

In an attempt to find a common ground in age brackets to be adopted statewide, affecting the players in the town-based leagues and those playing for non-state open league teams, the following options are being advanced for discussion with your league's leadership group.

Age bracket rules are currently being applied inconsistently throughout the state, with some leagues allowing players to 'play down' an age bracket so that they are playing with their classmates. In addition to creating consistency statewide, these proposals are intended to provide clarity and proper notification to players, parents, coaches and referees as to who will be playing in any age grouping.

These proposals are intended to be considered from a player friendly view, and not merely from a vantage point that might result in a decision that is more convenient, easy, or expedient. Players value playing with their friends, friends who are also most often their school classmates. Inflexible age bracket definitions, reliant solely on calendar dates, often create impediments to the ability of these classmates to play together.

These proposals are not intended for any players or teams that may be playing in statewide competitions leading to regional and national competitions (e.g.: State Cup eligible teams). These players must adhere to the USYS and USSF promulgated age bracket definitions using the current August 1 date without exception.

Thus, with goal of becoming both more player centric and player friendly, the following are offered with the goal of adopting one clear, consistent statewide approach to defining levels of play for our youth:

Option 1: Redefine the levels of play by a combination of age and grade level as follows:

- a. U14 would become "Grade 8 or U14" as an inclusive bracket;
- b. U13 would become "Grade 7 or U13" as an inclusive bracket;
- c. U12 would become "Grade 6 or U12" as an inclusive bracket;
- d. U11 would become "Grade 5 or U11" as an inclusive bracket;
- e. U10 would become "Grade 4 or U10" as an inclusive bracket;
- f. U9 would become "Grade 3 or U9" as an inclusive bracket;
- g. U8 would become "Grade 2 or U8" as an inclusive bracket.

Option 2: Limit any MTOC divisions of play to the USYS age bracket/level of play definitions, and then apply then apply the above, more inclusive, level of play definitions provided above for any division of play.

Option 3: to adopt, statewide and without exception, the August 1 determined, age based brackets as provided by USSF and USYS. While this option would standardize age bracket rules statewide it would not address the issue of affording a defined level of play that would permit players to play with classmates while generally maintaining reasonably banded age demarcations.