

Volleyball Alberta Age Categories

For 2020-2021 the Age Classes are as follows: Volleyball Canada's Domestic Development Committee recently voted to adopt the following Age Categories for the 2021 Volleyball Canada National Championships, which Volleyball Alberta will also follow.

Age Class	Year of Birth (This was updated for the 2021 Indoor Season)
13U	Athletes born from September 1, 2007 to Dec 31 2008 (16 months)
14U	Athletes born from September 1, 2006 to Dec 31, 2007 (16 months)
15U	Athletes born from September 1, 2005 to Dec 31 2006 (16 months)
16U	Athletes born from September 1, 2004 to Dec 31 2005 (16 months)
17U	Athletes born from September 1, 2003 to Dec 31 2004 (16 months)
18U	Athletes born from September 1, 2002 to Dec 31, 2003 (16 months)*

***For 2021 Club Nationals, 18U Age Category ONLY:** A team roster for the 18U category can include 2 athletes born from Jan 1-August 31, 2002, with the following restriction: Athletes are NOT permitted to be part of any USport, CCAA or other Post-Secondary volleyball programs for the current season (Sept 2020-May 2021)

Definition of Post-Secondary: Part of a Post-Secondary Volleyball program is defined as training in whole or part with team members of the post-secondary institution that they are attending. If an athlete is attending a post-secondary institution, verification shall be confirmed by the Head Coach of the program. This would include any athlete regardless of their post-secondary eligibility, including those commonly referred to as red-shirts. This does not include intramural programs or club programs within a post-secondary institute.

Rationale and recommendations: The expansion of age categories from 12 months to 16 months is due to the research provided in the LTAD 2.0 document published by the Canadian Sport for Life group. The paper lists the 10 Key Factors influencing Long Term Athlete Development, of which "Developmental Age" is listed as point #3. Page 28-30 provides generic information about Developmental Age and demonstrates the flaws of lumping athletes into their birth year for participation in sports. In short, the large physical discrepancies that can occur between youth within the same birth year create significant disadvantages for late developing male athletes and to a lesser degree, early developing females. Therefore, increasing the range of months within a competitive division gives athletes greater flexibility to choose a level that best suits their needs. Some athletes born from Sept-Dec will benefit from choosing a younger division, while other athletes who play at an advanced level would benefit from the challenge of playing up an age category. Athletes, parents and coaches should consider the **short term and long term benefits of playing up or down an age category**. If playing up provides the needed challenge for improvement, and there exists no significant social/emotional drawbacks in the older age category, the benefits of playing up far outweigh the drawbacks.



2021 Nationals Age Categories

Volleyball Canada recognizes the following age categories for competitions in the 2021-2022 season:

	18U*	17U	16U	15U	14U
Sept	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Oct	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Nov	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Dec	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Jan	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Feb	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Mar	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Apr	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
May	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
June	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
July	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Aug	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Sept	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Oct	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Nov	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Dec	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007

***For 2021 Club Nationals, 18U Age Category ONLY:**

A team roster for the 18U category can include 2 athletes born from Jan 1-August 31, 2002, with the following restriction:

- Athletes are NOT permitted to be part of any USport, CCAA or other Post-Secondary volleyball program for the current season (Sept 2020-May 2021)

Definition of Post-Secondary:

Part of a Post-Secondary Volleyball program is defined as training in whole or part with team members of the post-secondary institution that they are attending. If an athlete is attending a post-secondary institution, verification shall be confirmed by the Head Coach of the program. This would include any athlete regardless of their post-secondary eligibility, including those commonly referred to as red-shirts. This does not include intramural programs or club programs within a post-secondary institute.

Guiding Principles:

Long Term Athlete Development research demonstrates the flaws of placing athletes into their birth year for participation in sports. In short, the large physical discrepancies that can occur between youth within the same birth year create significant disadvantages for late developing male athletes and to a lesser degree, early developing females. Therefore, providing a range of months (16) within a competitive division gives athletes greater flexibility to choose a level that best suits their needs. There are athletes born from Sept-Dec who will benefit from choosing a younger division, while other athletes who play at an advanced level would benefit from the challenge of playing up an age category.

Athletes, parents and coaches should consider the short term and long term benefits of playing up or down an age category. Volleyball Canada recommends that if playing up provides the needed challenge for improvement, and there exists no significant social/emotional drawbacks in the older age category, athletes should play up.