 will have the opportunity to play up with older age groups in accordance with their club’s governance.

U.S. Soccer performed an assessment of available data (e.g., 2020 U.S. Census & National Center for Education Statistics) and qualitative feedback and determined that September 1 represents most school districts’ calendars (~68%) across the country.

About US Youth Soccer

[US Youth Soccer](#), the largest youth sport organization in the country, is on a mission to provide world-class support, resources, and leadership, helping every member fulfill their goals on and off the field of play. US Youth Soccer registers 2.68 million players annually. Through its programming, resources and leadership, US Youth Soccer is advancing the game for its 54 Member State Associations, 10,000 clubs and leagues and one million administrators, coaches, and volunteers. US Youth Soccer connects families and communities to the power of sports and its shared love of soccer. US Youth Soccer provides a path for every player, coach and referee offering programs that provide a fun, safe and healthy environment at every level of the game.

About US Club Soccer

A National Association member of the U.S. Soccer Federation, **US Club Soccer** fosters the growth and development of soccer clubs in order to create the best possible development environment for players of all ages.

Anchored by **Players First** and its pillars of Club Development, Coaching Development, Player Development, Referee Development, Parent Engagement & Education and Player Health & Safety, US Club Soccer offers registration, league- and cup-based competition platforms, player identification and a variety of other programming, resources and services.

US Club Soccer is sponsored by Nike, DICK'S Sporting Goods and Gatorade.

About AYSO

American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) is a national nonprofit organization committed to delivering quality youth soccer programs in a fun, family-friendly environment. AYSO is rooted in Six Philosophies: Everyone Plays®, Balanced Teams, Open Registration, Positive Coaching, Good Sportsmanship, and Player Development. Now celebrating its 60th year since inception in 1964, AYSO programs span over 640 communities across the United States.

As a member organization of the U.S. Soccer Federation, all AYSO programs, including AYSO PLAY!, conform to U.S. Soccer standards for safety and player development curricula. Learn more about AYSO at www.ayso.org.