



This Explanation is provided by USA Volleyball to help you better understand the Age Definition Requirements.

Thank you for your concern about the age group cutoff date. This issue is periodically reviewed by USA Volleyball and we are always looking for ways to grow the sport.

The age group cutoff date and others issues concerning Juniors are discussed and debated by the General Assembly of the Youth and Juniors division of USA Volleyball. This group is made up of Youth and Junior representatives from each of the 40 Regions of USA Volleyball. After the Juniors division makes its decision, the recommendation goes to the Regional Operations division which is made up of the commissioner from each region. The region commissioners endorse or come up with their own version of the recommendation. Final approval is made by the Board of Directors of USA Volleyball.

The make up of different age groups has gone through significant evolution to get to its current state. In the early 80's there were three age groups that had names other than ages. In the mid 80's the three age groups were renamed to 13 and under, 15 and under, and 17 and under. In the late 80's these were renamed to 14's, 16's and 18's to better reflect the actual ages of the participants. The age groups were based on the grade of school that the players were in unless a player was significantly older.

Having age groups based on grade in school would seem to be inherently unfair. A player that is over three years older than some of their opponents would in most cases have a significant advantage. A team made up of several players like this should be significantly better than most of its opponents. Middle school and high school teachers can testify that a years difference in age can make a tremendous difference.

In the mid-nineties the decision was made to make age group definitions base only on birthdays. This decision was made to even out the advantage gained by parents that held back their student so that they would be older than other kids in their grade and thus gain an athletic advantage. At the same time, it was decided that the group wanted to keep as many kids playing with their "ideal" age group... Seniors should play 18's, juniors 17's and so on.

The group realized that many kids like to play with classmates. Individual regions are allowed to grant waivers so that kids missing the cutoff date can still play with their younger classmates in local competitions. They decided to try to minimize the impact of older more highly skilled players competing against younger players at a high level by not allowing "waivered" players to compete at the Junior Olympic National Championships and National or Regional qualifying events.

At this time extensive research was done to find the date that would work best given the different cutoff dates for starting school around the country. At that time August 30th was determined to be the best date for achieving the desired results.

In May of 2003 the General Forum decided to revisit the age group cutoff date and whether to allow "waivered" players to compete at JO' or qualifying events. The

Interface Commission was directed to research the issue and come back with a recommendation. The results of the research are attached. The General Forum voted unanimously to keep the age group cutoff date the same. The group also voted unanimously to keep the rules on waived players the same.

As per USA Volleyball policy, the present rules will remain in effect till the end of the current quadrennium: the summer of 2008. At that time we may revisit the issue.

Thank you for your input. The next time we look at age groups, we will be sure to consider your concerns.