

# Central Okanagan Youth Soccer Association

## Policy on Playing Up, Playing Down, and Player Call-ups:

### 1. Purpose:

This policy establishes guidelines for players requesting to "play up" (compete in an age group above their designated birth year), "play down" (compete in an age group below their designated birth year), and "player call-ups" (temporary movement of players to an older age group for specific games or events) within the Central Okanagan Youth Soccer Association (COYSA). The policy aligns with BC Soccer Association regulations and COYSA's governance, ensuring fairness, player development, and safety.

This policy applies to both the spring and fall playing seasons, which both start and end within the same calendar year. Players remain in the same age group for both seasons to ensure continuity in competition and development. A player's age classification remains consistent throughout the year to ensure continuity in competition and development.

Each Club is responsible for implementing and adhering to this policy under COYSA's governance, ensuring strict adherence to BC Soccer's rules and regulations. Clubs are expected to uphold the values of integrity, fairness, and respect in adherence to BC Soccer's rules and regulations. It is the moral responsibility of each Club to govern player movement ethically, ensuring the best interests of all players and the spirit of the game are maintained.

### 2. Eligibility Requirements:

A player may be considered for playing up based on the following criteria:

- The player must demonstrate exceptional technical skill, tactical awareness, and physical ability that justify placement in an older age group.
- The player's development needs must be better served by playing up rather than remaining in their designated age group.
- The decision must prioritize player safety, ensuring the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the player.
- As per BC Soccer Rule 2, entire teams are not permitted to play up in an older age group.

A player may be considered for playing down based on the following criteria:

- The player must have a documented medical, developmental, or exceptional circumstance that significantly impacts their ability to compete at their designated age level.
- A formal request must be submitted by the player's parent/guardian, accompanied by supporting documentation from a medical professional or relevant specialist.

- The request must comply with BC Soccer’s policies on playing down, which require approval from both the COYSA and BC Soccer.
- The decision must prioritize the best interests of the player while maintaining fair competition and team balance.
- As per BC Soccer Rule 3, playing down requests require exceptional circumstances and must be approved by BC Soccer before implementation, especially in the Interior, where league structures may limit movement between age groups.
- BC Soccer Rule 3 also mandates that players playing down must not have a competitive advantage that disrupts the integrity of the game at the lower age level.
- In the Interior, the league's competitive balance considerations may further restrict playing down approvals, and applications must demonstrate a compelling reason beyond standard player development needs.

### 3. Player Call-Up Policy:

Player call-ups allow for the temporary movement of a player to an older age group for specific games or events under the following conditions:

- Pick-ups/call-ups may only come from within the same Club. \*
- Pick-ups may only be in an upward direction:
  - A grassroots team to the same age or older development/competitive team.
  - A development/competitive to another same age or older development/competitive team.
- Call-ups must be approved by the player’s current coach and the receiving team's coach.
- Call-ups should only occur when the older team is experiencing a roster shortage due to injuries, suspensions, or other extenuating circumstances.
- A player may not be called up if it negatively affects their primary team’s roster or development.
- Call-ups must follow BC Soccer’s guidelines, ensuring that the player’s workload and physical demands are managed appropriately.
- Players called up may participate in games as needed, in accordance with BC Soccer rules, to support team needs while maintaining fairness in competition.
- The call-up process must prioritize player safety, development, and fair play.
- For COYSA leagues, ID cards are required for players U14 and up. For TOYSL, ID cards are required for players U13 and up. When a team is calling up a U12 player and ID cards are required, the Club must specifically issue an ID card. It is the Club/player responsibility to produce the ID card for the call-up and then return it to the player’s main team.

### 4. Player Movement Approval Process:

- The request must be reviewed by the Technical Director (if applicable) and the Age Group Coordinator.

- The player must be assessed by a qualified coach or technical staff to determine readiness for the proposed age group.
- The final decision must comply with BC Soccer rules and regulations.

#### 5. Additional Considerations:

- A player approved to play up, play down, or be called up must be registered accordingly, following BC Soccer's registration policies.
- The approval is granted for one season only and must be re-evaluated annually.
- Playing up, playing down, or being called up should not negatively impact team dynamics, roster sizes, or player development opportunities in either age group.
- COYSA reserves the right to rescind approval if it is determined that the player's placement is not in their best interest.
- Entire teams are prohibited from playing up to an older age group under BC Soccer Rule 2.

#### 6. Special Circumstances:

- Exceptions may be granted in cases where a player has consistently demonstrated exceptional performance, is physically and mentally capable of competing at a higher level and has the support of both their current and prospective coaches.
- Players seeking to play down must provide sufficient documentation to justify the request, and the final decision must be approved by BC Soccer.
- As per BC Soccer Rule 3, in the Interior, playing down requests may be further restricted due to league constraints and competition balance considerations.
- Players approved to play down may be monitored throughout the season to ensure compliance with BC Soccer Rule 3 and league integrity.

#### 7. Compliance with BC Soccer Rules:

- All decisions must comply with BC Soccer's policies on player movement and development.
- Any updates or changes to BC Soccer's regulations will be reflected in this policy as necessary.

#### 8. Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually by the COYSA to ensure alignment with BC Soccer guidelines and best practices in youth player development.

(\*Same Club refers to the club under which the player is currently registered.)