



# Kitsap Alliance FC

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### Play-up Policy

Kitsap Alliance recognizes there are situations where players will play with an older age group. This experience is unique and situational to each individual player and each season. We identify two primary reasons for players to play up an age, one being a player's personal development and growth, and the other being team health. While evaluating those reasons through the lens of our experience and responsibility as a Premier youth soccer club, along with our philosophy and club values, we conclude that at the heart of the matter, the player's experience is always at the core of the decision. Through humility, we recognize that each player is part of something bigger than themselves – a team, a club, and a soccer community with shared goals and aspirations.

#### **Player Development - When a player is allowed/encouraged to play up due to developmental reasons and experience.**

As is universal in sports, young athletes develop physically, technically, tactically and psychologically at their own rates. Sometimes a player is identified as an early developer, in which playing with an older age group is where that player can experience the proper balance of challenge and success to foster positive development while undertaking the journey of sport. This is more common amongst younger ages before the playing field is leveled as other players of the same age catch up to the early developed athletes. We believe that as long as a player can demonstrate being advanced in all 4 foundational soccer pillars (physical, technical, tactical and psychological/psychosocial) then playing up can be considered. Through humility, we recognize that individual success is always connected to collective growth, and we make these decisions with both the individual and the greater good in mind.

#### **Team Health - When the formation or health of a team is in jeopardy, therefore so is the experience of many kids and families.**

Sometimes when teams form at tryouts, due to lack of tryout attendance or gaps in age groups during transition periods of roster growth, age groups may be combined in which case one or more players may be asked to play up an age group. This is done most often at first year 7v7

teams when players who have outgrown recreational soccer want to play competitively while occasionally happening in other ages throughout the club. When these teams are formed, coaches and directors first thoroughly evaluate the level of the team, the division and expected challenge of opposition play the team will experience, and then determine if it is believed to still be a positive experience for all players involved to train, compete and develop in the game under our mentorship and watch. If concluded that it can be, we ask parents/players if they are open to the experience and will commit to it. With humility, we assess how individual placements affect the larger team ecosystem, recognizing that our decisions impact not just one player but the entire club community.

### **Harmony/Cohesion between Player Development and Team Health**

Due to the unique nature of each play up situation, there are occasionally instances when the process of a player playing up can negatively affect team health. It can leave the at age team without enough players to be supported. It can also displace developing players at the older age which in subsequent years can negatively impact the team health. This is yet another reason why the club staff take playing up situations seriously with tremendous care and evaluation. When playing up and team health conflict there are always solutions, such as extra training and guest playing with older ages. As Kitsap Alliance is a Premier soccer club competing in the top youth premier league in the state, we are fully aware of the nuances of navigating a competitive environment (See Near). Additionally, while Kitsap Alliance is a Premier soccer club focused on true development, not only of a player's ability and knowledge of the game, but also their character, we are passionate and fully capable of navigating player experiences and growth (Look Far). Embracing humility in these decisions means understanding that we are all interconnected – individual player development must harmonize with team needs, and short-term decisions must align with long-term club vision.

Parents of players who are asked to play up or return to their own age are eventually put into difficult positions and we recognize this. We understand it can be hard to see your player adjust to new teammates, new coaches, and new information, especially after growing accustomed to a certain experience. However we also see the adjustment as an opportunity for positive growth in a vast number of skills directly related to your player's success on and off the field. As members of Kitsap Alliance, our expectations are for your trust in our methods and recognition of our values and the positive impact they will have on your player's life as well as their soccer journey. We ask for your harmony in this process through communication and commitment to the process. Through humility, we ask parents to recognize that their player's journey is part of a larger club mission and vision, where individual successes contribute to collective achievements and where learning to be part of something bigger than oneself is a valuable life lesson that extends far beyond the soccer field.

### **Policy Summary**

- Kitsap Alliance will listen to and evaluate any request from a player to play up an age.
- Player's playing up must re-tryout for the older age team each season.
- Players trying out for older ages must attend their own age tryout and demonstrate clear comprehension and ability that exceeds their age group in the 4 Foundational Pillars (Physical, Technical, Tactical, Psychological). If those tryouts conflict then one tryout at each age is necessary, youngest first and oldest second.
- Players trying out for an older team must demonstrate ability and impact in the older group that warrants at age player displacement and can only be considered for Blue team roster spots.
- Coaches, Evaluators, and Directors will deliberate throughout the tryout process to come to a conclusion.
- Directors will listen to and consider player and parent feedback from past experiences in the process.
- Kitsap Alliance FC will make the decision that is best for the player's growth, while maintaining the health and integrity of the entire club community through humble recognition that we are all part of something greater than ourselves.