

THE TRANSFER PROCESS

BACKGROUND

FIFA requires all players over the age of 12, regardless of their ability or citizenship, to receive an international transfer clearance (“ITC”) from their former country when they are attempting to register to play soccer in a different country (i.e., the United States). U.S. Soccer is responsible for obtaining that ITC on behalf of all players in the U.S. participating in affiliated leagues.

FIFA, however, prohibits the transfer of players between the ages of 12 to 17 (minors) unless the player meets one of two exceptions:

(a) The player has moved with his/her parents to the U.S. for reasons other than playing soccer (e.g. work);

or

(b) The player and prospective club are both located within 30 miles of an international border.

If the player can prove to FIFA that either of the two exceptions above has been met, U.S. Soccer would be permitted to request the ITC for that minor player. If the player does not meet one of the two exceptions above, the available options to register are listed below.

In 2009, FIFA instituted the FIFA TMS system. TMS is an online method to provide FIFA with documentation to prove that a player fits either of the two exceptions above. Documents are uploaded into FIFA’s system and are reviewed by FIFA, who then makes the final determination on whether an ITC request could be fulfilled for a minor player. However, U.S. Soccer has received a limited exemption from FIFA from the requirement to use the electronic FIFA TMS system. U.S. Soccer is now responsible for the documentation, review and determination of whether a player meets either of the two exceptions above. Although required to uphold the same standards as FIFA, U.S. Soccer is able to review the documents on an expedited basis and determine whether an ITC request could be made for a minor player.

International Transfer Clearance Options

Under FIFA’s rules, there are four options by which a player born outside of the U.S. can register with an affiliated league:

1. **Entry Prior to Age 12** - Players who entered the U.S. prior to the age of 12 (regardless of their current age) can supply a copy of an official document to prove that fact (e.g. – report cards, immunization records, doctor records).

2. **First Registration**

a. **U.S. Citizens** – U.S. citizens born outside of the U.S. (regardless of current age) may simply complete and sign the First Registration form attesting that the player has never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country. U.S. Soccer can immediately clear the player.

b. **Non-U.S. Citizens** – A player born outside of the U.S., who is currently over the age of 18, may also complete and sign the First Registration form. U.S. Soccer will contact the foreign federation for confirmation, and once that is received, U.S. Soccer can clear the player.

3. **Minors** – Any player currently between the ages of 12 to 17 who is NOT eligible for one of the proceeding methods must prove to U.S. Soccer that he/she meets one of the exceptions (a) or (b) above. Once verified, U.S. Soccer will request the ITC from the former federation. Per FIFA regulations, that federation has up to 30 days to respond after which U.S. Soccer can issue a provisional international transfer clearance.

ITC Request – Players 18 years of age and over who are not eligible for the Entry Prior to Age 12 or First Registration options, will need to fill out the ITC Request Form and submit it to U.S. Soccer. U.S. Soccer will then request the ITC from the former federation. Per FIFA regulations, that federation has up to 30 days to respond after which U.S. Soccer can issue a provisional international transfer clearance.

Please contact [Steven Murry](#) with any questions.