

CONNYS Grade-based Player Segmentation Policy

September 27th, 2016

CONNYS lacrosse has adopted a grade-based player segmentation policy for all member programs. The change was driven by the US Lacrosse age-based guidelines and their goal of increasing fairness and player safety. The new policy also addresses the confusing mix of CONNYS age-based and grade-based teams that seriously complicated scheduling.

This summer, a broad CONNYS subcommittee was formed and tasked with making a recommendation to the CONNYS Board. The objective was to strike the right balance between the USL proposal and what was best for the diverse CONNYS member programs. The draft was vetted, revised, and approved overwhelmingly by the CONNYS membership on September 27th. The policy creates a unified player segmentation that will be effective immediately.

The CONNYS policy, which is grade-based and has an age filter, is a modified version of the USL recommendation. The committee felt this configuration would encourage participation and better ensure fairness and safety.

For players in grades 5-7, the age cutoff will be September 1st of the year preceding the season. Those born before September 1st would automatically play up one grade. Players who are "young in grade" (i.e., are younger than their grade's birthday span) have the option of staying with their grade or playing down in grade.

The cutoff for 8th grade was moved back to March 1st of the year preceding the season, which results in an 18-month age span. This allows the vast majority of 8th graders to continue playing for their town program. Those 8th graders born before the cutoff date can petition CONNYS to be allowed to play. To help avoid mismatches at scheduling, the 8th grade section of the CONNYS team tiering spreadsheet will include additional columns to show the number of players who do not meet the cutoff, as well as the birthdate of the oldest player.

All programs will require grade declaration at the time of registration. Where feasible, CONNYS requires programs to configure teams by single grade. If this is not possible, teams can be combined, but only within divisions (i.e. 7th and 8th grade Seniors and 5th and 6th grade Juniors).

For players in grades K-4, CONNYS will enforce no age cutoff. There was strong consensus for keeping these grades to an intro-to-lacrosse model. Most of these players are relatively new to lacrosse and the committee wanted to stress keeping it fun, emphasizing fundamentals, and playing 7v7 or another small-sided play configuration.

The CONNYS Board of Directors