

## **Soccer on the Hill “Play-up” Policy**

Dated July 2006

Soccer on the Hill requires players to participate in the correct, age-appropriate division unless special permission is granted by the league. VYSA and most all other soccer clubs determine a player’s soccer age by that player’s age on July 31<sup>st</sup>, just prior to the start of the soccer year.

However, there are several situations where the league will consider play-up requests. Below is the process to be used by the requesting parent, and the criteria that the Commissioners and League will apply. Playing up is not a “right,” but is rather an exception only used under the criteria outlined below.

Playing-up exceptions are made by the Soccer on the Hill Board. The Commissioners and Coaches will be consulted but the SOTH Board will be the final arbiter in playing-up decisions.

Playing up must benefit both the child and the league.

Playing-down will occasionally be approved by the Commissioners for a child this development is more appropriate to the younger age.

### **Process**

The parent requesting that their child “play-up” should submit an SOTH Age Division Exception Form (available from each Commissioner) or make a written/email request discussing the reasons for their request and citing at least one of the criteria listed below. The request should be made to the lower age division Commissioner at least 2 weeks before the opening game of a season. Normally, this will be done by mid-August, but can also be done in between seasons (early March). One week before the season begins, Commissioners will discuss their observations of the player’s ability based upon the previous season and make a recommendation to the Soccer on the Hill Board. The Board is the final arbiter in deciding if a player may move up.

If the lower Commissioner is not familiar with the player (e.g., a new player to the league), the player shall play in the first game of the lower age bracket league. The lower age bracket Commissioner will observe the player and may make a recommendation to the upper age Commissioner. If the lower Commissioner does not recommend moving up, the request will be deferred until two weeks before the beginning of the following season.

In no case will moving up be approved if the player is more than one year younger than the age bracket requested.

## Criteria

The League Commissioner will consider the following factors in determining whether to approve a “play up” request.

1. **Exceptionally Skilled Player - Level of play significantly exceeds peer group.** Particularly in the lower age brackets, when only 4 or 5 players are on a side at one time, an exceptional player may dominate play to the extent that the game is no longer competitive for the opposing team. A player who fits these criteria must dominate play in more than one phase i.e. striking and passing; defending and challenging; defending and striking, etc. Though parents or coaches may often feel that a child is dominant because the child is the best on the team, the exceptionally skilled criteria apply to the child in relation to the entire league and most other children of his or her age. Typically, a player who is approved for this reason has extensive tournament or competitive soccer experience beyond the house league.
2. **Physical Ability and Above Average Size.** If a child is exceedingly big for his or her age group and has above average soccer skills, the Lower Commissioner may recommend a play-up request – particularly if there is some risk that the physical play of the child may pose a danger to smaller “of age” players.
3. **Parental Hardship.** In some situations, families with multiple, close-in-age children are not able to juggle the demands of supervising children in too many different age brackets. The Commissioner may allow “play-up” requests for parental hardship if the player is of a high caliber, and would like to join a team with a sibling. In the opinion of the lower Commissioner, the “play-up” player must be physically able to participate with the older division, and must demonstrate above average soccer skills.
4. **Overall Benefit to the League.** If there is an overall benefit to the league for moving a player up, the two Commissioners may jointly approve it. For example, if the older division needs to fill a coaching vacancy, but the ability of a parent to take on the coaching position is contingent on his or her child moving up, the League may approve it. In unusual situations, the League may request that a grouping of players move up due to overall numbers balancing across divisions. If this is to occur, an overall approval by the Commissioners is required.

# Soccer on the Hill Age Division Exception Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent (Guardian): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Age at cutoff date (7/31): \_\_\_\_\_ Division applying to: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior soccer experience:

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Reason for requesting the exception:

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Volunteer Commitment:

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