

Team Formation Process

Objective:

The **objective** of the Team Formation Process is to field teams in such a manner that league games are as competitive as possible each week during the season. Associations are to make every effort to form their teams in such a manner as to balance the competitiveness of their teams as closely as possible. Because the situation for each association is different, the athletic directors are to ensure that teams in their respective associations are formed in a manner that “balances” the competitiveness of their teams as closely as possible.

For associations with multiple teams in the same age/weight divisions, the formation of teams is normally accomplished by (1) having players return to their team from the previous season (2) moving players together from the same team in a lower age/weight division to a team in a higher age/weight division (3) drafting players from the player pool (players who are new to the association or who request to play for a different team) to complete the roster.

There are many needs, wants and requests that are part of the decision making process in the formation of teams. However, the formation of teams in such a manner that league games are as competitive as possible each week during the season is the **objective** for assigning players to teams.

While associations have some flexibility in the formation of teams, the following process is a good guideline for the team formation process.

Player Assignment Process:

Returning Player Team Assignment:

- a. Players playing in the same age/weight Division may be assigned to the same team on which they participated the previous year.
- b. Players/Parents may **not** request that a player be assigned to a team other than their team from the previous year. However, a player or parent may request for the player to be removed from his/her prior team and placed back into the pool of players available for the draft process.
- c. A player who moves up to the next higher Age/Weight Division level may move up with the Head Coach and/or players of his lower age/weight division team. **Associations may place all players moving to another age/weight division in the player pool; or place all players in an age/weight division in the player pool.** If a player/parent wishes that the player not return to his prior team upon moving up to the next level of play, that player is placed into the player pool of available players for the draft process.

When teammates from multiple teams in an age/weight division are moved to teams in a higher age/weight division, the players are to be assigned in a manner to balance the competitiveness of the teams.

Example: An association has players returning to three Jr. PeeWee teams and players from three Mitey-Mite teams moving up to the Jr. PeeWee age/weight division.

Jr. PeeWee #1 – Strongest returning JPW team
Jr. PeeWee #2 – Medium strength returning JPW team
Jr. PeeWee #3 – Weakest returning JPW team

Mitey-Mite #1 – Strongest returning MM team
Mitey-Mite #2 – Medium strength returning MM team
Mitey-Mite #3 – Weakest returning MM team

When assigning the returning Mitey-Mite players to Jr. PeeWee teams:

Mitey-Mite #1 is assigned to Jr. PeeWee #3
Mitey-Mite #2 is assigned to Jr. PeeWee #2
Mitey-Mite #3 is assigned to Jr. PeeWee #1

New Player Pool:

Head coaches shall identify coaches' sons and any player who played for the head coach the previous year. These players will be positioned in the draft process to ensure an even draft. Coaches' sons who are new to the team will be placed in the first draft rounds. The other returning players will be placed in the middle of the draft.

If a parent requests the reassignment of their child from their existing team, the player shall enter the **New Player Pool** and is available to any other team in the age/weight division through the assignment process.

Each team shall be allowed three sons of coaches to be assigned to a team, including the head coach, for player assignment purposes.

All players who did not play for the Association the previous year shall be placed into a "**New Player Pool**" and will be available for selection by all teams. A new player is defined as a player who did not participate in the associations' football program the previous year, has moved up from a lower age/weight division and is not accompanied by a coach and his previous year's teammates or placed in the pool at the request of the parent despite qualifying as a returning player to an existing team.

Coaches shall not be allowed to recruit new players to their teams from other Associations. Under National Pop Warner rules, no player may be recruited from another Pop Warner team outside the Association region without a release from the other Association.

Selection Process

Each head coach shall identify their **Coaches' Sons** and their other returning players. Coaches' Sons shall be assigned in the selection positions beginning with draft slot #1. All other players assigned to the team shall occupy selection positions beginning with the middle of the roster and extending prior to the middle round and immediately past the middle round depending on the number of returning players. This process will place all returning players in the exact middle of the draft.

As an example, if an Association will have 26 players per team, the middle round of the draft would be draft round 13. If a team has three coaches who have sons playing and 10 returning players; the coaches' sons will be placed in draft slots 1, 2, and 3. Five of the other returning players will be placed in draft slots 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 and the other five players will be placed in draft slots 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

Coaches shall select players from the **New Player Pool** until their teams have reached a maximum number of players as defined by the Association. The Athletic Director may increase the maximum number of players per team if necessary.

II. Timing of Player Selections and Assignments

Player selections and assignments shall be made by head and assistant coaches prior to the first team practice in August. Associations may allow all players in the same Age/Weight Division to practice together during the first 2 weeks of practice to allow head coaches and assistant coaches to evaluate all players for the upcoming player draft.

The Athletic Director shall monitor and conduct the selection process and shall make every effort to insure that skill positions be equally balanced among the teams.

Any player who registers after the formation of teams, is to be added to the next team in a continuation of the selection process, i.e. the next team in the selection process gets the next player who registers.

Replacement of a head coach

If a head coach does not move up in age/weight division or chooses not to coach in a subsequent year, any assistant coach of that head coach may apply for the position of the departing head coach and receive the same selection and assignment rights previously afforded the head coach if accepted as head coach.

The above replacement process is subject to the approval of the Athletic Director.

Association Specific alterations to the draft process

An Association may decide to allow any **new** teams (teams that have no returning players) to have the first two or three picks in the draft process to enable new teams to “catch up” on skilled players. This decision should be incorporated into the Associations draft process.

An Association may make variations to the draft process as long as the variations are more stringent than the Pop Warner Little Panther’s draft process guidelines and that the variation has been approved by the Director of Football Operations.

An Association may allow teams to swap several players once the draft is completed if there is a need to either balance the teams or to accommodate special needs of players such as carpooling issues, etc. This swap process may only take place during the draft and is not allowed once the draft meeting has ended.

A sample of the draft process for three teams in the same Age/Weight Division is as follows:

(DRAFT FACTS)

- The Association has decided that there will be 26 players per team for this Age/Weight Division.
- Team A has 12 players returning.
- Team B has 6 players returning and 1 new coach who has a son who plays.
- Team C is a new team with 3 coaches who have sons who play.
- The association allows any new team to have the first 2 draft picks to all the teams to attempt to balance the overall talent of each team.
 - a. Each team should pick a number out of a hat to determine their draft pick number. In this scenario, Team A is draft pick 1, Team B is draft pick 2 and Team C is draft pick 3.
 - b. The draft will be a “snake” type draft where the order of picks will be as follows:

Team A	Team B	Team C
1	2	3
6	5	4
7	8	9
12	11	10

(CONTINUE THE DRAFT ROUNDS AS ABOVE UNTIL ALL DRAFT ROUNDS ARE INDICATED)

The actual draft:

The draft process will start with the new team (Team C) making the first 2 (catch up) draft picks. The next pick would be team A with draft pick #1. Since the B Team has a Coaches’ son, they will place the name of the Coaches’ son in their first #2 draft slot which is the #2 overall draft slot. Team C would have the next two draft picks (#3 and #4 picks) and then team B would have pick #5.

Since Team A has 12 players returning, they would place the 12 players into the draft process in draft rounds 7 through draft round 18. Team A will not have draft picks in draft rounds 7 through 18. Team A will begin drafting again at round 19.

Since Team B has 6 players returning, they will place these returning players in draft slots 10 through 15. Additionally, Team B has a new Coaches' son who will be placed into their draft round 1 (slot 2). Team B will not have draft picks in round 1, and rounds 10 through 15. Team B will begin drafting again in round 16.

The draft continues until all players have been drafted. Each team should fill in the draft slots of their returning players or coaches' sons in the appropriate draft slots prior to the beginning of the draft. The draft would then continue in the "snake" process until all players have been drafted.