



Playing-Up a Division

The age brackets for each Division and the January 1st birth date cut-off date are established by the Illinois and American Softball Associations (ASA). WGSA adopted these requirements to comply with our participation in the Quad City League and the DuKane Girls Softball League. Years ago when WGSA shifted from school-year based Divisions to these age brackets, some girls were caught in the gap between the new Jan. 1st and the former School District age cut-offs and thus would be playing a third season in the same Division. We offered these girls the option to “play-up” a Division. That transition period has ended.

During the transition period, experience has shown that “playing-up” was generally not in the best interest of most girls. Girls have struggled to perform at the higher level while those girls who remained at the appropriate age level had a very satisfying experience and gained confidence. This is most evident in the transition from Minors to Majors where the ball size and pitching speed increases. For the WGSA this translates into the difference between a girl being frustrated and discouraged by softball to feeling accomplished and confident, and being safe. Consequently, the WGSA strongly discourages the practice of “playing-up”.

We recognize, however, that there is the occasional exceptional athlete who could benefit from playing-up a Division. A girl who strongly feels that she can perform in a higher Division may petition the WGSA to be evaluated. The following requirements must be met:

- 1) Have already played two seasons at the age appropriate WGSA Division or equivalent if transferring in from another program.
- 2) Participate in the WGSA Winter Clinics in January and February where her performance will be observed.
- 3) Achieve an overall high score on her Skills Evaluation.
- 4) Submit to a rigorous “playing-up” skills test in the presence of her parent.

Following completion of this evaluation the WGSA Board and coaches will determine if “playing-up” is warranted. Note that any girl who is approved to “play-up” is expected to play three seasons in that Division.