

## **HSC Play Up Policy**

Rev. 3 – Approved - June 5, 2005

The following details the policy of the Harvard Soccer Club with regard to assigning players to play in a particular age group.

### **Standard policy**

A player for the Harvard Soccer Club is usually assigned to play within an age group based on the following:

1. The player is in the same grade as other players in that age group.
2. The player's age/birth date is within the range recognized for that age group as stated by MYSA and NYYSL, i.e., the player's age as of July 31 of the soccer year. For example, if the player is age 10 or 11 on July 31<sup>st</sup>, he/she is eligible to play U12 during the subsequent Fall and Spring seasons.

Rarely, players may be assigned to play in an older age group based on the following:

3. There are not enough players to field a team in the older age group without the participation of the player.
4. Team size issues indicate a benefit for a player to move up. For example, there is no room for a late registering player in a particular age group, so a player moves up in order to make room. In these cases, the appropriate age group coordinators work together to determine the options for resolving the issue and who, if anyone, is asked to move.

In order to promote the development of highly skilled players within the Harvard Soccer Club, the following exceptions will be utilized:

### **Exceptions**

#### **U8 player playing on a U10 team**

Parents, with the support of their child's current coach and the age group coordinator, may request to move their child early from U8 to U10 based on:

- An assessment that the player's skill level is a risk to other players on the field (a typical example is kick strength). Note: This does not include reckless play.
- The player demonstrates very strong core soccer skills and is talented and mature enough to play on one of the skill-based teams at the U10 level (typically in the top half of the skill ratings or roughly the top 3 U10 teams)

It is anticipated that very few requests will be approved based on these exceptions. For this exception, a child should be a top player on their current team and viewed by their coach, as well as other coaches in the age group, as one of the dominant players in the age group. A detailed description of the process and method for assessing the merit of the U8 request is at the end of this document.

Requests to move the player up the next soccer season should be submitted to the HSC Board by the middle of the current soccer season.

#### **U10 player playing on a U12 team**

Parents, with the support of their child's current coach and the age group coordinator, may request to move their child early from U10 to U12. In order to be a good candidate, the player should demonstrate very strong core soccer skills and be talented and mature enough to play on one of the top two U12 skills-based teams.

This exceptions process is intended for those players where it would be in the best interests of the child as well as the other players in the age group for that player to play up. These players are dominant at the highest level of play in U10 and, as such, there are inadequate opportunities for them to continue to develop as a soccer player. Generally they are without peers in their natural age group.

A detailed description of the process and evaluation criteria for assessing the merit of the U10 to U12 request appears below. Requests to move the player up the next soccer season should be submitted to the HSC Board by the middle of the current soccer season.

## U8 Play Up Exception Details

Below are the steps and assessment criteria for evaluating the merit of a request for a U8 player to move early into U10 based on the player's skills.

1. A decision is made that the U8 eligible player is a good candidate to move up to U10 one or two season's early. This decision will include the parent, the player's current coach, and the age group coordinator. To be a good candidate:
  - The player must demonstrate very strong core soccer skills and be talented and mature enough to play on one of the skill-based teams at the U10 level (typically in the top half of the skill ratings or roughly the top 3 U10 teams). The player should be a top player on their current team and recognized as one of the top few players in their league by coordinator and/or other coaches in the age group as well.
  - The player should demonstrate positive attitude, have excellent attendance and have the emotional maturity to be able to play at a higher level of competition with other players that are one or two grades higher and not in the player's current grade.
2. The player's parent then submits a request for their child to move up to U10 to the HSC board (through the age group coordinator or email "board@harvardsoccer.org"). The request should generally be received by the middle of the current soccer season, or a week before any scheduled tryouts, whichever is earlier. While the request is submitted by the parent, it should also be also supported by the player's current coach and the age group coordinator.
3. The primary and preferred method for evaluation will be to utilize the spring tryouts for the following fall season. By utilizing the tryouts as the evaluation mechanism, this will allow for the most objective way to evaluate a player's capability to play at the next level. The player must register for and attend any tryouts that may be scheduled. Tryouts for the Fall season are typically scheduled in May.
4. Tryouts for the Spring season are usually not held, so a substitute assessment will be used to observe the player.

The HSC Board assigns the request to an independent board member for evaluation and forms an evaluation team that includes the board member, U8 coordinator and appropriate U10 coordinator.

The evaluation team will:

- Obtain existing evaluation information about the player such as:
  1. Have the current coach do a mid-season evaluation of their team using the standard evaluation form.
  2. Obtain the previous season's team evaluation that includes the player (usually from the current or previous age group coordinator).
  3. Prior tryout information about the player, if the player attended a tryout in the previous season
- Attend 2 of the player's games to observe the player's ability to play at the next level.
- Get input on the player's skills, temperament and dominance from the following: U8 age group coordinator, player's current coach and assistant coach, player's previous coach (if different), and other coaches in the players age group to determine the following:
  - The player demonstrates very strong core soccer skills and is talented enough to play on one of the skill-based teams at the U10 level (typically in the top half of the skill ratings or roughly the top 3 U10 teams).
  - The player is a top player on their current team and recognized by the coordinator and other coaches as one of the top few players in their age.

- The player demonstrates a positive attitude, has excellent attendance and has the emotional maturity to be able to play at a higher level of competition with other players that are one or two grades higher and not in the player's current grade.
  - If the player's level of play is a danger to other players on the field (e.g., strength of kick with a potential for injuring another player). This does not include reckless play.
5. Using the information gathered above, the U10 age group coordinator will determine whether the player's skills clearly places him/her on one of the skills based teams or not, and if roster positions are open for one of those teams.

NOTE: In general the steps above must be completed by the first of June for the Fall season, and the first of December for the Spring season.

6. The evaluation team should submit their recommendation, in writing, to the Board by the last Board meeting before team counts need to be submitted. This is usually the first Sunday in June, or the first Sunday in December.

Generally, if evaluation results in the player being placed *clearly* at the level of a skill-based teams (typically in the top 3 U10 teams), AND there is roster positions open, they will be considered eligible to play up and will be placed on one of the skills based teams. If there are no roster positions available, the player will be placed as best as possible by the coordinator. If the player falls below that point they will be expected to play at the U8 level.

7. The Board votes on the request. The vote of the majority carries.
8. The responsible Board member informs the player's parent, coach and U8 and U10 age group coordinators of the Board's decision.

## **U10 Play Up Exception Details**

Below are the steps and assessment criteria for evaluating the merit of an exception request for a U10 player to move early into U12:

1. A suggestion is made by consensus of the player's parents, current coach, and current age group coordinator that a U10 eligible player is a good candidate to move up to U12 one or two season's early.
  - In order to be a good candidate, the player must demonstrate exceptionally strong core soccer skills in comparison to their natural age group and be talented and mature enough to play on one of the top two U12 skills based teams. A good litmus test for determining that a child is a strong candidate for an exception is that the child is currently one of the top few players on the U10A team, i.e., they are not only the best player in their grade but better than most players in the older grade as well.
  - The player should also demonstrate positive attitude, have excellent attendance and have the emotional maturity to be able to play at a higher level of competition with other players that are one or two grades higher and not in the players current grade.
2. The player's parent then submits a request for their child to move up to U12 to the HSC board (through the age group coordinator or email "board@harvardsoccer.org").

The request should generally be received by the middle of the current soccer season, or a week before any scheduled tryouts, whichever is earlier. While the request is submitted by the parent, it should also be also supported by the player's current coach and the age group coordinator.

3. The HSC Board assigns the request to an independent board member for evaluation and forms an evaluation team that includes the board member, and the appropriate U10 and U12 coordinators.
4. The evaluation team will:
  - ❑ Obtain evaluation information about the player including:

1. Coach evaluation of the player as well as his/her teammates by the current coaches using the standard evaluation form.
2. Previous season's coaches evaluations for the team that includes the player.
3. U10 and U12 tryout results for the player from the most recent and previous jamboree/tryout sessions.

Note: By utilizing the tryouts as the evaluation mechanism, this will allow for the most objective way to evaluate a player's capability to play at the next level. The player *must* register for and attend both U10 and U12 tryouts that may be scheduled. Tryouts for the Fall season are typically scheduled in May. Tryouts for the Spring season are usually not held, so a substitute assessment may be used to observe the player.

- ❑ If possible, attend 2 of the player's games to observe the player's ability to play at the next level.
- ❑ Get input on the player's skills, maturity, commitment and dominance from the following: U10 age group coordinator, player's current coach and assistant coach(es), player's coach from the previous season (if different), and other coaches in the player's age group. To assess maturity and commitment, the following should be considered: attitude, sportsmanship, coachability, team spirit, respect for coaches, attendance, emotional control, and confidence playing at a higher level of competition with other players that are one or two graders older. Attributes that could negatively effect the consideration would be: temper tantrums, arguing with the coach, disrupting practices, disparaging remarks to teammates, etc.

NOTE: In general the steps above must be completed by the first half of June for the Fall season, and the first half of December for the Spring season.

5. The evaluation team will consider the information gathered and come to a consensus about whether or not the child is without peer as a soccer player within his or her natural age group and therefore it is in the best interests of the child as well as the other players for the child to move up. The following criteria will be *considered* when reaching that consensus:
  - ❑ The player is one of the top several players on the U10A team as evaluated by the player's current coach.
  - ❑ The player's U10A team is competing successfully in Rec 1, i.e., the highest level of competition in U10, and the player is clearly as skilled as or more skilled than the best players of the team's U10 Rec 1 competition.
  - ❑ Both U10 and U12 jamboree/tryouts show the player is the top player in his/her age group and is better than most of the players in the next oldest grade as well.
  - ❑ The U10 team standard selection/evaluation process (i.e., ranking as determined by the standard combination of coach evaluations and U10 tryout results) shows the players' score to be 0.5 higher than the next closest score in the same grade/gender.
  - ❑ The U12 team standard selection/evaluation process (i.e., ranking as determined by the standard combination of coach evaluations and U12 tryout results) clearly places the player on one of the top two U12 skills based teams.
  - ❑ The player evidences a positive attitude and high level of commitment to the sport of soccer.
  - ❑ The player's maturity level is not an area of significant concern relative to the demands of playing at a higher level of competition with other players who are one or two grades older and not in the player's current grade.
  - ❑ The player can play and match up with a physically more demanding age group without risk of injury or detriment to playing ability.

Notes: If a play up request is approved for the Spring season, placement on one of the top two U12 skills-based teams is made provided roster positions are available on the team in question. Placement of a U10 player for the Spring should not displace a player who was on that team in the Fall. In the unlikely event roster positions are not available on the top two teams, the age group coordinator will place the player on the next best team. If this is not acceptable to the player, the player may elect to remain playing in U10.

6. The evaluation team should submit their recommendation, in writing, to the Board by the last Board meeting before team counts need to be submitted. This is usually the first Sunday in June, or the first Sunday in December.
7. The Board votes on the request. The vote of the majority carries.

8. The responsible Board member informs the player's parent, coach and U10 and U12 age group coordinators of the Board's decision.