



POLICY

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BRFC Playing Up Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for player placement within Belle River Soccer's travel program, with a specific emphasis on players participating at their designated age level, provided an age-appropriate team exists. This standard sets consistent expectations for coaches, players, and parents regarding team selection, development pathways, and the opportunities available within the Club.

This policy supports both the individual athlete and the broader objectives of the Club. Athletes with elevated technical and tactical skills can serve as role models and contributors to team culture, while maintaining access to appropriate playing opportunities throughout their full range of eligibility. Simultaneously, the Club gains from enhanced fairness, reduced conflict among teams, and simplified administrative processes.

By prioritizing long-term player development and club-wide growth over short-term team success, we foster a culture rooted in fairness, collaboration, and integrity. This policy reinforces our commitment to measuring coaching success by the ability to develop and nurture talent—not merely by the recruitment of already-established players.

Definitions

Essex County Soccer League (ECSL) - An L5 regional league operating within the Windsor / Essex area.

Belle River F.C. (BRFC) - The branded name given to Belle River Soccer's Travel Program

Travel Program - A Belle River Soccer program focused on participation in the ECSL which includes both Grassroot and Competitive divisions, but may also include training for younger age groups focused on development in anticipation of eventual participation in ECSL.

Playing Up - When a player is permanently rostered to a team with an older birth year.

Affiliated Player (AP) - A player participating in a league game for a team they are not rostered to but who is in need of extra players to complete their roster due to injury or other planned absences.

Scope

This policy is specific to Belle River F.C. and applies to all age groups both at the Grassroots and Competitive levels.

This policy does not include players being asked to participate as an affiliated player (AP).

Guidelines

Notwithstanding this policy and subject to District, League, and Ontario Soccer regulations, the club may grant an exception to a player to register at an older age level providing that the player:

1. Is identified by the Director of Travel as a truly exceptional talent;
2. Approved by the Belle River Soccer Club Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Director of Travel

Exceptions are valid for one playing season only.

Players may be considered for an older division solely by coach assessment when a BRFC team does not exist for the player's age. In all other cases, any player being considered for playing up should meet the following guidelines for selection:

- Technical-Tactical Ability
 - A player must demonstrate that their individual skill and game understanding meets or exceeds the technical-tactical abilities of other participating players within the age group the player wishes to participate in.
- Physical Ability
 - A player must match other players within their age group in physical strength and speed, and have the ability to blend in with players of the intended age group.
- Cognitive Ability
 - A player must meet or exceed other participating players within the age group in decision making, problem solving, and critical thinking.
- Social-Emotional Ability

- A player must be able to comfortably interact with players within the intended age group on and off the field (games, training and social gatherings). This includes the mental strength that will be necessary when dealing with chronologically older opponents.
- Tryouts
 - In order to be selected to an older age level competitive team, an underage player, along with meeting the above guidelines, must rank within the top third of the players for the older age group.
 - Where tryouts have been missed or do not happen:
 - The parent or guardian of the player shall make their request in writing to the Club. The request can be made to via the Information Request form on the club website
 - The Club will assess the player
 - First, in their own age group environment and
 - second, if merit warrants, in the older age group environment

The request to play up an age group must be made annually and history of that player may be considered.

This policy has been developed to address individual player circumstances only and not the needs of an entire team.

All players assessed and approved to play up should be documented using the following forms:

Authority and Responsibilities

The Belle River Soccer Travel Director is responsible for the creation, maintaining, and enforcing of this policy.

This policy shall be reviewed a minimum of every two (2) years or when new developments in the Belle River Soccer Travel Program or any of its governing bodies occur. All revisions shall be maintained by the Belle River Soccer Travel Director and approved by the Belle River FC Travel Committee.

Enforcement

The Registrar will not approve players to a roster with a different birth year without the approval of an appropriate club authority as specified above.

Players in violation of this policy are subject to removal from the team, club suspension, and loss of registration fees.

Related Documents

- Player Placement and Playing Up Procedure (BRFC-000110-PRC)
- Playing Up Assessment Form (BRFC-000111-FRM)
- Placement and Playing Up Agreement (BRFC-000012-FRM)

Revisions

- A. This policy was originally approved on September 4th, 2025
- B. This policy will be reviewed by September 4th, 2027