

Grade-Based Division FAQ - 2026 Season

Overview of the Change

Why is the league switching from age-based to grade-based divisions?

We're making this change to keep girls playing softball longer and better prepare them for high school competition. By switching to grade-based divisions, we can align our program with the school year and high school eligibility requirements, creating a clearer pathway that keeps players engaged up to and through 9th grade in some cases. This change also allows teammates to play with their school classmates and groups players by similar social and developmental stages. We understand change can be difficult, but keep in mind this is happening at the MGS League level, meaning all teams across Marin will be undergoing the same changes at the same time.

What are the new divisions?

- **6U:** Pre/T-K (*entering K in Fall 2026*) + Kindergarten
- **8U:** 1st & 2nd grade
- **10U:** 3rd & 4th grade
- **12U:** 5th & 6th grade
- **15U:** 7th, 8th & 9th grade (*non-high school players*)

When does this change take effect?

The grade-based division system will begin with the 2026 spring season.

Determining Your Division

Which grade do I use to determine my division?

Use the grade your player will be in during the **2025-2026 school year** (*the school year happening during our season*).

My daughter was held back a grade. Which division does she play in?

She plays in the division that corresponds to her current grade level, regardless of her age.

My daughter skipped a grade. Which division does she play in?

She plays in the division that corresponds to her current grade level. If you have concerns about physical size differences, please contact the league director to discuss your situation.

What if my child is homeschooled?

Homeschooled players should register for the division that corresponds to the grade level they would be in based on their age and typical academic progression. If you need assistance determining the appropriate division, please email us at twincitiessoftball@gmail.com

My daughter's birthday is right around the school enrollment cutoff. How does this affect her?

Under the new system, your daughter's birthday relative to school cutoffs is no longer directly relevant. What matters is which grade she's actually enrolled in during the 2025-2026 school year.

Impact on Current Players

How will this change affect my daughter's division?

Most players will move to a division that better matches their school peers. Some players may find themselves in a higher or lower division than they would have been under the age-based system. We encourage you to check the new divisions carefully to understand where your player will compete.

My daughter will be playing with younger kids now. Is this fair?

While some players may be older than others in their division, all players will be competing alongside their grade-level peers. The focus is on social and developmental alignment rather than just physical age. We believe this creates a more cohesive team environment.

Will my daughter be playing with the same teammates as last year?

Not necessarily. The shift to grade-based divisions may result in some roster changes as players are grouped by grade rather than birth date. However, many players will find themselves playing with school friends they may not have been grouped with before.

My two daughters are close in age but in different grades. Will they still be in the same division?

Not necessarily. Under the grade-based system, each player competes in the division corresponding to her grade level. This may mean siblings who previously played together could now be in different divisions.

Safety and Competition

Won't younger players be at a disadvantage against older players in the same grade?

There is natural variation in physical development among children of the same grade, just as there was with age-based divisions. Our coaches are trained to ensure appropriate skill development and safe play for all participants. We will continue to monitor player safety closely.

What if my daughter is significantly smaller than other players in her grade?

We understand parents' concerns about size differences. Our coaches focus on skill development and safe play at all levels. If you have specific concerns about your child's safety or ability to compete, please reach out to us directly twincitiessoftball@gmail.com

Will the league make any adjustments to field size, equipment, or rules?

We are reviewing all aspects of our program to ensure age-appropriate play. Any necessary adjustments to fields, equipment, pitching distances, or rules will be communicated before the season begins.

Are there any safety protocols being updated with this change?

Player safety remains our top priority. We will continue to enforce all existing safety protocols and will implement additional measures if needed based on the new division structure.

Pre/T-K and Kindergarten Players (6U)

My child is in Pre/T-K (*entering K in Fall 2026*). Is she ready for softball?

The 6U division is designed as an introduction to softball with T-ball and modified coach pitch formats. These programs focus on basic motor skills, fun, and learning the game in an age-appropriate way. We encourage parents to assess their child's readiness based on attention span and interest in the sport.

What should I expect from the 6U program for my Pre/T-K or Kindergarten child?

The 6U program emphasizes fun, basic skills, and positive experiences. Practices and games are shorter, with a focus on keeping young players engaged. Coaches understand the developmental needs of this age group.

Can my TK child handle the commitment?

The 6U program is designed with young children in mind, featuring shorter practice times, fewer games, and age-appropriate expectations. We encourage you to discuss any concerns with your coach.

High School Players

My daughter plays high school softball. Can she still play in the league?

The 15U division is specifically for 7th, 8th, and 9th grade non-high school players. If your daughter is playing on a high school team, she would not be eligible for our recreational league as the season conflicts.

What if my daughter is in 9th grade but playing JV or Varsity softball?

If she is actively participating in high school softball, she is not eligible for the 15U division, regardless of grade level.

Registration and Administrative Questions

When does registration open for the 2026 season?

Registration opens on November 1, 2025. Please stay tuned for updates.

Will fees change with the new division structure?

Fee information for the 2026 season will be announced with registration details.

How do I prove what grade my daughter is in?

For most players, no proof will be required. However, the league reserves the right to request documentation such as a report card or school enrollment verification if questions arise.

What if I have questions not answered here?

Please contact twincitiessoftball@gmail.com or the MGS league board president [Greg Flandermeyer: gflandy@gmail.com]. We're happy to help you understand how this change affects your family and answer any specific questions you may have.

Looking Ahead

Will the league evaluate how this change is working?

Yes, we will carefully monitor the implementation of grade-based divisions and gather feedback from families, coaches, and players. We're committed to making adjustments as needed to ensure the best possible experience for all participants.

Can I provide feedback about this change?

Absolutely. We welcome input from our softball families. Please reach out to the MGS league board to share your thoughts and experiences.

MGS President: Greg Flandermeyer: gflandy@gmail.com

MGS Vice President: Eric Crandall: ericcrandall@aol.com