

Discontinuing the “Upper Level Rule”

The upper level rule was instituted many years ago in part to encourage teams to allow new players on their teams (instead of just having the same roster on multiple nights).

Internally, we’ve been reviewing the continued usefulness of this rule. Is it accomplishing what we want? Is it relevant anymore? Lynn Hall our adult program manager has had many conversations with members as well.

Here’s what we’ve learned,

1. Many teams find the rule irksome. It prevents them from filling their rosters and sometimes leads to forfeits or teams not returning to play. The opposite of what was originally intended.
2. Many members thought the rule was created to prevent them from being hit at by higher level players. However, the rule doesn’t really make anyone safer. It only takes one unsportsmanlike member wailing at the ball in an uncontrolled manner to potentially hurt someone. Additionally, the rule only applied within divisions. In other words, if three or four men from a men’s open team wanted to all play together on a coed B team, the rule does not prevent that. It only prevents them all from playing together on a lower level men’s team.

So, the rule was frustrating some of our members and not really making anyone safer. Therefore, we’ve decided to discontinue the rule altogether. We don’t want to tell you who you can play with – you should, within reason, be able to put any other member on your team as long as your roster conforms to gender requirements.

We do recognize everyone’s desire to play in a fun, safe, competitive environment so we’ll be asking our referees to keep an eye out for anyone who is potentially endangering other players by playing too aggressively for a particular league. Those players will be given a verbal warning with increasing sanctions if they do not heed the warning. We have a number of very good players who, based on their ability, perhaps do not belong at a lower level but they want to play on a team with family and friends. If they adjust their level of play to conform to the league they are in, why should we stop them?

We will discontinue this rule on a trial basis beginning with the Fall 2017 season.

Use of Rise and Fall rule

The Rise and Fall rule is stated in the member handbook as “In order to maintain a competitive balance in the leagues, teams may be moved up or down when creating the following season’s leagues. While we recognize that this may cause a hardship by changing the normal night of play for a team, our experience has shown that is highly important to maintain parity within divisions for the playing enjoyment of all teams. In cases where team records merit a change, more than one team may be moved up or down.

RVC management reserves the right to move any number of teams in order to better balance the leagues, but will contact teams before making unexpected changes.”

Based on member feedback, parity within leagues is one of the most important aspects of the game. Changes to our coed leagues several years ago made implementation of the rule easier as it reduced disruption to member's schedules (no longer having to switch nights). Beginning in Fall 2017, we will adjust, re-name, and re-align some of our men's and women's leagues so that we can do the same, at least to some degree, for our men's and women's leagues.