

# PLAY-UPS



As part of the club's focus on high level play and player development, there will be times players will "play up" at an older age to be challenged or to increase the competitive level of a team.

**How are PLAY-UP Player's selected?** PLAY-UP players will show skill delivery that falls in the **top 10% of their current age level and in the top 50% of the age level they are being considered for PLAY-UP.**

Development directors use three elements to identify this criteria:

- (1) Players that consistently demonstrate a high-level effort and a positive attitude in training and games;
- (2) Players that consistently deliver high level possession-based technical skills and;
- (3) Players that consistently reveal high-level soccer IQ, and/or show tactical awareness.

PLAY-UP players are identified in training and in competitive events. They are players considered capable of playing at an older age level where more complex movements and a deeper awareness of the game is necessary to be successful at quicker speeds of play and with higher rates of execution.

**Why PLAY-UP's:** While PLAY-UPS are not limited by age group, at u14 and above, the club does prioritize being highly competitive in league and at events. For these reasons, PLAY-UP decisions may be made simply to have sufficient substitutes. However, most often, PLAY-UP decisions are more complex; like increasing the tactical or technical execution by position. Sometimes we select players to expose them to the next level of development as a way to gauge a more aggressive development opportunity.

**Club Impact:** PLAY-UP movement benefits players and teams both directions. Either by increasing or filling out a positional skill set of the team receiving the PLAY-UP player; or the team "loaning" the PLAY-UP player benefiting when a PLAY-UP player returns, sharing their growth with current team. And while the "soccer-side" benefits, so does the culture. "Cross-pollinating" players through the system helps them prepare and shows other players where opportunities are based on hard work and improved skill sets.

**Team Impact:** A PLAY-UP decision is done with a great deal of thought. The club looks at how the player moving will be affected, just as we consider how the players who will have a play-up player will be affected. We consider if we feel a player is ready to be challenged and if they have developed enough technical skill sets to be comfortable at a higher level. A final decision takes many of these things into consideration and makes a decision we feel is best for everyone involved.

**Player Impact:** We also know the first couple times, a player being offered to PLAY UP may hesitate and maybe even reject an opportunity. Eventually, the player becomes comfortable enough to acclimate and embrace new team dynamics. We will not offer a PLAY UP to a player we do not think is ready. We fully appreciate the need to keep building confidence.

*"How do I develop the skills to be considered at the top of my age group?"* PLAY-UP's challenge the thinking and attitude of all players. How players respond will play an important part in defining them as players and as people. First, we urge all our players to deliver a high level training effort and positive attitude every opportunity they have. Decisions are made from what is seen in training, typically, not in games. Second, stay focused on delivering high-possession oriented technical skills. Lastly, watch some soccer. Recognize tactical movements. See the game clearer.

Like all the other things we do, we seek to continue to challenge our athletes and provide them with opportunities that are unique to developing high level players. This truly is, "No Ordinary Soccer Club You're Dealing With."

