

Youth Eligibility Rules

Youth Eligibility in DiscNW Events

These Eligibility Rules apply to DiscNW youth school-based team events, unless otherwise stated in the event description. These rules govern play in official DiscNW events but not in out-of-season practices or in unofficial scrimmages. Hat events, club events, and some small, school-based team tournaments are not subject to these rules.

These rules are designed to support three primary goals:

1. Growth of the sport of Ultimate in the Northwest via the development of new school-based teams and by promoting the sustainability of school-based teams.
2. Parity between teams by requiring schools to recruit from their own student body rather than from the Ultimate community at large.
3. Safety of play by defining grade and age limits for various divisions of play.

The DiscNW Eligibility Rules are subject to change as the needs of the sport of Ultimate in the Northwest evolve.

Eligibility Review Process

After reading the Eligibility Rules (below) in their entirety, if you believe that you might qualify for an exception, please go to the [Application for Eligibility Review](#) and complete the appropriate form. Players or teams applying for an exception are permitted to participate in DiscNW school-based team events only if the application is approved.

Youth Eligibility Rules

I. Definitions

A. A **student** shall be defined as a person who meets the following qualifications:

1. Is enrolled at least half-time at a traditional or alternative public or private school or registered as a home-based student for that academic year. A student in Running Start or an early entrance college program must be enrolled at least half-time in college and/or high school classes.

2. Is under 20 years of age on June 1 of the current academic year.
3. Must not have graduated high school or college or received a GED before January 1 of the current academic year.

B. The **Advisory Committee** shall be defined as the entity responsible for enforcing the Eligibility Rules and for considering exceptions to the rules.

1. The Advisory Committee is made up of the following persons:
 1. The coordinator(s) for the event(s) to which the application pertains.
 2. The DiscNW Executive Director.
 3. The DiscNW Youth Director.
 4. Conference Commissioners.
2. In the event of a conflict of interest within the committee, the committee member with the conflict will be excluded from decision-making for the case(s) in question.
 1. In this event, or if for any other reason the committee is reduced to a size of two or smaller, secondary committee members will be recruited from the DiscNW staff.

II. Eligibility Rules

A. Any player participating in a DiscNW youth team event must be a student, as defined above, and must play for the team representing the school at which they are enrolled.

1. A student who is home-schooled shall play for the public school that would be their school of attendance if they were enrolled in public school.
2. A student enrolled in Running Start or an early entrance college program may play in one of three places: A) for the school where they access the Running Start or early entrance college program, B) for the school that they attended immediately prior to beginning the Running Start or early entrance college program, or C) for the public school that would be their school of attendance if they were enrolled in public school. A student opting for B or C must not attend classes at any other middle or high school; in other words, they must play for the middle or high school where they are attending classes, if any. If not one of options A, B, or C has an Ultimate team; see the *Free Agent* exception below.
 1. Once the student has selected one of A, B, or C, they must play for that team for the remainder of their youth-eligible years, or until the team ceases to exist, whichever comes first.
 2. A student enrolled in Running Start or an early entrance college program who plays on the Ultimate team at the post-secondary institution (s)he attends is not eligible to play in DiscNW youth school-based team events.

B. A student may play for only one school in any one DiscNW event, regardless of the gender makeup or the skill division of that school's team(s).

1. For the purpose of this rule, DiscNW youth school-based team leagues occurring during the same season are considered one event. In other words, a player may not participate on the Bx or Gx league team from one school and the mixed league team from another school, if those leagues occur simultaneously.
2. Teams from Bx or Gx schools who wish to participate in mixed play may apply for a *Consortium Exception* as described in the next section.

C. A student may play for 2 of 3 seasons with the Bx, Gx and mixed teams at their school.

D. A student must participate in the division corresponding to their grade level. All DiscNW school-based team events abide by the following grade guidelines:

1. Elementary school is grades 3-5.
2. Middle school is grades 6-8.
3. High school is grades 9-12.

E. Individual school eligibility standards that are more restrictive than the DiscNW Eligibility Rules will be honored by DiscNW.

III. Exceptions

A. The Advisory Committee may grant exceptions to the Eligibility Rules written above.

1. Exceptions apply only for the period of time indicated in the Application for Eligibility Review.
2. When considering exceptions, the factors taken into account by the Advisory Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. Past efforts and/or future plans of the applicant(s) to advance the sport at the applicant's own school(s).
 2. The size of the applicant's school(s).
 3. The make-up of the team, including but not limited to gender, age, skill level, and school association(s).
 4. The geographic location of the school(s) involved.
 5. The availability of alternative opportunities for the applicant to play Ultimate.
 6. Safety for all event participants.
 7. Fairness for all event participants.
 8. Precedent.
 9. The effect of the decision on growth of the sport of Ultimate in the Northwest.

B. The following are exceptions that can be considered by the Advisory Committee. Schools or individuals wishing to apply for an exception should refer to the Eligibility Review Process section above.

1. **The *Free Agent* Exception:** A student without a team at their school (including a home-schooled student whose public school of attendance does not have a team) may ask for permission to play on another school's team through the eligibility application.
 1. In the event that the geographically closest school team cannot accept the free agent (e.g., due to school policy, rostered to full capacity, makes cuts), the advisory committee will work to connect the player with the next closest program able to accept free agents.
 2. With the exception of students requesting free agent status on teams traveling long distances to participate in a DiscNW event (e.g., out-of-state teams playing in Spring Reign), the Advisory Committee will not consider free agent exceptions for players whose school has, or will have, in the current academic year, participated in an ultimate league or multi-day ultimate tournament.
 3. During the mixed season, if you cut Bx matching athletes, you may still take Gx matching free agent athletes.
1. **The *Consortium* Exception:** A consortium team is a team composed of players from two or more schools. This exception is intended for A) a school that is not able to recruit the personnel required to form a team, and which must therefore combine with another school or schools in order to participate, or B) a team that accepts free agents from multiple schools.
 1. If an application for consortium is approved, an unlimited number of players from the approved schools on the application may play on the team and need not apply for individual *Free Agent* exceptions.
 2. If an application for consortium is approved, all players from the approved schools on the application must play with that consortium team for the event(s) in question (i.e., they may not form separate consortiums with other schools or play as free agents on another school team).
 3. Consortium status applies to the DiscNW school-based team league that the advisory committee's decision applies to.
 4. If an application for consortium is approved, then the consortium is valid for up to two consecutive years for the event that it was

approved. In other words, a consortium that is approved for a specific spring league event may play in the same spring league event the following year. After two years, it is highly recommended that the schools within the consortium try to advance the sport by establishing a team at their own schools. Teams will have to reapply if interested in extending the consortium.

5. Applications from neighboring schools or from schools that demonstrate some type of similarity or connection will be more strongly considered than those from schools with no commonality.

1. **The Hardship Exception:** This rare exception allows a student to participate on a team that is not their own school's team, or their grade level team.

1. A hardship exists only when unusual circumstances regarding the student's physical, emotional, family, or socioeconomic status exist. The circumstances must be unique.
2. The exception will not be granted if there is any reason to believe that it was requested for the purpose of simple convenience or to gain a desired athletic outcome. (Transportation or scheduling challenges alone or athletic deficiency of the Ultimate team at the student's official school do not constitute hardships.)
3. There must be a direct, causal relationship between the alleged hardship and the student's inability to meet the Eligibility Rules.
4. The burden of providing evidence that a hardship exists must be borne by the applicant.
5. In some cases, applications for hardship exceptions from players with 12 or fewer months of remaining eligibility within their current age division will be considered more favorably than those from applicants with more than 12 months of eligibility remaining.

C. For consistency's sake, if a governing body outside of DiscNW has approved of the exception requested by the applicant in the context of another sport or ultimate league, the DiscNW Advisory Committee will consider that decision and may allow exceptions that are not in line with the three types of approved exceptions described in section III.B above.

IV. Violations

A. Violations may be reported by any participant in the DiscNW youth school-based team event in question, including players, coaches, administrators, teachers, and parents.

B. When a violation has been reported, the Director of Youth Operations will investigate the matter.

C. If a violation has occurred, all games of the event(s) in question occurring prior to the discovery of the infraction will be forfeited by the violating team. Future games will be considered valid, provided that the team corrects the infraction, either by eliminating the illegal player(s) or by acquiring approval for an exception via an Application for Eligibility Review.

Have questions about our Eligibility Rules email our Youth Manager at youth.info@discnw.org