



Indoor Youth Competition Division Split Manual

Updated March 2026

(Valid until 2026-27 Youth Competition Manual is posted in the summer of 2026)

Updated March 2026

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Introduction

This document has been developed to support clubs and members in understanding the Division Split and the rationale behind its implementation. The changes outlined in this handbook are informed by the findings and recommendations of an independent third-party consultation conducted by [Sport for Life](#). ([Sport For Life Final Report](#))

Within this document, you will find:

- The evidence and reasoning that led to the division split decision
- A clear explanation of how the structure will function moving forward
- Division eligibility and operating rules
- Annual movement between divisions
- The process for submitting division switch requests

The goal is to provide transparency, clarity, and practical guidance to ensure clubs can confidently plan, register, and operate within the new structure.

Purpose behind splitting divisions

The continued and substantial growth of volleyball in Ontario has created new operational challenges across the youth competition structure. Significant expansion within the 6v6-16U Girl's age groups have increased demand for competition space and facilities.

This growth has made it increasingly difficult to secure sufficient facilities on a single weekend to accommodate all registered teams. It has also limited the ability to host all teams within an age category under one roof at Ontario Championships.

The Division Split is a structural response to these capacity constraints while supporting the continued growth of the sport.

Key Features to Be Preserved

Based on feedback from stakeholders and survey findings, several essential aspects of the OVA's competition structure will continue to be part of the experience during the transition to a streamed format for the Girls competition structure. While many rules and processes will remain unchanged, the focus here is on the core characteristics that define playing in the OVA.

The following elements will continue throughout the transition to the Girls Divisional split competition model:

- The OVA will maintain its variety of event types, including 9 on 3 courts, convention centre events, and two-day tournaments.
- Tiering of teams with promotion and relegation (Premier, Select, Championship, and Trillium) will remain in place.
- Both divisions within an age group will follow the same set of rules.
- Teams will retain the ability to play matches outside of their declared age group.
- The number of tournaments offered within each division of an age group will stay consistent.

What the Division Structure Means

Beginning in the 2026–27 season, select Girl's age groups (6v6 through 16U) will operate with two distinct divisions within the same age category: Division 1 and Division 2.

Each division will function as its own competition stream throughout the season. Teams will compete and be re-aligned within their assigned division, but movement between Division 1 and Division 2 will not occur during the season.

Divisional Split Example for 15U Girls

15U Girls			
Division 1		Division 2	
Rank	Team	Rank	Team
1	Spikers	1	Flyers
2	Blockers	2	Strikers
3	Stars	3	Giants
4	Falcons	4	Volleys
...

The remainder of this document outlines how the division structure will operate in practice, including placement processes, administrative procedures, competition regulations, and any changes or areas of continuity that clubs and teams should be aware of for the upcoming season.

Club Administration

Cost for Regular Season events and Ontario Championships

Event fees will remain consistent across Division 1 and Division 2. The implementation of the Division Split does not impact the cost of participation for clubs.

Both divisions will receive the same standard of event delivery and competition experience, and fee structures will remain aligned within each age group.

Specific event fees are outlined in the Youth Competition Manual on an annual basis.

Membership level

All athletes will still be required to register as Volleyball Canada Competitive members. Since teams from either division are permitted to attend VC Nationals should they choose, it is important to maintain a consistent membership across both divisions.

Access to Nationals

Teams from both Division 1 and Division 2 will continue to have equal access to Volleyball Canada Nationals each season. The Division Split does not provide additional weight or priority to Division 1 teams. All teams will follow Volleyball Canada registration and draw procedures.

For the purposes of pre-event seeding and reporting final Ontario Championship results to Volleyball Canada, teams will be listed with Division 1 teams first, followed by Division 2 teams. Within each division, teams will be ordered according to their Ontario Championship finish.

Example:

- There are 75 16U Girls teams from Ontario attending VC Nationals – 45 from Division 1 and 30 from Division 2. The Division 1 teams will be listed 1-45 in the results in order of their OC's finish in Division 1, followed by the Division 2 teams listed 46-75 in order of their OC's finish in Division 2.

Other Club Administration Policies

All other existing club administration policies will remain unchanged under the Division Split. This includes, but is not limited to, eligibility requirements, athlete transfer policies, club team organization guidelines, and team roster limits.

All provisions outlined in the **Club Administration** section of the Youth Competition Manual continue to apply equally to both Division 1 and Division 2. The Division Split does not alter these administrative standards.

Competition Rules & Regulations

Competition rules will remain aligned between Division 1 and Division 2 within each affected age group. The Division Split is not intended to create fundamentally different rule sets across divisions.

Any rule modifications approved for the 2026–27 season will apply consistently across the age group. Where appropriate, minor division-specific adjustments may be implemented to reflect the structure or objectives of each division.

As part of the annual review cycle, the OVA will evaluate potential rule changes in collaboration with membership and the Indoor Volleyball Development Committee following the completion of the current season. Any approved updates will be communicated through the annual *What's New* document released in the summer.

The sections below outline key changes or important areas of consistency that clubs should be aware of for the upcoming season.

Fair Play

Fair Play requirements will remain in place across all applicable age groups and competition formats. This includes 6v6 divisions, TLS, 15U pool-play formats, and the current 16U Girls Trillium tier. Under the new structure, the existing 16U Girls Trillium Fair Play requirement will transition to apply to 16U Girls Division 2. No additional Fair Play modifications are being introduced as part of the Division Split.

Age Eligibility

Age eligibility will remain the same as previous OVA seasons and will apply to both divisions within affected age groups. The following chart shows the breakdown of the age groups for the 2026/27 season:

Age Category	Chronological Age Class
4v4 Rallyball	Born 2015 or later
6v6 Rallyball	Born 2014 or later
TLS	Born 2013 or later

Age Category	Extended Age Class
4v4 Rallyball	Born between January 1st, 2014, and December 31st, 2014
6v6 Rallyball	Born between January 1st, 2013, and December 31st, 2013
TLS	Born between September 1 st , 2012 – December 31, 2012 *January 1 st , 2012 – August 31 st , 2012 – Application Required*

Age Category	Chronological Age Class
15 & Under	Born 2012 or later
16 & Under	Born 2011 or later
17 & Under	Born 2010 or later
18 & Under	Born 2009 or later

Age Category	Extended Age Class
15 & Under	Born between September 1st, 2011, and December 31st, 2011
16 & Under	Born between September 1st, 2010, and December 31st, 2010
17 & Under	Born between September 1st, 2009, and December 31st, 2009
18 & Under	Born between January 1 st , 2008, and December 31 st , 2008

Individual player movement

Individuals are permitted to move between teams in their club within the age eligibility guidelines found in the Youth Competitions Manual. Athletes are permitted to be listed on multiple rosters, with the following restrictions:

- A player may not compete on two different rosters within the same event.
- Lateral movement (within the same age group) is permitted only between teams competing in the **same division** and only prior to the roster lock date.

Example:

Prior to the roster lock date, a 16U athlete registered with the Bears (16U Division 1) may move laterally to the club's other 16U Division 1 team (the Lions). However, the athlete may not compete for both teams within the same event and is not eligible to compete for the Rockets, the club's Division 2 team within the same age group.

- After the roster lock date, athletes are locked to one roster **per age group** and may only compete for the team to which they are officially rostered within that age group.
- Roster lock applies by age group only. An athlete may be rostered on a team in their own age group and also be rostered on a team in an older age group, subject to standard eligibility requirements.

OVA Points System

Since Division 1 and Division 2 will operate completely independently of each other, the two divisions will feature the same Points System as outlined in the Youth Competitions Manual. This system will remain unchanged from previous seasons and will continue to adapt based on the number of teams registered under a given age group and division.

Ontario Championships Eligibility

Teams that wish to compete at Ontario Championships must compete in 2 of-age events within their respective division during the OVA regular season. This also applies to underage teams who are hoping to compete at an age-up Ontario Championships. (*see playing up section*).

Tournament Formats

Tournament formats will remain largely unchanged in each division. The standard 9 teams on 3 courts remains the best format for combining OVA competition requirements:

- Maximizing teams at a venue
- Single day event
- Efficient schedule
- Minimum 4 matches per team
- Clean re-alignment protocol
- Maximizes usable facilities (plenty of 3-court venues)

6,8 and 12-team formats will still be used as needed. There is a strong avoidance to 10 team formats, however, they may be used on rare occasions based on team registrations.

Playing Up

Teams will still be permitted to play up in OVA competitions. However, teams must only play up **in the Division that they compete in** at their respective age group level.

Examples:

- A Division 1 TLS Girls team would like to play up in the 15U Girls Provincial Cup. They are permitted to do so, but are only eligible to compete at the 15U Girls Division 1 level. Within that Division, they will be initially placed based on the **Initial Placement Adjustment protocol for underage teams found in the Youth Competitions Manual.**
- A Division 2 16U Girls team would like to play up in the 17U Girls Challenge Cup. They are permitted to do so, and since there are no divisions at the 17U Girls level, there is no restriction for them. They will be placed based on the **Initial Placement Adjustment protocol for underage teams found in the Youth Competitions Manual.**

Teams are also permitted to play up at Ontario Championships, as long as there are vacancies in that age group. Teams will be accepted to play-up at Ontario Championships events using the same process as usual.

Division Split Process and Season Details

6v6 Girls

Initial Division Split Method: Self-Declaration

Division 1 Team Target: No target capacity

For 6v6 Girls, the Division Split will be determined through a self-declaration process. Clubs will select the division that best aligns with their team’s competitive objectives and development pathway. This Self-Declaration will be permanent for the duration of the 2026/27 season.

For the first two events, teams will self-declare their tier of competition within their chosen division. Each division will offer two tiers of competition for teams to choose from.

Teams may adjust their tier selection for the second event following the completion of the first event. However, division placement remains fixed for the entire season and may not be changed.

See below for a breakdown of the tier options available for the first two events.

2026-27 Seasonal Structure for Divisional Split in 6v6 Girls

	Event #1 <i>Provincial Cup</i>	Event #2 <i>Challenge Cup</i>	Event #3 & #4 <i>McGregor Cup & Bugarski Cup</i>
Placement Method	Self-Declare Division & Tier	Self-Declare Tier only	Tiers created based on overall average after the Challenge Cup for McGregor Cup and re-alignment* for Bugarski cup
Division 1	Championship (Tier 1) Trillium (Tier 2)	Championship (Tier 1) Trillium (Tier 2)	Championship (Tier 1) Trillium (Tier 2)
Division 2	Championship (Tier 1) Trillium (Tier 2)	Championship (Tier 1) Trillium (Tier 2)	Championship (Tier 1) Trillium (Tier 2)

*7th-9th place teams moving down and 1st place teams moving up for Bugarski Cup

6v6 Ontario Championships

The 6v6 Ontario Championships will continue to operate under the traditional three-day format. Within each division (Division 1 and Division 2), teams will be placed into **Flights** (formerly known as “Divisions”). Each flight will conclude with tiers of 8 or 16 team playoff bracket, depending on the size of the flight. Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals will be awarded within each flight.

The champion of **Flight 1 within each division** will be recognized as the official Division Champion and will receive the Championship banner and t-shirts. Both Division 1 and Division 2 will crown their own Division Champion.

TLS Girls

Initial Division Split Method: Self-Declaration

Division 1 Team Number Target: 80 -112

Division 2 Team Number Target: 97+ (dependent on Division 1 final numbers and new teams joining the age group)

For TLS Girls, the Division Split will be determined through a self-declaration process. Clubs will select the division that best aligns with their team’s competitive objectives and development pathway.

Division 1 has a target capacity of 80 to 112 teams. Final placements will reflect both declared preference and the requirement to meet this target range.

If Division 1 Declarations Exceed 112 Teams

If more than 112 teams declare Division 1, adjustments will be required. In this scenario, previous season rankings will be used to determine final Division 1 placements in a fair and transparent manner. Teams not meeting the placement threshold will be assigned to Division 2.

If Division 1 Declarations Are Below 80 Teams

If fewer than 80 teams declare Division 1, adjustments may also be required to reach the target capacity. In this scenario, previous season rankings may be used to identify additional teams for placement in Division 1 in order to meet the 80 to 112 team target and support appropriate competitive balance.

Seasonal Structure

The first two events will operate under a self-declaration model within each division, offering two tiers of competition for teams to select from.

Teams will declare both their division and tier at the start of the season. Division selection remains fixed for the entire season and cannot be changed.

Following the first event, teams may adjust their tier selection for the second event if desired; however, movement between Division 1 and Division 2 is not permitted at any point during the season.

2026-27 Seasonal Structure For Divisional Split in TLS Girls

	Event #1 Provincial Cup	Event #2 Challenge Cup	Event #3 & #4 McGregor Cup & Bugarski Cup
Placement Method	Self-Declare Division & Tier	Self-Declare Tier only	Tiers created based on overall average after the Challenge Cup for McGregor Cup and re-alignment* for Bugarski cup
Division 1	Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)	Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)	Premier (Tier 1) Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)
Division 2	Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)	Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)	Premier (Tier 1) Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)

*7th-9th place teams moving down and 1st place teams moving up for Bugarski Cup

TLS Girls Ontario Championships

The TLS Girls Ontario Championships will continue to operate under the traditional three-day format. Within each division (Division 1 and Division 2), teams will be placed into **Flights** (formerly known as “Divisions”). Each flight will feature tiers with 8 or 16-team playoff bracket, depending on the size of the flight. Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals will be awarded within each flight.

The champion of **Flight 1 within each division** will be recognized as the official Division Champion and will receive the Championship banner and t-shirts. Both Division 1 and Division 2 will crown their own Division Champion.

Please note - Division 1 and Division 2 will take place on different event days and potentially different venues due to event capacity.

15U & 16U Girls

Initial Division Split Method: Previous Season Rankings

Division 1 Team Number Target: 96 - 112 Teams

Division 2 Team Number Target: 97+ (dependent on Division 1 final numbers and new teams joining the age group)

For both the 15U and 16U Girls age groups, the Division Split will be determined based on final rankings from the previous season's Ontario Championships in the corresponding category. Teams will be placed into divisions according to their Ontario Championship finish.

There will be two streams of competition for each age group – Division 1 and Division 2. Division 1 features a target number of 96 to 112 teams for the 2026/27 season, with Division 2 consisting of all remaining teams within the age group.

15U & 16U Girls Division Placement Process

Upon the conclusion of the 2026 Ontario Championships, an official ranking list will be posted on the OVA website. The following placement process will apply to both age groups:

Initial Ranking Publication

- In May 2026, all participating teams will be listed in rank order based on final Ontario Championship results.
 - 2026 TLS Girls results will inform 2026-27 15U Girls placement
 - 2026 15U Girls results will inform 2026-27 16U Girls placement
- A clear cut-off line will be shown at the 96th team.
- Teams ranked 1–96 will form the provisional Division 1 group.
- Teams ranked 97 and below will form the provisional Division 2 group.
- Division placement is assigned to the **club**, not to an individual team roster. If a specific team disbands or does not reform, the club retains ownership of its

allocated division position and may field a new team of the same age group in that placement

2026-27 Division Placement for 15U & 16U Girls

2026 Ontario Championship Results	2026-27 15U & 16U Girls Placement
Ranks 1-84	Division 1 Locked
Ranks 85-96	Bubble – Upper 12
Cut-Off	
Ranks 97-108	Bubble – Lower 12
Ranks 109+	Division 2 Locked

Bubble Teams

To allow flexibility near the division cut-off line:

- The 12 teams immediately above and the 12 teams immediately below the 96-team cut-off (24 teams total) will be designated as “bubble teams.”
- Bubble teams must submit a **Statement of Preference** to the OVA once they have a minimum of eight (8) signed athletes and no later than September 20, 2026.
- In this Statement of Preference, the team will indicate its preferred division for the 2026–27 season.
- Preferences will be reviewed and considered by the OVA Competitions team when finalizing division placements; however, placement in the requested division is not guaranteed.

Locked Teams

- All teams outside of the 24-team bubble range will be considered “locked” into their assigned division for the 2026–27 season.
- A locked team may request consideration for a division change by submitting an **Exceptional Request for Division Change** form.
 - Requests may be submitted once the team has a minimum of eight (8) signed athletes.
 - Requests must be received no later than September 20, 2026.

- The request must clearly outline the intention and rationale for the division change (e.g., significant roster turnover, relevant competitive results from the previous season, or other material considerations).
 - Approval is not guaranteed and remains at the discretion of the OVA Competitions Team.
- If an Exceptional Request for Division Change is approved, the team's Pre-Season Rank will be determined in accordance with the Initial Placement Adjustment protocols outlined in the Youth Competition Manual.

New Teams

- All new teams entering the 15U or 16U Girls competition structure will be placed in **Division 2** of their respective age group by default.
- A new team may request consideration for placement in Division 1 by submitting an **Exceptional Request for Division Change** form, following the same process, requirements, and deadlines outlined above for locked teams.
- Requests will be reviewed by the OVA Competitions Team and approval is not guaranteed.

Final Division Confirmation

Following the September 20, 2026 submission deadline, the OVA Competitions Team will complete its review of all Statements of Preference and Exceptional Requests for Division Change.

All teams that submitted a request will receive written confirmation of their final division placement for the 2026–27 season no later than **September 25, 2026**.

Once confirmed, division placements and Pre-Season Rankings for the 2026–27 season will be posted on the OVA website and considered final.

Seasonal Structure

Each division will build to a minimum of three tiers of competition throughout the season. At the start of the season, teams will be assigned to a tier based on their Pre-Season rank. Teams will be re-aligned using the regular protocol found in the OVA Indoor Youth Competitions Manual.

2026-27 Seasonal Structure For Divisional Split in 15U Girls

	Event #1 Provincial Cup	Event #2, #3 and #4 Challenge Cup, McGregor Cup and Bugarski Cup
Placement Method	Pre-Season Ranking + Initial Placement Adjustments for New Of-Age teams and Underage Teams	Re-alignment based on OVA Re-Alignment Policy* + Initial Placement Adjustments for New Of-Age teams and Underage Teams
Division 1	Select (Tier 2) Championship (Tier 3) Trillium (Tier 4)	Premier (Tier 1) Select (Tier 2) Championship (Tier 3) Trillium (Tier 4)
Division 2	Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)	Premier (Tier 1) Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)

**7th-9th place teams moving down and 1st place teams moving up*

2026-27 Seasonal Structure For Divisional Split in 16U Girls

	Event #1 Provincial Cup	Event #2 and #3 Challenge Cup and McGregor Cup	Event #4 Bugarski Cup
Placement Method	Pre-Season Ranking + Initial Placement Adjustments for New Of-Age teams and Underage Teams	Re-alignment based on OVA Re-Alignment Policy* + Initial Placement Adjustments for New Of-Age teams and Underage Teams	Teams with the best Top 2 points average from the first three events will be placed in the Grand Prix. Other teams will be re-aligned based on OVA Re-Alignment Policy* + Initial Placement Adjustments for Underage Teams
Division 1	Select (Tier 2) Championship (Tier 3) Trillium (Tier 4)	Premier (Tier 1) Select (Tier 2) Championship (Tier 3) Trillium (Tier 4)	Grand Prix (Tier 1) Select (Tier 2) Championship (Tier 3) Trillium (Tier 4)

Division 2	Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)	Premier (Tier 1) Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)	Grand Prix (Tier 1) Championship (Tier 2) Trillium (Tier 3)
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**7th-9th place teams moving down and 1st place teams moving up*

New for 2026/27! Top teams from both Division 1 and Division 2 for the 16U Girls Age Group will feature a Fall Classic event at the EY Centre in Ottawa for their Provincial Cup and a 2-day Grand Prix to conclude the regular season.

Ontario Championship

The 15U and 16U Girls Ontario Championships will continue to operate under the traditional three-day format. Within each division (Division 1 and Division 2), teams will be placed into **Flights** (formerly known as “Divisions”). Each flight will feature tiers with 8 or 16-team playoff bracket, depending on the size of the flight. Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals will be awarded within each flight.

The champion of **Flight 1 within each division** will be recognized as the official Division Champion and will receive the Championship banner and t-shirts. Both Division 1 and Division 2 will crown their own Division Champion.

Please note - Division 1 and Division 2 will take place on different event days and potentially different venues due to event capacity.

Post-Season Movement (for 2027-28 season and beyond)

The same processes and procedures outlined for the initial season will apply to future division splits within the 6v6–16U Girls age groups.

Division 1 target capacities may be adjusted in future seasons based on overall participation numbers. Any revised target number for an age group will be communicated to clubs no later than two (2) months prior to that age group’s Ontario Championships event for the applicable season.

The established target number will determine the division cut-off line and, accordingly, the number of bubble teams identified between Division 1 and Division 2 each season.

Implementation & Adjustment Authority

The Division Structure for 6v6–16U Girls has been developed to support the continued growth of youth volleyball in Ontario. While every effort has been made to establish clear and stable processes, participation numbers and facility capacity may require operational adjustments.

The OVA reserves the right to modify division sizes or realign teams prior to the start of the season if necessary to ensure appropriate capacity, scheduling feasibility, and successful event delivery, including regular season weekends and Ontario Championships.

Any such adjustments will be communicated to clubs and stakeholders in a timely and transparent manner. Changes will only be made where required to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the competition structure.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Statement of Preference

(Official Form will be submitted via Cognito Forms)

STATEMENT OF PREFERENCE (Team inside “bubble” for 15U/16U Girls Age Group)

TEAM NAME:

COACH NAME:

PREFERRED DIVISION FOR 2026/27 SEASON:

- Division 1
- Division 2

REASON FOR CHOICE:

LIST OF ATHLETES ON ROSTER:

1. *ATHLETE NAME – PREVIOUS OVA TEAM – PREVIOUS OVA TEAM RANK*

Acknowledgement that they are submitting their preference for the 2026/27 season, this request is not guaranteed. The OVA Competitions Team will review each request and notify all teams by September 25th, 2026.

SIGNATURE _____

Appendix II – Exceptional Request for Division Change

(Official Form will be submitted via Cognito Forms)

EXCEPTIONAL REQUEST FOR DIVISION CHANGE

TEAM NAME:

COACH NAME:

CURRENT RANK (Put NR if new team):

REASON FOR REQUESTING DIVISION SWITCH: (list of valid reasons below)

- Significant roster turnover (better or worse) (need 8 athletes that create an average within the top 50% for Division 1, or for Division 2 they need over half their roster to be new to OVA + remaining average within the bottom 60% of the age group (a.k.a 80 or lower in an age group of 200 teams)
- Results that show they overperformed/underperformed
 - o Need proof of results to confirm (i.e won/lost against comparable teams in higher/lower division)

LIST OF ATHLETES ON ROSTER:

2. *ATHLETE NAME – PREVIOUS OVA TEAM – PREVIOUS OVA TEAM RANK*

Acknowledgement that they are submitting their request for the 2026/27 season, this request is not guaranteed. The OVA Competitions Team will review each request and notify all teams by September 25th, 2026.

SIGNATURE _____

NOTE: All new clubs are automatically placed in Division 2 for their first season.

Appendix III - Self-Declare Guide for Teams

To support clubs in the self-declaration process for the 6v6 and TLS Girls age groups, the OVA will provide age-specific Self-Declaration Guidelines in advance of the submission deadline. These guidelines are intended to assist coaches in evaluating the most appropriate division for their team.

6v6 Girls Self-Declaration Guidance

Division 1 may be appropriate for teams that:

- Have more than half of the roster previously competing at the 6v6 level.
- Have an average roster ranking within the top 60% of the previous 6v6 Ontario Championships results.
- Demonstrate early comprehension of team play, including:
 - Strong ball control skills
 - Developing attacking fundamentals
 - Understanding of offensive and defensive systems
- Include athletes demonstrating advanced physical development for their age (e.g., height, physical literacy, overall athleticism).

Division 2 may be appropriate for teams that:

- Are new to OVA competition.
- Require additional time for technical and tactical volleyball development relative to their peers.

These guidelines are advisory in nature and are intended to support informed decision-making. There is no requirement to strictly adhere to these indicators. The OVA remains confident in clubs and coaches to determine the most appropriate competitive environment for their athletes.