

RTJBL Recreation Division Goal

Our number one league goal as we create divisions is to place players where they will have the best experience and want to continue to play the following season. Our league has divisions up to 18 years old. We want to have as many players as possible continue until then, and building confidence is critical to making that happen.

Play Up Requests

During registration we allow for families to request to have their child play up one grade division. Typically this has been the first travel team selected and sometimes a few other playup requests are authorized to fill out division player counts. When evaluating requests, the league takes into account recreation evaluations from the previous season, travel evaluations if it pertains to that player, as well as direct feedback from the coaches or other board/committee members that may know the players.

Why do we setup divisions and have some children play up?

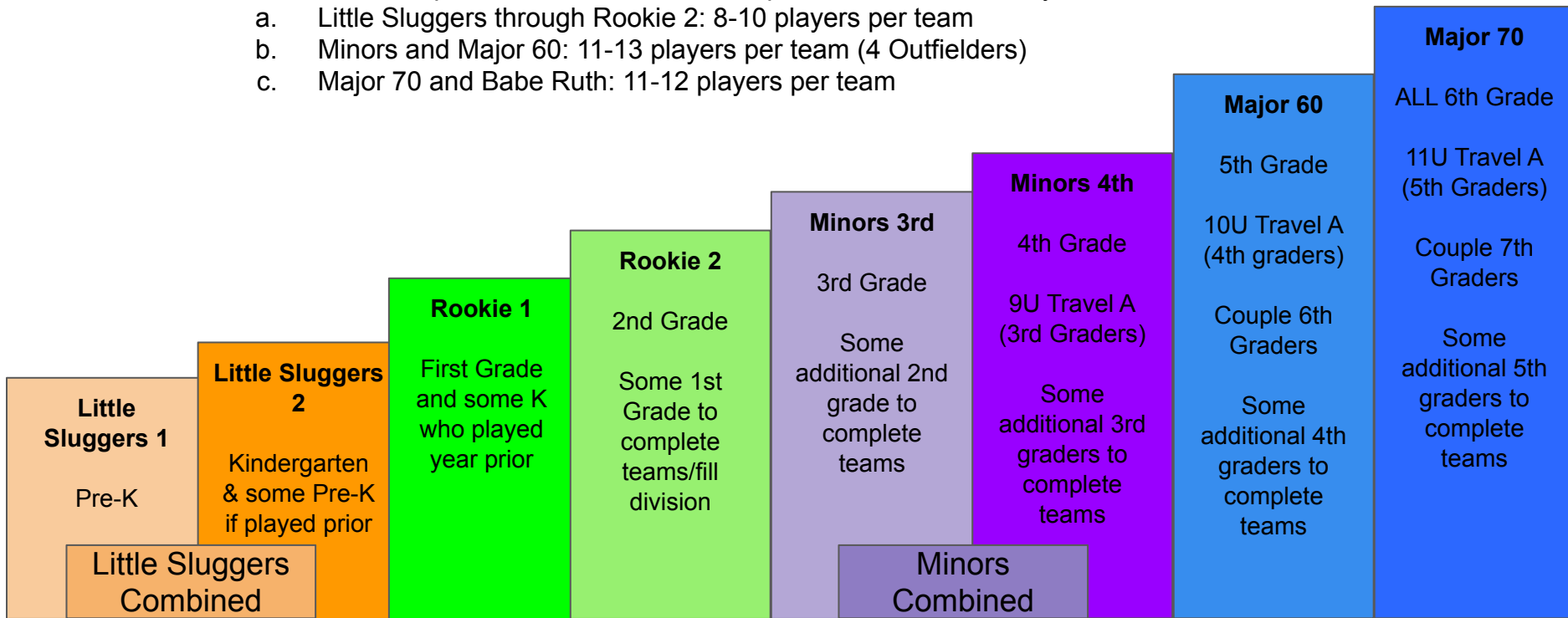
-The divisions are set up this way in order to give every player the best experience. The play up process creates an optimal developmental environment for all players. Those playing up have an opportunity to be challenged. Those who do not play up likewise get to play in an environment that will challenge them while helping to build their confidence.

-Baseball is a very difficult sport, and is a sport of failure. As a league we want your child to have a good experience, getting hits, pitching more often, being a leader, etc. If we play by grade level only, more often than not, the top players will get the top positions and opportunities for the entire baseball experience. The more even the playing ability within the level, the better opportunities for kids to play more roles and build confidence as they develop from 3rd to 6th grade. In 6th grade all of the kids group up again in the Major 70 division.

Typical RTJBL Division Setup through 13U/7th Grade

Goals:

1. Create great baseball experiences so kids come back the next year
2. Even number of teams per division so no one has open week on a Saturday
 - a. Little Sluggers through Rookie 2: 8-10 players per team
 - b. Minors and Major 60: 11-13 players per team (4 Outfielders)
 - c. Major 70 and Babe Ruth: 11-12 players per team



RTJBL Recent Recreation Registration Counts

	2015 Grade	2016 Grade	2017 Grade	Grade 2018	Grade 2019
Pre-K	33	30	26	15	15
K	43	45	46	33	34
1st	46	49	55	36	41
2nd	50	53	43	47	38
3rd	55	43	44	42	46
4th	45	38	27	36	40
5th	38	41	44	27	33
6th	38	41	34	34	28
7th	22	34	16	27	22
8th	19	16	13	4	17
9th	10	10	13	4	3
10th	5	8	6	10	3
11th	13	2	6	7	9
12th	8	12	4	13	6
	425	422	377	335	335

RTJBL Divisions FAQ

Why does RTJBL do playups?

- Play-up opportunities help create optimal developmental opportunities for all players. Both those who play up and those who do not play up. We aim for teams in each division to be built fairly and equally (10-12 kids per team, consistent distribution of skill levels across all teams within a division)
- Players do not have to play up to make travel teams for their age group

Why don't I know the times and days when my child will play when I register? Timeline:

- Registration by end of January (including coach registration)
- Drafts in February
- Rosters communicated to families in March, practices begin for most divisions
- Manager availability drives most of the scheduling decisions

RTJBL Divisions FAQ (continued)

How does the league establish teams?

- During each season, managers submit evaluation forms for each player (R2 - Majors)
- Using registration data and evaluation forms, player pools established for each division
- Once division player pools are established, each player is assigned a draft round, and division directors coordinate a live draft with all division managers
- Division directors and league admins review rosters to ensure the teams are fair, considering evaluations, towns, schools, and car pool requests (for younger ages)
- It is important that each town have a presence on each team in our multi-town league
- After rosters are approved, managers communicate rosters to families, and the league orders uniforms (late registrations are assigned to the most appropriate team)

RTJBL Divisions FAQ (continued)

Why don't all players play all innings?

- With 9 or 10 positions on the baseball field and 10-12 players on a team, some players will need to sit out each innings (should be balanced across games and across the season)
- Each player must play at least one inning of infield and one inning of outfield per game
- Younger divisions have more flexibility to put all players on the field

Play up process... alternative approaches

There may be no perfect solution, but other known options are:

1. Leave process as-is but merge divisions with Branchburg, lightening constraint of forming even number of teams for each division. Each league has its own teams, but Branchburg teams play R/T teams regularly → protects against registration swings year-on-year, creates logistical challenges, different competitive dynamic
2. Offer dedicated 3rd & 4th grade division and dedicated 5th and 6th grade division, eliminating play-ups → diminishes developmental environment for both the strongest and least developed players, allows players to stay with age-group peers
3. Make Minors a 3rd grade division, maybe with some 2nd graders playing up. M60 becomes combined 4th and 5th grade division → reduces some of the flexibility needed to create fair teams, diminishes developmental environment for both the strongest and least developed players, allows players to stay with age-group peers
4. Leverage unaffiliated evaluators: host a dedicated evaluation day where all players attend and perform pre-determined drills. Performance is evaluated and those evaluations shape player pools and draft rounds for each division. Difficult to get substantial participation on any given evaluation day; evaluator calibration is a challenge. Was done for many years and dropped to what we use now (coach evaluation from previous season)