



## US Soccer Mandates: Impacts on the ABYSA Recreation Program



As an ABYSA Recreation Soccer Family, you may have heard about the United States Soccer Federation's (USSF) birth year registration and small sided games mandates for youth soccer, and might be wondering how these mandates will impact your child's participation in our program. We are happy to let you know that the impact for players in ABYSA Rec will be minimal; however, they are worth paying attention to, especially if your child is enjoying their soccer experience and you are considering enrolling them in one of our competitive programs. This is especially true if your child is currently in our Rec Program at the U7 age group or older.

### **What is the Birth Year Registration mandate and who does it affect?**

Per U.S. Soccer's mandate, all US Youth Soccer competitive members will be required to transition age grouping of teams from school year based (August 1st thru July 31st) to birth year based (January 1st thru December 31st). In essence, age groups will now be determined by the year in which a player is born. This mandate is only required for competitive programs. At ABYSA, we recognize that players want to play with their friends and classmates. Because ABYSA Rec is an "in house" program, we will continue to register our players using the August 1st thru July 31<sup>st</sup> dates and will continue to allow players to play up one year and request a "car pool buddy". Basically, nothing changes for an ABYSA player unless they want to play at a more competitive level.

### **My player is really enjoying soccer and we are considering a more competitive playing environment with higher level coaching. How do the mandates impact us?**

ABYSA's competitive programs, HFC Academy, Classic and Challenge, are required to comply with the birth year mandate. This means that you need to consider your child's birth year to see what competitive program they are eligible for. This is especially important if your child is a U7 or older Rec player. Because Rec age groups are based on the August 1<sup>st</sup> cut off, and HFC age groups are based on birth year, you will need to pay attention to the programs your player is eligible for. For example, the "older" U7 Rec players this season will be eligible for the HFC U9 Academy program in the fall, and will need to attend placement evaluations this spring if they want to be placed in that program next year. See the following example:

*Sally was born on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and currently plays as a U7 player in the ABYSA Recreation Program. Due to the new birth year registration mandate, during the 2016 Fall season Sally is age-eligible to participate as a U9 HFC Academy player or can remain in the ABYSA Recreation Program as a U8 player. Again, the HFC Academy Program will adhere to the USSF birth year registration mandate, and the ABYSA Recreation Program will not.*

Similarly, older U9 Rec Players will be eligible for U11 Classic and Challenge. If your child is enjoying their soccer and you are looking for more, we recommend that you make sure you know what programs will be available to you now, and contact the program directors if you have any questions. You can learn more about HFC Academy, Classic and Challenge on our website.

**What is the Small Sided Games mandate and how will it impact my child's ABYSA Recreation Soccer experience?**

The small sided games mandate simply changes the number of players on the field for the younger age groups. The USSF recommends that age groups that currently play 6 v 6 will play 7 v 7 in the future. Age groups that play 8 v 8 will play 9 v 9. In North Carolina, these changes are not being implemented until 2017. Just like with the Birth Year Registration mandate, because ABYSA Rec is an in house program, we can adopt the game formats that best fits our program. We will talk with programs that have made these changes over the next year to decide if they would be good for us.

We hope this document has helped you understand how the USSF mandates will impact your player and will inspire you to look at the programs available to your player in the future! If you have any questions, please contact you ABYSA Recreation Soccer Director of Coaching.

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