



## **Greenhaven Soccer Club School Year Age Matrix Policy – Beginning in 2026**

Beginning with Recreational Registration in April of 2026 and Competitive Tryouts for the 2026-2027 Season, Greenhaven Soccer Club (GHSC) will join with the major clubs in the region and adhere to the USSF School Year Age Matrix as mandated by our governing bodies, US Soccer and NorCal Premier. Please see the respective program policies below.

### **Competitive Program**

**U9-U12** players will play with their appropriately aged team.

With rare exception, “playing up” will not be allowed. Exceptions are at the discretion of the GHSC Technical Director and the respective Program Director of Coaching, with input from the player’s current and prospective coaches. Exceptions will only be made for players who are significantly more advanced than their similarly aged peers, and have the emotional maturity to handle playing on an older team. These players must be among the top 1 or 2 players in their appropriate age group, as well as the top 3 or 4 players of the age group in which they are requesting to play. The final decision will be made at tryouts, as there may be new players trying out for the team that will impact where the requesting player ranks.

The process to request to play up is as follows:

- Beginning with Winter Training, the player’s parent will send a request in writing to the GHSC Technical Director and the respective Program Director of Coaching.
- During Winter Training and Spring League play, the GHSC Technical Director and respective Program Director of Coaching or another qualified, experienced individual affiliated with GHSC will observe the player in question during both trainings and game play. The goal is to have a qualified, experienced person conduct an objective evaluation. This avoids any subconscious, unintentional bias by the player’s current coach.
- If need be, stand-alone evaluations of the player will also be conducted by the personnel described above.
- During tryouts, the player in question must attend at least one tryout with their appropriately aged group and one with the older age group in which they wish to play.
- At the conclusion of tryouts, the GHSC Technical Director and the respective Program Director of Coaching will confer with the coaches of the teams in question and a final decision will be made. The final decision will be made by the GHSC Technical Director and the respective Program Director of Coaching.

**U13 and older teams** will be given more flexibility and consideration, as teams at the 11v11 level frequently roster players from two different age groups. Permission for an existing U13 or older multi-age group team to stay together or be formed must be given by the GHSC Technical Director and the respective Program Director of Coaching. Factoring into the decision will be the team's record and the skill level equity among the current players. **NOTE:** this scenario is highly unlikely for U13 teams beyond the 2026-2027 season as younger teams will be formed with adherence to the new age matrix as described above.

### **Competitive Select Program**

GHSC's Competitive Select Program was created for players born in 2013 and earlier, who missed the 2014 birth year cutoff when our Competitive Program was created. Age pure play on these teams is relatively rare, and as such the policy regarding playing up will be more flexible. Team formation will be at the discretion of the GHSC Technical Director and the respective Competitive Program Director of Coaching in conjunction with the team's coach.

### **Recreational Program**

Recreational soccer participation and team formation is largely friend based. For the entire 50 years of GHSC's existence, we have allowed friend and coach requests, and accommodated them to the best of our ability. However, the new age matrix allows for better player development, a higher probability of similar levels of soccer skill development among teammates and the ability for kids to play with their classmates. The policy outlined below is a compromise that we believe best embodies the tradition of GHSC and the spirit of recreational play.

Beginning in the 2026 Fall Season, all U5, U6 and U7 teams will be formed according to the new age matrix.

Existing U8 and older teams may stay together even if they are of mixed age. Any new players added to an existing team in that age range must be appropriately aged.