

Division Criteria

IN-HOUSE AND TRAVEL DIVISIONS

In order to best serve, develop, and challenge players, SWS offers two separate divisions of play for participants. The format of the two divisions is similar: a 20 game regular season, standings kept, and an end of the season tournament. Both divisions follow the same rules (ASA with SWS additions) and the seasons closely coincide. The commitment and ability of the participants is the decided difference.

The first level of play is the In-house division. This division (and SWS itself) originated from the fact that while many communities offer in-house programs through all age levels, often times participation at the older levels is too low to make an in-house league viable. By combining teams from many communities, participants are able to play full and varied schedules, even if their home organization is only able to produce a single team at a given level.

This “traveling in-house” program is a necessity to many 16U and 18U teams. At the 10U, 12U, and 14U levels it is often a choice, the travel and variety of opponents being seen as a benefit over staying with a true “in-house” program. These levels often have a large number of participants, resulting in considerable disparity in talent and ability between teams. To create as much parity as possible, these divisions may be further divided into In-house “A” and In-house “B”. An organization must be a member of Southwest Suburban Softball in good standing to participate in the In-house division.

The second level of play offered by SWS is the Travel division. This division is for low to mid-level ASA “B” teams. In other words, those teams which have moved beyond the in-house level. Besides the ability level, the main difference from the In-house division is scheduling. Games are scheduled for weeknights in order to leave weekends free for participation in outside tournaments. Games will be scheduled as doubleheaders when possible, and on open weekends. Following approval by league officers, non-SWS member teams will be allowed to participate in this division.

SWS encourages teams to play at a level commensurate with their ability, and following the SWS Team Review policy, can deny In-house participation to teams that do not, in the judgment of the board, belong in an In-house level program.

The SWS division criteria policy has been developed to accurately evaluate teams. The three main points of this policy are:

SWS Division descriptions
SWS Tournament Participation Limits
SWS Team Review Policy

SWS Division Descriptions

SWS member organizations have different policies and practices regarding registering and selecting players. Each organization uses different terminology to describe levels or teams. Thus, depending on the town, terms like In-house team, travel team, Tournament team, All-star team, "A" team, and "B" team, all mean different things. Below are the **SWS** definitions for the three levels of play in SWS. Using these guidelines to evaluate teams will go a long way towards ensuring placement in the appropriate division.

- **In-house "B"**

Emphasizes basic player development and instruction. Many teams at this level are assembled in the spring; there is little, if any, off-season instruction. For many teams in this division the majority of players are in the younger half of the age group. Pitchers have had little formal instruction, and typically don't practice during the off-season. The SWS In-house "B" division is designated as the lowest level of fastpitch play. No organization running a current "in-house" program of their own will be allowed to enter a team culled from that program into the SWS In-house "B" division. Teams selected from an ongoing "in-house" program will be required to play SWS In-house "A".

- **In-house "A"**

Continued player development with an increased level of competition. Many "A" teams are organized in the fall; some players participate in "open gym" workouts, team practices or private instruction during the off-season. Teams with the majority of their players at the older limits of the age group are likely to be "A" teams. At this level pitchers have received some level of formal instruction, and typically practice during the off-season. Organizations that operate a true In-house program of their own and assemble a team(s) from that program to participate in SWS will play in the "A" division.

- **Travel**

Competitive play at the low to mid ASA "B" level. Teams are organized in the fall, practice as a team during the off-season, with many players taking additional instruction on their own. Pitchers at this level take

lessons and/or attend clinics, and practice during the off-season. Teams capable of playing ASA "A" tournaments, making it to the national level of ASA "B" play, or playing 6+ tournaments may find the level of competition too low in this division.

SWS Tournament Participation Limits

Unless circumstances require the league to alter the schedule, all SWS teams will be scheduled for and expected to participate in 20 regular season games and the SWS end of the season tournament. In addition to that schedule, teams may elect to participate in outside tournaments or round-robins subject to the division limits outlined below.

Team participation in non-SWS tournaments or round-robins during the SWS season for each age division will define which division a team is eligible to register for. A team exceeding their division restrictions will be subject to a minimum penalty of exclusion from the SWS tournament, to a maximum penalty of expulsion from the league, as determined by the Sportsmanship committee.

- Teams in the **In-house "B"** division may participate in a maximum of two (2) outside tournament or round-robin during the SWS season.
- Teams in the **In-house "A"** division may participate in a maximum of three (3) outside tournaments or round-robins during the SWS season.
- Teams in the **Travel** division may participate in unlimited ASA "B" level tournaments or round-robins, but no ASA "A" level tournaments in a calendar year.