

SEPYLA  
Guidelines for Youth Team Levels  
2007

There are three general levels of youth teams that exist in SEPYLA and they are: “A” level teams that represent 7th through 8th grade; “B” level teams which represent 5th through 6th grade and “C” which represents 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. Within those general levels are a total of seven specific levels of teams: A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3 and C. There is no requirement that clubs have teams at each level and it can change from year to year. **The challenge and responsibility of each club is to evaluate their own programs and players and place their own teams into the proper level. Every attempt should be made to avoid significant mismatches of skill, age and size which can result in discouragement for one team and lack of challenge for another not to mention the potential for physical injury to younger and smaller players. Mismatches are created when you place your team at a lower level than they belong.** The following is an updated and expanded version of an e-mail that was sent out to all the SEPYLA clubs in February 2002 which provides guidelines and descriptions of each level:

C - This is the youngest grade level team which was originally designed for the young beginners in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Players in 5<sup>th</sup> grade may **not** be on this team. Any exceptions for 5<sup>th</sup> graders should be the result of a Competition Committee decision. Even if the Competition Committee permits a 5<sup>th</sup> grader or 5<sup>th</sup> graders to play on a C team, the permission may require the consent of the opposing team. In other words, the Competition Committee may allow 5<sup>th</sup> graders to play in C games only when the opposing teams’ coach has agreed to the 5<sup>th</sup> grader’s/ graders playing in that specific game. Over the years it has become common for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to play at this level and often the teams are a mix of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. It is up to the discretion of the club, coaches and parents to allow 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to play with the understanding that this was designed to be a 4<sup>th</sup> grade level team and some of the teams you have occasion to play may be all or mostly 4<sup>th</sup> graders.

B3 - Designed to be primarily a 5<sup>th</sup> grade team. However your program may not be able to field a team of all 5<sup>th</sup> graders. If that is the case and you need 6<sup>th</sup> graders to fill out the team, you need to consider playing at B2 which is primarily a 6<sup>th</sup> grade team of average skill that does not rise to the B1 level of highly skilled players. Your decision should be made based on the number and skill level of your 6<sup>th</sup> graders. A good barometer to use should be greater than 25% 6<sup>th</sup> graders is a B2 team regardless of their skill because of the age and size difference. If you have a highly skilled and physically large 5<sup>th</sup> grade team you could consider moving up to B2. Moving up to B2 is not a problem for the other club teams. Moving down to B3 or staying down at B3 is the problem.

B2 - Designed to be a primarily 6<sup>th</sup> grade team of average skill and experience who do not rise to the level of the B1 highly skilled and experienced players. If your program has a B1 team, your second team of less skilled 6<sup>th</sup> graders belongs here. Clubs who do not have a B2 and B1 team (meaning you only are fielding one “B” level team) will likely be in this level unless they have very few 6<sup>th</sup> graders. A good barometer to use should be

greater than 25% 6th graders is a B2 team regardless of their skill because of the age and size difference. Players in 7th grade may **not** be on this team. Any exceptions for 7th graders should be the result of a Competition Committee decision. At some point in the growth of your program you will need to decide when a mostly 6th grade B2 team gets moved up to B1. Moving up to B1 is not a problem for the other club teams. Moving down to B2 or staying down at B2 is a problem because you end up taking advantage of B2 5th grade teams. Discretion and good judgment should be exercised.

B1 - Designed to be a primarily 6th grade team of highly skilled and experienced players who are in this playoff division level. This level does not exclude 5th graders who possess those type of high level skills and experience. Players in 7th grade may **not** be on this team. Any exceptions for 7th graders should be the result of a Competition Committee decision. A program which has 10-15 6th graders who have played since 4th grade should field a B1 team.

A3 - Designed to be a mix of 7th and 8th graders of beginning or average skill and experience. If this team is made up of greater than 25% 8th graders, you belong at the A2 level. If you have a highly skilled and physically large 7th grade team you could consider moving up to A2. Moving up to A2 is not a problem for the other club teams. Moving down to A2 or staying down at A2 is the problem.

A2 - Designed to be a primarily 8th grade team of average skill and experience who do not rise to the level of the A1 highly skilled and experienced players. An A2 team may also be comprised of mostly 7th graders who were a highly competitive B1 team the preceding year with a few 8th graders. If your program has an A1 team, your second team of less skilled 8th graders belongs here. Clubs who do not have an A3 or an A1 team (meaning you only are fielding one "A" level team) will likely be in this level unless they have very few 8th graders. A good barometer to use should be greater than 25% 8th graders is an A2 team regardless of their skill because of the age and size difference. At some point in the growth of your program you will need to decide when a mostly 8th grade A2 team gets moved up to A1. Moving up to A1 is not a problem for the other club teams. Moving down to A2 or staying down at A2strong is a problem because you end up taking advantage of A2 mostly 7th grade teams. Discretion and good judgment should be exercised.

A1 - Designed to be a primarily 8th grade team of highly skilled and experienced players who are in this playoff division level and play high school rules. This level does not exclude 7th graders who possess those type of high level skills and experience.