Position Clarification

Restriction on Number of teams in each grade

_B-ACT’s mission is to successfully lead, manage, develop and promote basketball for the benefit of our members and to maximise the enjoyment and opportunities for all_

This position statement intends to inform all stakeholders of the philosophy on Basketball ACT’s position on restricting teams in each grade of each age group as well as the single club team in Junior Division #1.

Objective
In general the Junior Winter Championship Season will consist of 14 regular season games plus a finals series for the top 4 in each grade.

Grades

Teams per Grade
- As a general guideline, in the Winter Championship Season only, Division #1 grades will consist of a minimum of 6 teams and a maximum of 8 teams in each age group.
- All other grades will have a minimum of 6 and maximum of 10 teams per grades.

Where more than 8 (Division #1) or 10 (other grades) teams are nominated BACT reserves the right to regrade teams according to performance.

Team Grading
It is a goal of BACT to strive to continually improve the competitiveness of all competitions for all participants at all levels. Each club is responsible to nominate teams in the correct grade as best as they can. Given the varying levels of participation, the nomination form allows clubs to nominate teams across 6 grades (Division #1 – Div#5 grade). Additional grades (e.g. Div#6, Div#7, etc.) will be added should they be required.

In determining which grade to nominate a team in, BACT recommend clubs consider the following:

- Experience of the team and individual players
- Top age versus bottom age players
- What the team/players achieved in the previous season
- Division #1 Grades are not to be used for development purposes, they are for Elite competition

In order to strengthen its competitions, BACT reserves the right to move any team where deemed necessary, justifiable, and in the best interests of the competition as a whole. This will be based on a number of factors, including though not limited to;

- Win/loss record
- Margin and Pts %
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- Individual team assessment by independent experts
- Previous season performance (where applicable) and grading
- Perceived level of competence
- Transfer of players both in and out of the particular team

Teams per Competition

The optimum number of teams per competition is 8 with a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10. In addition in the preservation of balance, evenness in scheduling and accommodating the extend of all competitions across B-ACT, it is operational preference that competitions should not have an odd number of teams that creates byes and at all times this will be avoided where possible however may not always be possible.

How this apply in a practical sense for example, if there are 7 teams nominated in B grade and 7 teams nominated in C grade, one of the teams may be moved to either the higher or lower grade so that there is an even number in each grade.

Rationale

8 and 10 team grades

- 8 team Division #1 grades intensify competition at the top level, leading to the strengthening of underpinning grades in the pathway. This provides greater opportunity and enjoyment for all participants across all grades and is crucial given the relatively small population base in the ACT, comparative to other major cities sport markets.
- 10 team grades allow for greater depth of participation across all the entire competitions and promotes inclusion while ensuring a level of quality control on the competition and reducing the large disparity that can emerge between teams on the top and at the bottom of each grade in each age group and competition.
- An even number of teams ensures there are no byes throughout the competition.
- Providing more grades and depth of competition ensures that greater emphasis and foresight is placed upon teams to nominate in grades suitable to the level of their teams.
- A greater number of participants are more likely to experience success and finals in smaller grades, leading to increased enjoyment, perceived confidence, retention, and more importantly an increase in the fairness and equity of competitions, by fulfilling one of B-ACT’s shared values being inclusion.
- Conducive towards the development of younger referees, hence competition of higher quality.
- 8 and 10 grades allows for improved utilisation and the maximisation of limited court space and facility resources.

This structure is aligned with the strategic vision of Basketball Australia, and incorporates other state’s best practice models (namely Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland) whereby competitions do not exceed 10 teams in each grade and all nominations are subject to acceptance and, where necessary, grading by relevant processes.
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In general all of the top elite representative competitions in each state and territory around Australia have no more than 10 teams and in a number of cases restricted to 8.

Eg Basketball Victoria’s Junior Championship competition has 10 teams. This is a state with 160,000 participants.

BNSW’s junior leagues all have grades with a maximum of 8 teams, specifically the Sydney Metro Junior League Div#1 for all age groups which is the top junior competition in NSW which has 50,000 participants. Similarly in SA, WA and Qld.

Division #1 Competition

- One of the strategies to improve quality is to restrict quantity and this in turn produces a more intense competitive environment when you have a limited fixed population.
- In the past, there have been too many teams and players who are not of Division #1 quality in Division #1 competitions which resulted in large average spreads in scores and results of games across the season. Eg. Last season average spread for U/16 boys was 39 points.
- More grades with less teams creates depth in the teams right through the lower grades and more competitive social grades and allows for more teams to experience finals and therefore the opportunity of success. This is a measure to improved quality of A-grade that underpins Division #1 in order to provide focus and emphasis on improving the quality of A-grade so that it is recognised as a real pathways to Division #1.
- 8 teams in Division #1 allows for a balanced draws ie in a 14 week competition every team plays every other team twice. This ensures a complete competition and most accurate result for our most elite competitive competition.
- In previous competitions the gap and discrepancy between teams and scores was too large and therefore reduced competitiveness and was of no benefit to anyone, winning teams players do not improve and this effects our competitiveness at Australian Junior Championships and teams that consistently lose by large margins is detrimental to individual participants enjoyment.
- Too many players who were not Division #1 quality players yet were playing Division #1 because team numbers needed to be filled and therefore was a weight that restricted improved quality of competition.
- To maximise the court space available and to ensure that all competitions can fit into the fixed restricted facilities that we have at out disposal.
- Ensuing Division #1 quality refereeing and alleviating strain on referee resources and allows for greater development of referees and ensuring that appropriate quality of referees is available on Friday nights as well as greater coverage.
- Key word being Division #1, It should be the best players playing against each other in the most competitive environment and competition that can be provided based on performance.

Challenge for admission to Division #1 League

No teams or clubs are locked out of Division #1 because one season they are not in. It is a flexible promotion and relegation structure where new teams can be included into Division #1 every season.
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At the beginning of each new season, Summer and Winter, Clubs have the opportunity to nominate teams in Division #1 if they feel they are of the appropriate quality and they also have the opportunity to challenge existing teams if they have a case that they have improved.

In situations where a team feels they should be considered to be placed in any Division #1 competition, at the beginning of each season they may submit an application to the Competitions Management. In this application, they are expected to provide substantiation and rationale including evidence of performance to support the claim, such as previous seasons final rankings, new playing recruits, or development of players and or changes in coach.

As a result many clubs have voluntarily have elected to not nominate a Division #1 team because they have realistically assessed that they are not at that standard. A number of teams and clubs have now realistically assessed their actual teams level, performance and position and taken the appropriate action of not playing in Division #1 and nominating in A-grade. Therefore removing inequality in Division #1 and improving quality and competitiveness for A-grade which will in turn lead to improved quality of Division #1 over the long term. This is a conscience decision that clubs have made based on their own particular circumstances and club philosophy and should be acknowledged. It should also be stated that this in no way prohibits or restricts any team from any club from re-entering Division #1.

Please be reminded that the quota of a maximum number of 8 teams is for Winter Competition only and in the Summer Competition, the maximum number quota can be increased to 10 allowing for flexibility and opportunity of teams to be included. Teams can therefore nominate for Division #1 in Summer Competition and also Challenge for a position in the Winter Competition if there performance and result in Summer warrants such inclusion. Clubs can also nominate for the Winter competition and challenge the lower placed teams, if again they can demonstrate improvement. Therefore season upon season, there is opportunity to be included into Division #1 based on performance and results.

Only on team per club in Division #1

It is a general guideline and principle in the formation of the competition to ensure that all clubs have an equal opportunity to be represented in the highest Elite competition being Division #1. Therefore it is an operational preference that each club be permitted to have only 1 team in each Division #1 age group. However this may not always be the case and there will be exceptions to the general rule.

The guiding principal is to ensure the best teams on performance are competing against each other in Division #1 at a different times in different age groups this may mean that a particular club is permitted to enter more than 1 team in Division #1 from that same club due to the fact that the club is extraordinary string in a specific age group.

In this case the club will be required to substantiated the inclusion of a second team in an age group and participate in any challenge required to re-affirm their inclusion.