

## **Halfmoon Baseball League 2015 Division Eligibility Guidelines**

### **Purpose**

One of the goals of the Halfmoon Baseball League (League) is to continue to grow our participation numbers and develop our players and the structure of our Divisions to the point whereby it is a rare exception when a player “plays up”, meaning he/she aspires to play in a division with older players. Our structure must provide opportunities for all kids to play and have fun playing while learning the game and progressively develop.

### **Playing Up Protocols**

The goal of the Recreational Division Eligibility Guidelines is to create specific protocols to assist parents and the League in arriving at a decision. Protocols also create guideposts and remove potential bias and opinion among those in the League who are responsible for making these decisions from year to year.

The factors a parent should consider when requesting to have their child “play up” include:

- Their child complains they are not having fun or are bored because of the level of competition.
- They feel that the child is such an exceptional athlete that they are not being challenged or will hurt another player whether it is by hitting or throwing too hard.

The factors for the League to consider in the discussion of “playing up” include:

- The player played two years at the younger division.
- The player has demonstrated that they have mastered the skills for the younger age group and are ready to move to the next level of play. (this should be confirmed by the prior year’s rec coach)
- The player has demonstrated that they can meet the challenges of playing at the higher level, i.e. for 10U they must be able to pitch reasonably well from the mound and comfortably play the infield, for 12U they must be able to throw the longer distances. For all levels they must be able to hit the average opposing pitcher.
- Players demonstrate the emotional maturity similar to the group they are requesting to join. (this should be confirmed by the prior year’s rec coach)
- The player will not be overly challenged by moving up to the point that they are no longer having fun playing.
- Holding the player seeking to move up significantly hinder his/her development.

In addition to the above factors, the League will consider allowing a child to “play up” due to extenuating family circumstances including:

- A family has siblings that are 1 year apart, and it is not possible for them to juggle 2 or more children’s team schedules.
- A family is unable to get their child to the games due to work schedule; transportation issues etc., but can arrange for others to assist.

Although these extenuating family circumstances are rare occurrences, acknowledging them is necessary to satisfy our purpose.

The final item to address is consideration for “playing up” based on the child’s actual birthdate compared to the May 1<sup>st</sup> cutoff date. Many will consider a child whose birthday is a couple days or weeks or even months past the cutoff as close enough in the grand scheme of time. However, this thought process defeats the purpose of establishing a cutoff date if there are automatic exceptions for a period of time thereafter. Therefore, requests will be evaluated per the protocols defined herein.

#### Division Specific “Playing Up” Protocols

Our Recreational Divisions structure and the corresponding player ages are as follows:

Division	Intended Ages	Specific “Play Up” Policy
T-Ball	4 & 5	N/A. This division is for 4 & 5 yr olds only.
6U	6	This division is for 6 yr olds only.
7U	7	This division is for 7 yr olds only.
8U	8	This division is for 8 yr olds only.
10U	9 & 10	This division is for 9 & 10 yr olds. However, the League will evaluate “play up” requests according to the factors above. Players will be subject to playing two years in this division unless they meet the move up criteria for 12U. An example of a 10U “play up” candidate as an 8 yr old is a player who previously excelled as a 7yr old on the previous season’s 8U Blue All-Star team.
12U	11 & 12	This division is for 11 & 12 yr olds. However, the League will evaluate “play up” requests according to the factors above.
15U	13 - 15	This division is for 13-15 yr olds. However, the League will evaluate “play up” requests according to the factors above.

#### Playing Up Request Procedure

Parents should make all requests to “play up” during the recreational season through the comments section of the online League registration process. The League will review and decide on all requests in consultation with the applicable Division Coordinator and Board of Directors prior to the start of the season.

#### Travel & All-Star Team Playing Up Request Procedure

All of the above conditions apply for Travel and All-Star teams depending on the makeup of teams formed each year. For example, if the League forms separate 9 & 10yr old Travel or All-Star teams, then 8yr old players will be considered for the 9yr old team and 9yr old players for the 10yr old team as defined above. If the League forms one or more 10U Travel or All-Star teams (comprised of 9 & 10yr olds) then 8yr old players will be considered as defined above.

Parents should make all requests to “play up” at least two weeks in advance of the tryout to allow the League the appropriate amount of time to review and decide on the request in accordance with the process defined above.