

IFSC UPDATE: Understanding the Age Category Changes for 2025

Ahead of the 2025 Boulder, Lead and Speed / Sport Climbing season, the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) have made changes to how they define age categories.

To help navigate the new age categories, we have broken down the changes and what it means for competitors.

The IFSC's goal is to create consistency across sports and international competitions. Mountaineering Scotland, The BMC and Mountaineering Ireland will align with global standards to ensure fairness and clarity for climbers and organisers.

What are the changes for 2025?

The IFSC is shifting how these age categories are defined. Currently, climbers' age groups are based on the **calendar year they were born**. This system is being updated to align more closely with international sports standards, such as those used in athletics and other Olympic sports.

Mountaineering Scotland, The BMC and Mountaineering Ireland are adopting the IFSC's age categories new framework for the Youth categories starting in 2025, please refer to the table below for information.

New Category Name	Birth Years	Age on 31 Dec 2025
U11	2016 or 2015	9 or 10
U13	2014 or 2013	11 or 12
U15	2012 or 2011	13 or 14
U17	2010 or 2009	15 or 16
U19	2008 or 2007	17 or 18
U21	2006 or 2005	19 or 20

Key changes Explained

1. Climbing Age "Rolls Forward" in January:

- A climber's competition age category for the entire year will be determined by their age on **December 31 of that year**.

- For example, if a climber turns 14 on November 10, they'll compete in the U15 category all year long, even if they're still technically 13 during the earlier part of the year.

2. **Clear Two-Year Bands:**

- Each Youth category remains a two-year group. As climbers grow older, they'll transition smoothly from one category to the next.

How will the updates affect competitors?

For most climbers, the changes may not feel drastic. However, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. **Check your 2025 category:** Use the new system to confirm which group you or your child will compete in.
2. **Plan training accordingly:** Climbers who must wait an additional year to compete internationally due to age restrictions face unique challenges. This extra time can be used strategically to refine skills, build experience in domestic competitions, and tailor training programs to ensure they are fully prepared when they become eligible for international events.

If you're unsure about which category you or your climber falls into, refer to the table above or consult with competition organisers.

For more enquiries, please contact:

- Jack Davis - jack@mountaineering.scot (Talent Development Officer)
- Heather McAslan heather.m@mountaineering.scot (Competitions Officer)