



PEIFC Underage Player Playing-up Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the procedure that will be followed if a player is deemed to be “exceptional” for their age group and may be considered to play in a higher age group within the PEIFC U15 or PEIFC U17. This policy also applies to the PEIFC team who participates at the Canada Games.

Definition and Criteria

Underage - a player, who by birthdate, is considered for an age group higher than the designated age.

Exceptional Player status allows underage players to join a higher-level team by proving they possess a rare combination of extraordinary skill, physical maturity, and social-emotional development that makes them stand out not just from their peers, but from players in the higher age category. This designation, which is granted on a limited basis, allows these few, highly-developed athletes to bypass the normal age restrictions and compete against older, more experienced players.

Key Criteria for Exceptional Player Status

- Superior Soccer Skills: The player's skill level must be far beyond their own age group and comparable to or superior to players in the higher age category they are aspiring to join.
- Physical Maturity: The athlete must have the physical maturity to handle the demands of playing at a higher level.
- Social-Emotional and Mental Maturity: The player needs to possess the maturity, mental toughness, and social skills to handle the pressure and expectations of playing in a higher league or team.
- Well-Roundedness: The designation often considers the player's overall development to ensure they are a well-rounded individual.

Purpose of Exceptional Player Status

- Player Development: It provides an opportunity for exceptionally talented young athletes to play in a more challenging environment, which can accelerate their development.
- Fair Review: The policy ensures a fair and comprehensive review process for players who may qualify to move up an age category. A player who moves out of their age group must be justified.

- Recognizing Rare Talent: It acknowledges players who possess a truly rare skill set and are well-rounded in all aspects of their development.

Steps

1. PEIFC coaches should identify any players for exceptional status to the PEI Soccer Technical Director and the PEI Soccer Executive Director by December 15th.
2. Applications for exceptional status must be submitted to the Executive Director and/or Technical Director by January 15th for consideration within the PEIFC or Canada Games programs.
 - a. A parent may submit an application on behalf of the player.
 - b. Players identified by a PEIFC coach and/or PEI Soccer Technical director will be evaluated during the winter sessions. Players will receive a trial during winter sessions and may be requested to participate in both their age group and the higher age category. Every effort will be made to ensure that training sessions and/or games during this period will not be physically or emotionally challenging for the player under consideration.
 - c. A fee of \$250 must be submitted with the application by January 15th.
 - i. No application will be reviewed without payment of the applicable fee.
 - ii. If the applicant is granted exceptional status then 50% of the payment will be refunded.
 - iii. Fee is to be paid by the applicant at the time of submission of the application.
 - iv. Cash /credit card payments accepted at the PEI Soccer Office. E-transfers can be sent to admin@peisoccer.com
3. Upward player movement shall be available for players in their second year of eligibility in their proper age division in either U13 or U15. A player in their final year of an age group is considered the higher age level.
4. Exceptional players requesting to be permanently must adhere to this policy.
5. Players in U15 level requesting special status may only be permitted to move up to the U17 level. Players in U13 may only be permitted to move to the U15 level.
6. No player of underage status may participate in any league games, training or exhibition games until approved by PEI Soccer with written confirmation.
 - a. PEIFC coaches must communicate with the PEI Soccer TD when the player will be required to train with either the higher age level.
7. Exceptional status will be granted for one year only.
8. Soccer PEI may revoke exceptional status at any time, when it has been deemed that the movement is not in the best interest of the player. If their status is revoked, the player will return to their appropriate age division for the remainder of the current season.
 - a. However, there must be room on the PEIFC roster for the player to be added to the team in the lower age category.

9. Exceptions to the policy will be reviewed in consultation with and approved by the Technical Director for PEI Soccer and the PEI Soccer Board.
10. If not successful, players can be affiliated with the upper age level team, however their priority will be their permanent team.

PLAYER RANKING

1. Players requesting movement to a higher category, the following will be taken into account to grant this status:
 - a. Overall soccer ability
 - b. Physical development
 - c. Social development
2. Playing time for the player must remain consistent with this ranking during the playing season or their status may be reviewed by the Technical Director.

EVALUATION PROCESS

1. In order to obtain the status of exceptional player with PEI Soccer, each player must be evaluated by an independent evaluator(s) of PEI Soccer.
2. Evaluations will be conducted during the Winter session, during which the player will participate within the higher age category division. Failing that, evaluations will be conducted during a game with the higher age category division in a regular setting. The evaluation(s) will be randomly picked during any time of the winter training sessions.
3. Evaluations will provide a recommendation on the ability of each applicant, which will be used by the evaluator(s) in their decision to grant or deny status to each applicant.
4. The evaluator(s) will be independent of the coaching staff of the team and designated by the PEI Soccer Board.
5. Each applicant will be evaluated objectively, independently, and carefully.
6. Any conflict of interest must be identified and reported so that an impartial evaluation can take place.
7. If an application is deemed unsuccessful, the outcome is final and not subject to appeal.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Players must rank in the top six players of the upper team's roster and rank in the top third of their position on the upper team's roster.
2. Goal Keepers must demonstrate a significant impact.
 - a. an evaluation of keepers will proceed on a case-by-case basis.

Note:

As the eligibility rules are subject to change for each Canada Games, any age restriction requirements by the Canada Games will supersede this policy. The Canada Games teams fall under the PEIFC program and are typically the U17 teams which may or may not carry overage players on their roster.

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