



## Upcoming Change to Age Group Registration Cycle for the 2026-27 Season

Dear Colorado EDGE Soccer Families,

We are reaching out today with an important update regarding the age group registration cycle for youth soccer that will impact all recreational and competitive programs at Colorado EDGE Soccer Club **starting with the 2026-27 season (beginning August 2026)**. Please read carefully, and we encourage you to reach out with any questions.

### What is changing?

Beginning with the 2026-27 registration year, youth soccer programs across the country will adopt a registration cycle based on **August 1 to July 31** rather than the current January 1 to December 31 (birthyear) format. This change comes from the national governing body, U.S. Soccer Federation (U.S. Soccer) and its member organizations including U.S. Youth Soccer (USYS), US Club Soccer and American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). ([U.S. Soccer](#))

To clarify:

- **No changes** will be implemented in the current (2025-26) season's registration cycle. This includes our Spring 2026 season.
- The new August 1 - July 31 cycle goes into effect for the **2026-27** season.
- This is **not** a decision made solely by Colorado EDGE; it is driven by U.S. Soccer and the national youth soccer governing bodies.

- The change applies to both recreational and competitive programs and will align our club with Colorado Soccer Association (CSA), ECNL, ECNL RL and the national structure.

### **Why the change?**

The decision to shift from a January 1 cutoff (birth year) to a school year style August 1 cutoff is based on multiple factors and feedback from the soccer community across the country. Key considerations include:

- **Better alignment with school year & peer groups:** School grade peers and friendships are a very important part of everyone's daily life and aligning the soccer age groups closer to the school calendar (Aug 1-July 31) is deemed beneficial for player experience and retention. This alignment should have a positive correlation with increased numbers of youth players entering and staying in the sport.
- **Reducing “trapped” players:** Under the birthyear model (Jan 1 - Dec 31), many players find themselves out of sync with their peers in school (for example, 8th graders playing on a U15 team when their teammates are freshman and playing high school soccer thus no season to play and then again at the U19 age group when the younger players in a birthyear have to find a new team for their last year of club soccer. The August 1 cutoff reduces the number of youth in that misalignment.

### **What this means for Colorado EDGE**

1. **Team formation:** For tryouts and roster formation for the 2026-27 season, age groups will be determined by the player's date of birth relative to the August 1 - July 31 cycle. We have already begun working diligently to plan for the transition and ensure clarity.
2. **“Playing up” exceptions:**
  - We anticipate that some players may be a grade ahead or may have developmental reasons to be considered for a different age group than strictly their birth date indicates.

- As always, our club Directors and Staff will evaluate those cases on an individual basis. Examples include:
    - A player who is a grade ahead in school and may wish to play with their school cohort even though their birthdate falls after August 1.
    - A roster situation where we may ask a player to “play up” for roster integrity or for the right developmental fit.
  - These exceptions will be handled individually and on a case by case basis during roster formation.
3. **Spring 2026 planning:** While we will continue to have teams and programs play their league and tournament games in the current birthyear format, because of the upcoming shift, the spring of 2026 will serve as an adjustment period to prepare for Fall 2026 and beyond. There are several moving pieces and factors that need consideration when organizing team rosters. Beginning early 2026, you will see information and communication from our club about age grouping sessions and evaluation periods to ensure everyone is prepared for the 2026-27 season.
  4. **Communication & support:** We will publish a clear age group chart to show where players will fall under the new cycle, send Q&A documents, provide informational sessions for families and host in person and/or virtual meetings.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Will every club across the country be doing the same August 1 cutoff?

**A:** The directive comes from U.S. Soccer and its national member organizations. Many prominent national youth organizations (USYS, US Club, AYSO) have announced adoption of the August 1 - July 31 cycle for their 2026-27 season. While there may be some variation among leagues or specific competitions, our club is aligning with the national consensus.

**Q:** Will this negatively affect my child’s team or friendships?

**A:** We recognize that change can be challenging. Yes, there may be shifts in team compositions, players moving into different age groups than in prior years. But from national research, aligning to school year cutoffs tends to reduce the number of

misplaced players and improve overall alignment with peers. ([Girls Soccer Network](#)) We will do our best to facilitate smooth transitions.

**Q:** Is this because of Colorado EDGE specifically?

**A:** No - this is **not** solely a Colorado EDGE decision. It is a nationwide policy change by U.S. Soccer and affiliated youth soccer organizations. We are simply implementing the change as required and supporting our families through the transition.

**Q:** When do we have to decide about our player for 2026-27?

**A:** Competitive Tryout and recreational program registration timelines will be announced early 2026.

### **Our Commitment**

At Colorado EDGE, our priority remains providing high quality programs, positive team culture, and an excellent experience for both players and families. We understand this change raises questions and may create some uncertainty. We are fully committed to supporting our families through the transition and ensuring preparations are handled thoughtfully, transparently, and with minimal disruption.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Colorado EDGE and for your patience and collaboration as we embrace this nationwide change together.

Sincerely,

Colorado EDGE Soccer Club

### **Links for More Information**

- U.S. Soccer: *Path Forward on Player Registration* – “Starting in the fall of 2026, organization members will be responsible for approving the age-group registration cycle...” ([U.S. Soccer](#))
- US Club Soccer: *Age Group Cut-Off Update for 2026-27 Season* – full explanation of the switch to August 1–July 31. ([US Club Soccer Website](#))
- AYSO: *Age Group Cut-Off Revision for 2026-27* – reinforces the August 1-July 31 shift. ([AYSO](#))