

# Harbor Premier Play-Up Guidelines

As a general rule, HSC players play within their natural age group. However, we recognize that in certain cases, due to a player's exceptional ability, advanced physical or emotional development and/or a high appetite for soccer. In such a case, opportunities for that player to train or compete in older age groups may be appropriate. Opportunities to compete in older age groups may include attending additional training sessions, participating as a guest player in games or tournaments or being officially rostered to a team of an older age group.

Sending a player to train or play with a team in an older age group impacts the experiences and opportunities of the players naturally assigned to the receiving age group. Moreover, it can impact the player's natural age group in ways that are not in the best interest of the other players in the player's natural age group or the club. For these reasons, opportunities for players to train or compete in an older age group may be limited or restricted by the club. Furthermore, playing up is an ongoing process and requires regular evaluation. An opportunity to play into an older age group in one instance does not guarantee or entitle the player to have subsequent play up experiences. Such opportunities are evaluated and determined on an ongoing basis.

HSC always strives to develop the kids they have into the best teams they can rather than form the best teams without regard to all kids having a team to play on. We believe it is in the best interest of players to play on-age in most situations. Though it's relatively easy to determine if a child has the necessary soccer technical skills, less obvious is whether they have the maturity to "fit in" at a higher level. A child being technically skilled and mature one year does not guarantee they won't fall behind in the next 2 – 3 years when the older kids mature faster. At that point, the "love of the game" may be impacted as they fall behind, ultimately resulting in the child leaving the game.

## Guidelines:

- HSC tries to field the most competitive teams possible in each age group. To take a good player away from his/her team's own age group generally weakens his/her team without substantially improving the older age group team.
- Each age group has a limited number of children from which premier teams can be constructed. A reasonable balance of the number of children available must be struck for each age group.
- HSC believes players should only play above their age level under rare circumstances.
- Play-ups will only be allowed with Technical Director approval after consultation with DOC & ADOC/YD. This approval will only be given after careful consideration has been given to the situation.
  - The best interests player, team & club must be served
  - Requests for permission to play for an older age group must be made via email by the player's parent(s) not the coach or manager.
  - Discussion must occur with the parents of the player regarding the potential positives and negatives
  - Any decision to play-up is only one year at a time - re-evaluation will occur each year to ensure the situation is still in the best interest of player, team & club.

If your child does want to be considered for an older age team, HSC will allow them to tryout at the older age group. If they do perform well at the tryouts, but are not selected to play up per the guidelines above, the following are some possible (with coach/club approval) accommodations that can allow a player to receive enhanced training and opportunities while still maintaining beneficial peer contact:

- Occasionally practicing with the higher level team.
- Utilizing the player pass rule to sub in on an occasional game during league play
- Utilizing the player pass rule to play in additional summer tournaments when on-age team is inactive