



US Soccer Mandates: Impacts on the HFC Girls' Classic Program



The following document will address the impact of the recent mandates put forth by the US Soccer Federation (USSF) as they relate to the Highland Football Club (HFC) Girls' Classic Program. These mandates will begin a period of transition for every club within the country. North Carolina Youth Soccer Association (NCYSA) has determined that these mandates will be implemented beginning in the Fall season of 2016 thus the tryouts process in late May/early June will be impacted and be the starting point for these changes.

I. Small Side Games Mandate (SSG)

The SSG mandate will have minimal impact on the current structure as we are already playing in a SSG format in the U11 & U12 age groups. Starting in the 2016 OR 2017 season, the U11 & U12 age groups will move from playing in the 8v8 format to playing in the 9v9 format. The U13 and above age groups will continue playing in the 11v11 format.

New SSG Mandate

Age Group	Old Playing Format	New Playing Format
U11 – U12	8 vs 8	9 vs 9
U13 – U19	11 vs 11	11 vs 11

II. Birth Year Mandate

The USSF Birth Year Mandate now requires that clubs form teams based on the year players are born (January 1 – December 31). This is different than the current method used to create teams which closely follows each players grade year in school (August 1 – July 31).

We will comply with the Birth Year Mandate put forth by the USSF; however, in the girl's classic program we will use a flexible model that we feel allows us to best serve each player's individual development within the team framework. The basic setup with our flexible model will give us the ability to consider players from two different age groups.

Please see the chart below which lays out how teams will be selected:

HFC Girls' Classic Team Selection chart

Age Group	Birth Year	Note
U18/U19	1998, 1999, 2000	Players from all three birth years will be considered for this age group
U17	2000 and 2001	Players from both birth years will be considered for this age group
U16	2001 and 2002	Players from both birth years will be considered for this age group
U15	2002 and 2003	Players from both birth years will be considered for this age group
U14	2003 and 2004	Players from both birth years will be considered for this age group
U13	2004 and 2005	Players from both birth years will be considered for this age group
U12	2005 and 2006	Players from both birth years will be considered for this age group
U11	2006 and 2007	Players from both birth years will be considered for this age group

***All player selections will be determined by HFC staff based on what's best for the player and the age groups.**

Note:

- '00s can be placed into either the U18/U19 age group or U17 age group
- '01s can be placed into either the U16 or U17 age group
- '02s can be placed into either the U15 or U16 age group
- '03s can be placed into either the U14 or U15 age group
- '04s can be placed into either the U13 or U14 age group
- '05s can be placed into either the U12 or U13 age group
- '06s can be placed into either the U11 or U12 age group

Tryout Procedure - Tryouts will take place in late May/early June. Specific dates will be announced very soon.

**No player may ever play down an age group. Players may play up for player development or team formation reasons at the discretion of the Directors of Coaching.*

Each age group will have 3-4 days of tryouts. Each day of tryouts will include players within their true birth year plus one other age group. See the example below:

Example: Mary is born in 2004. This means that under the new USSF age group mandates, Mary's true age group for the upcoming season would be U13. For the first two days of tryouts she will tryout with the U13 age group; her true age group, and this tryout will contain all 2004s and 2005s. For the last 2 days of tryouts she will tryout with the U14 age group and this tryout will contain all 2004s and 2003s.

III. FAQs

Why were these mandates put in place?

These mandates were put forth by the USSF in an attempt to get the country on the same page. You can read more about US Soccer's explanation here:

<http://www.ussoccer.com/stories/2015/08/24/18/07/150824-coaching-player-development-initiatives-rel>

Why have we chosen to use a flexible birth year model in the girls' Classic Program?

After considering all variables we feel that this approach gives us the best chance to ensure quality player development within the team framework while also ensuring a quality soccer experience for everyone. Instead of a player being locked into one age group it allows us to place players based on overall ability level.

Will my daughters team stay together?

Each year at tryouts, teams change and evolve. This year will be no different. All of the tryouts are open tryouts. Because we are going with a flexible model, this creates more opportunities for change and allows us to place players properly based on how they are developing from year to year. In year 1, it is expected that teams will be changing and this theme will continue as player development is the priority.

My daughter seems to be moving up two age groups with this new mandate (i.e. going from U11 to U13). Does this mean she's losing a year of soccer?

No, players will not lose a year of soccer. In the past it has been U11-18, but now it will be U11-U19. In fact, some players are actually gaining a year of classic soccer.

What happens to my daughter's team during the spring season when high school soccer starts if her team consists of both 8th graders AND 9th graders?

With these changes there will likely be players in different grades playing together. This will have the biggest impact during 8th/9th grade age groups. HFC has been in contact with NCYSA to determine how they will handle this issue. NCYSA is still sorting out specifics for how this will be handled but we are prepared with a solution depending on how NCYSA plans on setting up the spring season for this age group.

What are the impacts on the U19 age group?

As a result of the birth year mandate, more 12th graders will now be considered U19 players. Therefore, NCYSA has formed a U19 age division to ensure the needs of these players will be met. Thus, the impact on our newly defined U19 players will be minimal, and we will provide these players every opportunity that we provide younger age groups both in terms of training and competition.

How will promotion/relegation slots be determined?

NCYSA has mandated that all divisional slots earned at the conclusion of the 2016 spring season will remain with the named year of that team. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Example: The current '01 HFC Red G team competes in the Premier Division (this team currently has players born in 2001 and 2002). The divisional status earned at the conclusion of the 2016 Spring season will remain with the 2001 age group, not the 2002 age group.

What can we do to help?

We understand that change is difficult. Remain positive with your daughter and trust that we will continue to evaluate and ensure that we are doing everything we can to provide the best soccer experience for your child.

IV. Conclusion

As mentioned previously, this will be a period of transition for every club within the country. Please know that a great deal of thought and consideration has been put into how to best handle this transition for the players within our club. We want to make sure that we do everything possible to make sure that the development of the players remains the priority. Please also note that there will be a constant evaluation of the process to ensure we continue to do what is best for the players in terms of their development.

We hope that this document has answered many of the questions that you may have had concerning the mandates. If you have any questions or concerns then please do not hesitate to contact your DOCs.

Sincerely,

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Additional Resources regarding these mandates:

U.S. Soccer Federation Official Statement:

<http://www.ussoccer.com/stories/2015/08/24/18/07/150824-coaching-player-development-initiatives-rel>

US Youth Soccer Statement:

http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/us_youth_soccer_statement_on_us_soccer%E2%80%99s_birth-year_registration_mandate/

NCYSA Statement and Resources:

http://www.ncsoccer.org/news_article/show/566435?referrer_id=1955877