



### **Why is Birth Year Registration Taking Effect at All Levels of Play and All Ages?**

The way in which we register players and assign them to age groups currently is inconsistent with international standards and, in some cases, across leagues within the USA. The USSF birth year mandate provides a consistent approach across the country.

### **Will All Rio Rapids SC Rosters be Transitioning to Birth Year Registration?**

Teams currently nearing high school graduation will generally see few, if any, changes on rosters. When a team has only a short time left before graduation, the benefits of significantly reforming a team that has played together for multiple seasons do not outweigh the benefits of finishing out high school in the current format.

For Premier Track teams younger than high school age that compete in leagues and competitions at a regional and national level, birth year rosters will be implemented. As has always been the case, if the coaching staff feels a player would benefit developmentally from playing in the age above their birth year; that player will be given the opportunity to play up.

We anticipate more flexibility with the transition to birth year registration for all Academy Track, Club Track, and Team Track teams. We believe each current team should be viewed on a case-by-case basis. Head coaches and Directors of Coaching are in the process of reviewing the profile of current rosters along with the developmental and competitive needs of every team. Each team in the club is unique and will be treated as such. *When it becomes clear what direction a team will take moving forward, head coaches and age group directors will meet with each team's parent group to discuss the best possible path.*

Rio Rapids SC Youth Academy (U5 through U8) will be implementing birth year registration top to bottom. Players in the youngest age groups will be playing in the birth year model beginning in the Fall of 2016. Forming age groups based on birth year for the youngest players in the club will allow age groups and teams to remain stable as they move forward.

### **What Steps is Rio Rapids SC Taking to Support the Transition to Birth Year?**

Below is a general timeline/structure for the process:

1. In December and January, head coaches look at how their roster breaks down based on birth year. In consultation with age group directors, the coaches will decide what is the best way forward for their team.
2. In February/March, each team's parent group will meet with head coach (and age group director when possible) to discuss what is best for the team and its individual players.
3. March/April—as needed, periodic birth year training sessions will be scheduled for spring season 2016.
4. April/May—player/parent/coach conversations prior to tryouts for 2016-17 season to discuss individual player development plans and what to expect.
5. Throughout the spring season, on-going coach conversations and meetings to ensure staff awareness of player birth years in roster selection process.

### **What does this mean for 2016/2017? Shouldn't We Wait till US Soccer Mandates Birth Year in 2017/18?**

USYSA, US Club Soccer, and New Mexico Youth Soccer have announced that all national and regional competitions (New Mexico State Cup, Desert Premier League, Far West Regionals, etc.) will register by birth year for 2016/2017. In order that teams compete in their traditional competition venues, we will be required to register by birth year.

### **What if my son/daughter's team's staying together? And I don't want my child "playing up" because they are now 18 months younger than the oldest player in the new age group?**

Placing each child in the best environment to maximize their development is our top priority. Below is the process for communication when you are looking for explore the best options available for your son or daughter:

1. Family discussion about what you think is best for your child
2. Communicate with head coach of your team regarding your ideas
  - a. If needed, communicate with age group director for further advice
3. Once a decision is made, work with coach/director to participate with players in same age group, and in front of possible coaches for the following year
  - a. Some birth year age groups will be conducting age group play days—make sure to attend
  - b. Once the coach of next year's teams is known, alert him/her about your child's interest for the following year
4. When you have questions throughout the process, do not hesitate to ask your head coach and/or age group director
5. All current players and families should know what possibilities exist prior to tryouts

### **What Happens When my Child's Club Team has 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Graders on the Roster? What will the 8<sup>th</sup> Graders do while their Teammates Compete in High School Soccer?**

New Mexico Youth Soccer and the Duke City Soccer League are now tasked with providing tools and flexibility so that soccer clubs can answer this question appropriately. We anticipate NMYSA and DCSL will take necessary steps to address these concerns. As soon as these solutions are presented, we will work quickly to provide a complete experience for all players in the U15 age group.

### **What Happens when my Child's Team has some Players of College Age & some of High School Age?**

Our oldest teams' rosters will basically stay intact in the academic year format. This question won't become relevant in the near future. By the time this question becomes a reality, we will have had time to develop a plan.

### **How will Changes on Team Rosters Affect Rankings & League Placement within New Mexico and the Duke City Soccer League?**

New Mexico Youth Soccer Association and the Duke City Soccer League leadership will determine the best bracketing of teams to provide appropriate competition for teams and players.

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