



# 2026 Tournament Official Age Eligibility Policy

DATE: February 7, 2026

RE: School-Year Eligibility Exception (USYS Transition Year)

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## 1. POLICY OVERVIEW

In coordination with the US Youth Soccer transition toward school-age team formations, Essex United Soccer Club is adopting a flexible eligibility policy for our 2026 tournament. While our base rules remain centered on birth-year guidelines, this exception allows teams to remain unified as the national landscape shifts.

## 2. THE "BRIDGE" EXCEPTION

Teams may roster players who are older than the standard birth-year rule, provided those players meet the following criteria:

- **The Window:** The player must be born between August 1 and December 31 of the year immediately preceding the birth-year rule.
- **Roster Acceptance:** Rosters containing players within this "exception" age range will be accepted as official for tournament play.

## 3. REFERENCE TABLE

Tournament Age Group	Primary Birth Year	Eligible Exception Range
U8	2018	Aug 1, 2017 - Dec 31, 2017
U10	2016	Aug 1, 2015 – Dec 31, 2015
U12	2014	Aug 1, 2013 – Dec 31, 2013
U14	2012	Aug 1, 2011 – Dec 31, 2011
U16	2010	Aug 1, 2009 – Dec 31, 2009
U19	2007	Aug 1, 2006 - Dec 31, 2006



#### **4. CONTACT & QUESTIONS**

We understand that transition years can bring unique roster challenges. If you have questions regarding player eligibility or specific roster nuances, please contact our administration:

Tournament Committee Email: [tournament@essexunitedsoccer.org](mailto:tournament@essexunitedsoccer.org)