



## Memorandum

Date: February 26, 2018

To: Member Association Presidents and Registrars

From: North Texas Soccer Board of Directors

**Regarding: United States Soccer Federation Player Development Initiatives**

You will recall that approximately two years ago the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) mandated certain Player Development Initiatives (PDI's). Those PDI's included changing to calendar year birthdates for age groupings, modifying the size of fields and goals for various age groups, and modifying the number of players on the field for the various age groups. The rules pertaining to the PDI's can be found in the North Texas Soccer (NTSSA) Bylaws and Rules, Section 3.14. The NTSSA Rules of Competition state that 8U and younger play 4v4, 10U play 7v7, 12U play 9v9, and 13U and older play 11v11.

One of the unforeseen consequences of the PDI's is what happens if an entire team, or division of teams, wishes to use the playing format of the next older age group to have more players on the field? This has now become a method used by competing organizations, other State Associations, and even some of our own Member Associations. We have discussed this issue with USSF, and they have not decided how to handle the unforeseen consequence. The Board of Directors has decided to allow Member Associations, playing leagues, and tournaments the ability to notify NTSSA of a "temporary exception" to the PDI's, and NTSSA Rule 3.14, while USSF and the board explores how this will be handled in the future.

Member Associations and tournaments may temporarily create playing formats that differ from what is described in the PDI's and NTSSA rules. Recreation and competitive teams may simply play up to the age group desired\*, or stay in the same age group and use the playing format of the next older age group if it is offered within their competition. If both playing formats are offered, the teams may not play each other in that competition. For academy play, teams will play in their age group with identification that the division is playing the format of the next older age group. For example, a 10U division may be created either as the PDI specifies as 7v7, or up one age group format to 9v9, to be identified as 10U (Playing 11U format 9v9). The Member Association, playing league, or tournament must notify NTSSA, in writing, that it is playing with the format of the next older age group, that is different than the NTSSA rules state, and acknowledge that this is a temporary permission until such time as USSF clarifies the PDI's going forward.

NTSSA highly recommends that teams, leagues and tournaments follow the PDI's as outlined by USSF and NTSSA rules for the best player development experience. However, we do recognize that conditions exist where individual teams may believe their best experience is with a greater number of players on the field, and customer expectations exist to make this option available to our players.

Please feel free to contact the state office, the Youth Commissioner, or the Chairman of Cups and Games, if you have any additional questions.

\*Players must still be of the minimum age to play academy or competitive soccer.