



LSC Playing up and Playing Down Policy

Policy Type: Administration **Author:** Jordan Clements **Approver:** LSC Board of Directors

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The Lincoln Soccer Club (LSC) strives to develop players according to the Long Term Player Development (“LTPD”) principles as put forward by Ontario Soccer. Decisions about “playing-up” or “playing down” reflect this commitment. In 2005, Federal, Provincial and Territorial Sport Ministers accepted “Long-Term Athlete Development” as Canada’s development framework and committed to full provincial and territorial implementation in 2007. Since then, these concepts have been embedded in major national, provincial and territorial agencies for over a decade. As a leading organization, Ontario Soccer is committed remove barriers to participation and performance, and help make our systems more effective for players.

Those players could be recreation or development players as both groups need to establish a solid grounding and developmental base to play and enjoy soccer for life or progress through the talented pathways and beyond. What is critical as parents, coaches, administrators, and match officials is that we understand the philosophical shift of what a quality soccer program is and why it is important in the culture shift necessary to improve the game in Canada.

Playing up or down should be encouraged when appropriate for development purposes of the individual player. Players will be encouraged, when in the best interest of the player, to play up or down within the tiers of their own age group at the Academy, which consist of u8-u12.

Playing “Up or Down” an age group at the U3-18 recreational level.

In exceptional circumstances, following a request by the coach and parent, a child may play at a year higher or lower than their chronological age, as a result of factors that clearly indicate that



a child's developmental age makes that individual more suited to play at the older/younger age group. This decision will only be made at the application of the parent, and with the agreement of the Club Technical Director. This decision shall apply on a one season basis only (Indoor or outdoor). Requests can be made to the club's technicaldirector@grimsbysoccer.com prior to the season starting.

Playing “Up or Down” an age group within the u8 – u12 Academy Program.

Having children compete and practice in the correct environment is instrumental in their development as young people and as soccer players. The elements that have to be considered in that environment are:

- Social/Emotional
- Psychological
- Physical
- Technical

Ensuring that children are appropriately challenged in each of the four areas identified above is crucial to their enjoyment and progression in the game. The challenge that Clubs, Technical Directors, Coaches and Administrators have is making sure that each and every child is in the correct environment based on their needs and abilities in all four corners of development. To add to the challenge, children develop at differing rates and times; this puts an added burden on organizations to do the correct thing on this crucially important aspect of a child's holistic development.

The Process for a player to play up or down in the u8-u12 Academy Program.

If a Coach or Technical Director identifies a grassroots player who he/she feels has advanced skills and qualities and thinks they should be considered to play with an older age group, the following steps, which are outlined below, must take place. This process is also the same for any player who may be identified as needing to play at a lower age group to best serve their development.

- A discussion with the Technical Director and team coach to establish a history on the player and a consistency in their performance and behaviour. If this discussion proves to



be positive and an agreement is made that the player should be considered to play with a younger/older age group, then;

- A discussion with the player and his or her parents or guardian takes place. This formal discussion should inform the player and parents/guardian of the information that is contained within the Ontario Soccer fast tracking document (please click [here](#)), the challenges that the young player may face when playing with players of the same age or older players
- It's important that no pressure is put on the young player to play with the younger/older group.
- The player must be allowed to stay with their own age group if that is their choice - The evaluation process as laid out in the evaluation forms must be followed - Signatures from Technical Director, parents, player and district association must be on the form District associations are to keep copies of all evaluation forms.
- The fast-tracking decision is good for one playing season and must be revisited each season

Revisions

Rev. #	Date	Revisor	Comments
0	October 23rd,2023	Jordan Clements	New Documents

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