



Youth Players Playing Up Policy

“Playing Up” is where a player plays and/or trains with an older panel of players (eg. an Under 12 player plays with an Under 14 team). It is common place and sometimes necessary but can cause resentment among players, parents and mentors if, for example, an Under 12 player displaces a player who is “on the age” on the Under 14 team. This can prove extremely detrimental to less skilful players, to the point where they will eventually give up playing. Strong evidence is now emerging suggesting that playing up contributes to persistent injury in a player’s later playing career, as young players have not fully developed and while they may possess the skill levels required to compete in older age groups, their bodies have yet to develop enough to cope with the higher physical intensity involved. Our policy on this issue should be clear, consistent and fair and should cater for players of all abilities.

1. The panel a player is part of is determined by their age on 1st January, not their school year.
2. In team selection, preferences should be given to players who are “on the age” (ie. those who will be overage next year). If substitutes are available, then players who are “on the age” should play at least half the game in League and Friendly games and 20 minutes in Championship games. This is club *policy* for games up to and including Under 14 and *guidance* for older age groups. Selectors may deviate from this policy if there is a good reason not to select a player, other than the player’s ability (eg. indiscipline or poor attendance at training). In such cases, the player should be informed why he/she is not being selected.
3. The Club discourages “playing up” but allows it where players are needed to make up a team. “Playing up” should not deprive players who are “on the age” of a game.
4. In selecting a player or players to “play up”, preference should be given to those players who are closest to the age.
5. When a player plays up, the coach of his/her own team should be informed by the coach of the team in which he/she is playing up.
6. If a player refuses to train or play with his/her own age-group, the he/she may be prohibited from playing up.
7. A player is not allowed to play three or more years up (eg. an Under 11 playing on an Under 14 team) if substitutes are available.
8. A player is not allowed to play four or more years up (eg. an Under 10 playing on an Under 14 team) at any time in accordance with Section 6.18 of the GAA Official Guide 2011.
9. The Chairperson of the Youth Committee may sanction exceptions to this Policy. Only in the case of extreme circumstances shall exceptions to this policy be sanctioned.