

PACIFIC COAST ATHLETIC LEAGUE DIVISION STRUCTURE AND PLACEMENT POLICY

As Amended by Board of Managers Dec 1 2021

Introduction:

PCAL By-law Section 19.1.1 provides the basis for the formation of this policy:

19.1.1 Basis and Process

For each League sport and each gender, division structure and placement decisions shall be made on an annual or bi-annual basis and shall be based primarily on the concept of competitive equity, the competitive strength of the schools competing that sport. The details of the process to be used for making these decisions, including the definition of what is meant by “competitive equity”, shall be set forth in a League “Division Structure and Placement Policy” as established by the Board of Managers and published on the League website.

Pursuant to this direction, this PCAL Division Structure and Placement policy applies to all league sports as set forth herein.

Guiding Principle:

PCAL is founded on the principle that the placement of teams in divisions with other teams of similar strength for league competition in that sport will create better and more exciting competition for all athletes participating in PCAL sports, thereby increasing fun and interest in participation. These division placements shall be based primarily on the concept of competitive equity, defined as follows: Competitive Equity as a basis of PCAL operation means “structuring our league play so as to give each of our schools the best opportunity we can provide to compete on a more level playing field in league sports play.”

Definitions:

There are actually two concepts that work hand in hand in creating competitive equity within PCAL operations: “Division Structure” and “Division Placement”.

1. Division Structure: As used in the operations of PCAL, the phrase “Division Structure” signifies the process of determining the number of divisions as well as the number of schools in each division for each given sport; and
2. Division Placement: As used in the operations of PCAL, the phrase “Division Placement” signifies the process by which individual league schools are placed into each division within the structure of each given sport.

The principle guiding both of these processes is that of “competitive equity” as defined above.

Division Structure (Number of Divisions):

The division structure for each sport, each gender, shall be reviewed long-term on a biannual basis. An exception may need to be made if, but only if, a school adds a sport or stops competing a particular sport. It is acknowledged that, in its first two or even three years of operation, the league will be honing its processes and structure. After 2020-2021, however, and absent schools adding or dropping a sport that calls for review of number of divisions, the numbers of divisions in a sport should be reviewed only on a biannual basis.

The first step in organizing the league for a particular sport is to determine how many divisions there should be for that sport. There are some overall guiding principles in that regard:

- The CCS by-laws require, that absent necessity, a league (division) must have at least 6 schools to be entitled to an Automatic Qualifier to CCS.
- Smaller divisions are more equitable competitively by definition. There may be reasons for having fewer and therefore larger divisions, such as where natural breaks in competitive strengths call for larger and fewer divisions, or where smaller divisions leave one or more of the divisions unsustainable. However, in making for one larger division, there is the need to ensure that competitive equity is not sacrificed there or in the other divisions.

Division Structure (Number of Schools in each division):

The setting of numbers of schools in each division necessarily involves discussions of where individual schools belong on a competitive equity basis. To that extent, these decisions overlap with the Division Placement decisions below. For example, if there are 25 league schools participating in a sport, with four divisions, one of those divisions will have 7 schools. Which division has the seven schools may depend on competitive equity considerations and possible natural breaks in competitive strength. That decision may also take into account other factors such as the possibility, especially in the lowest division, that a school or schools may be unable to field a team in the end.

The review and recommendation process for Division Structure will follow the same steps as involved in the Division Placement process below.

Division Placement (Designating schools for each division for coming year):

Once the Division Structure is set, then decisions will be made to place each individual schools into one of the divisions. This shall be done on annual basis with these decisions guided by the principle of competitive equity set forth above, with the sport's strongest teams competitively placed in the Gabilan division, the next strongest group in the Mission division, then to the Cypress, Santa Lucia and Arroyo in that order, as applicable.

The placement of schools in the divisions of each sport shall be reviewed annually in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

There may be some sports where division placement is determined by a formula. Any formula related to any league sport shall be set for in the PCAL Sports Rules for that sport. If the Sports Rules do not contain a formula for division placement in that sport, it shall be treated as a "non-formula" sport as below. Hereinafter, each sport setting forth a "formula" for division placement in its Sports Rules shall be referred to as a "formula" sport.

For each league sport, “formula” or “non-formula”, there shall be appointed at the beginning of the league season an Athletic Director subcommittee (hereinafter referred to as an “AD subcommittee”), consisting of the Athletic Director Representatives assigned to such sport together with any and all other interested league Athletic Directors.

“Formula” Sports:

The formula regarding division placement of any “formula” sport shall be set forth in the PCAL Sports Rules for that sport. The process of applying the formula for each such sport shall be conducted by the AD subcommittee for that sport. On an annual basis, no later than 10 days after the completion of the league season, the formula for each sport shall be applied by said AD subcommittee with the results reported and recommended to the League Commissioner for action by the full PCAL ADC at its next meeting. The ADC shall consider the recommendations and shall make its recommendations to the PCAL Board of Managers, the body to have the final say with respect to all division placement matters.

“Non-Formula” Sports:

On an annual basis, the AD Subcommittee for each such sport, shall begin its work during the sport season. They shall use the following process:

Step One: The subcommittee shall begin gathering all information possible, historical and current, about each of the competing schools in that sport. Several weeks from the end of the league season in the sport, the subcommittee for that sport shall cause to be sent by the League Commissioner a survey of the coaches and Athletic Directors in all divisions of that sport concerning their opinions as to appropriate division placement for their sport for the following year.

The Surveys will request detailed information from each school such as follows:

- Coaching longevity and continuity at site
- Overall record for season
- League (Division) record for the season
- Results in specific contests with PCAL teams in other divisions
- Records at JV level for current season (overall and in division)
- Records at Frosh or Frosh-Soph level for the current season (overall and in division)
- Continuity of coaching staff (length of service to date and expected return following year)
- Size and Make up of squad this season (## Seniors, Juniors, Sophomores, Frosh)
- Make up of starters this season (## Seniors, Juniors, Sophomores, Frosh)
- Make up of primary contributors (e.g., scorers, defenders such as goalies, pitchers in baseball and softball) (## Seniors, Juniors, Sophomores, Frosh)
- Where a school believes it realistically belongs in next year’s division placements (Note: this does **not** ask where the school **wants** to belong, but rather where the school believes it **should** be placed based on its projected competitive strength)

Step Two: Responses to those surveys shall be provided to the AD subcommittee for that sport. The subcommittee shall establish its process for determining division placement for the next year, with the normal and natural beginning focus being on the teams that finished first and last in each division with a determination as to whether there should be movement. The overriding goal is to make a judgment as to which of any compared two schools is more likely to be stronger competitively than the other.

Step Three: Individual School Request for Division Movement: No later than five days prior to the last day of the league season for a given sport, any school that believes that its team in that sport should be moved to

another division (higher or lower) may submit to the League Commissioner a request for movement. Said request shall be made on the League form attached (Attachment 1), shall contain all information requested on the form, and shall be signed by the Athletic Director and Principal or Assistant Principal in charge of athletics. The League Commissioner shall forward any and all such requests to the appropriate AD Subcommittee, and the subcommittee shall consider the requests in their deliberations and recommendations.

Step Four: No later than 10 days after the completion of the league season, the AD subcommittee for each “non-formula” sport shall report to the League Commissioner the process used and their recommendations for the division placements in that sport for the following year. Said report shall also include any recommended changes in division structure if any there are. Said report shall include the rationale of the subcommittee for each such recommended structure and placement change as well as its rationale for granting or denying any “Individual School Request for Division Movement”.

Step Five: Individual School Appeal of Recommended Division Placement. Any school that believes that the AD Subcommittee recommendations are incorrect shall have the right to submit an appeal for consideration by the ADC. Said appeal shall be submitted to the League Commissioner no later than Two full business days prior to the ADC meeting considering the subcommittee recommendation, shall be made on the League form attached (Attachment 2), shall contain all information requested on the form, and shall be signed by the Principal or Assistant Principal in charge of athletics. The League Commissioner shall forward any and all such requests to the ADC, and they shall consider the requests in their deliberations and recommendations.

Step Six: The League Commissioner shall forward each of the AD subcommittee reports to the PCAL ADC for action at its next meeting. The ADC shall consider and act on all such reports and recommendations, as well as any Appeal pursuant to Step Five. It shall make final recommendations to the PCAL Board of Managers for each sport involved.

Step Seven: Individual School Appeal of ADC Recommendation. Any school that believes the ADC recommendations are incorrect shall have the right to submit an appeal for consideration by the Board of Managers. Said appeal shall be submitted to the League Commissioner no later than Two full business days prior to the Board of Managers meeting considering the ADC recommendation, shall be made on the League form attached (Attachment 2), shall contain all information requested on the form, and shall be signed by the Principal or Assistant Principal in charge of athletics. As set forth in Step Eight below, the League Commissioner shall forward any and all such appeals to the Board of Managers, and they shall consider the appeals in their deliberations and decisions.

Step Eight: The League Commissioner shall forward the ADC recommendations and any appeals filed to the Board of Managers for its consideration and final decision. The Board of Managers shall deliberate and make a decision regarding the recommendations it has received from the ADC.

Board of Managers Decisions Final: The decisions of the Board of Managers regarding division placement or change in numbers of teams in divisions shall be final and non-appealable.

[Attachments follow]

Attachment 1

PCAL School Request for Division Movement

- 1. Sport Involved:**
- 2. School Making Request:**
- 3. Describe Move Requested for your School:**
- 4. Rationale for Move Requested (In as much detail as possible, list all facts that you believe support the move requested):**
- 5.**

Dated: _____

Signature of School Athletic Director:

Signature of School Principal or Assistant Principal in Charge of Athletics:

Attachment 2

PCAL School Appeal of Recommended Division Placement

- 1. Sport Involved:**
- 2. School Filing Appeal:**
- 3. Describe the Proposed Division Placement you are Appealing:**
- 4. Identify Other School(s) Involved in Placement Appealed (If you change divisions, who should you replace and who should then replace you?):**
- 5. Rationale for Appeal (In as much detail as possible, list all facts that you believe support your appeal, as well as all facts that support the move of other schools identified by you in Item 4 above):**

Dated: _____

Signature of School Athletic Director:

Signature of School Principal or Assistant Principal in Charge of Athletics:
