

# USBC YOUTH MAXIMUM AGE CHANGE

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- To align with best practices in youth sports organizations, the maximum age for USBC Youth membership will be 18 starting with the 2020-2021 season
- USBC made the decision to lower the maximum age, with agreement from the Bowling Proprietors' Association of America and the International Bowling Campus (IBC) Youth Committee, from 20 to 18
  - For the 2020-2021 season, the age change will directly impact approximately 4,000 youth or 3.3% of the total youth membership
  - Approximately 10,000 youth, or 8.2% of the total youth membership, will turn 18 during the bowling season and be required to take the free online training through the U.S. Center for SafeSport if they plan to continue to bowl in a USBC youth league
- In May 2020, new age divisions for the 2021 Junior Gold Championships will be announced with the release of the tournament rules, including a separate division for U20 athletes
  - The separate U20 Junior Gold division impacts 790 Junior Gold athletes, or currently about 17% of qualifiers to the Junior Gold Championships.
- The Pepsi Youth Championships and Bowling.com Youth Open Championships will have a U18 division as the top age division starting with the 2020-2021 season
- The change better aligns USBC's membership and competition with policies from the U.S. Center for SafeSport, requiring SafeSport training for those 18 years of age and older if they plan to continue to bowl in a USBC youth league
  - Specific USBC policies are on [BOWL.com/RVP](https://www.bowl.com/rvp)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Why are these changes being made?

To align with best practices in youth sports organizations, USBC is drawing the line at 18, the legal age of becoming an adult, as its maximum age for youth membership.

This is not the first time USBC Youth has lowered the maximum age. In 2009, USBC Youth moved the maximum age from 22 to 20, and while it was a step in the right direction, the new age limit now aligns us with youth sports with the maximum age of 18.

Whether it was appropriate to have a 19-year-old and a 14-year-old in the same competition was something that had to be considered in looking at the age structure.

**2. Who is impacted by the change?**

It directly will impact approximately 4,000 youth, or 3.3% of the total youth membership, when it goes into effect for the 2020-2021 season. Approximately 10,000 youth bowlers, or 8.2% of the total youth membership, will turn 18 during the bowling season and be required to take SafeSport training if they plan to continue to bowl in a USBC youth league.

**3. When does the new youth age rule go into effect?**

Aug. 1, 2020, the start of the 2020-2021 season.

**4. How was the USBC Youth maximum age changed without being submitted to delegates for approval?**

Consistent with the authority granted to it under Article IV, Section E, Item 12 and Article VIII of the USBC Bylaws, the USBC Board has approved the change in the youth membership age from a maximum of 20 to a maximum of 18. These Articles grant the USBC Board the exclusive authority to amend, interpret and enforce policies and procedures, bylaws, rules and requirements, criteria and standards for athlete and youth issues.

**5. How will this change impact high school bowling?**

USBC Youth membership is not required by most high school athletic associations, so many athletes will not be impacted. Those who do turn age 19 or 20 still can compete in high school bowling as adult members, as long as the governing rules of those competitions support it.

**6. Will the age change affect the USBC Youth membership process?**

There is no change, with exception to the maximum age being lowered from 20 to 18.

**7. How will this impact USBC Youth leagues?**

The maximum age for USBC Youth members will be 18.

**8. How will this impact USBC certified adult/youth leagues?**

The maximum age for USBC Youth members will be 18; however, there is no additional changes with the exception of the U.S. Center for SafeSport requirements. See the Registered Volunteer Program (RVP) handbook located at [BOWL.com/RVP](http://BOWL.com/RVP) for more details.

**9. Will SMART be impacted?**

There will be no impact on SMART or youth scholarships. Though competitors over the age of 18 now will be new adult members, those who are 19 and 20 still can earn scholarships, provided the tournaments in which they compete are certified that way.

**10. Can an adult member bowling in an adult league have their prize winnings submitted to SMART?**

There are no age limitations on who can possess a SMART account. This would allow any collegiate student-athlete to submit their prize winnings into SMART.

**11. Can collegiate student-athletes bowling in an adult league accept the prize winnings in the form of a SMART scholarship?**

Yes. The SMART program does not have any limitations regarding the age or membership type for those who wish to have funds submitted to SMART.

**12. What other considerations contributed to this change?**

These changes better align USBC's membership and competition with policies from the U.S. Center for SafeSport, requiring SafeSport training for those 18 years of age and older that have regular contact with minor athletes. Specific USBC policies are on [BOWL.com/RVP](https://www.usbc.com/BOWL.com/RVP).

**13. Does the age change affect the Special Olympics membership?**

No. Special Olympics membership is separate from USBC Youth membership.

If you have additional questions about the USBC Youth age change that starts with the 2020-2021 season, please email [youthmembership@ibcyouth.com](mailto:youthmembership@ibcyouth.com).