

Splitting a division into two separate phases is our tried and tested formula of coping with a large number of entries in one division.

Phase 1

All teams in the division will play each other once.

Phase 2

Following completion of Phase 1 the division will be split into two or more sections based on league position at the end of phase 1. The number of sections and the number of teams in each section will vary depending on the number of teams that are still competing at the time the split is made. It is likely though that the division will be split into two or three sections and that each section will contain between five and eight teams.

Each team will carry its playing record from phase 1 into phase 2.

The top teams will go into section A. Then, still based on league position, the next teams into section B and so on.

Teams will then play each of the others in their section once (venue to be reversed from when the teams first met in phase 1)

Following completion of all fixtures the team finishing top of section A will be declared the division Champions and the team in second place in Section A the division runners up. As per normal league rules, play offs will be held, if necessary, to determine the champions & runners up.

There will be no prizes, medals or cups etc for the other sections.

We have to be prepared for withdrawals from the division as the season progresses so the split will be made as follows:-

Based on the number of teams in the division at the time the split is made.

19 teams - Split into three sections, A & B each to with 6 teams, C with 7 teams (Total 24 games A & B, 25 games in C)

18 teams - Split into three sections, A, B and C, each of six teams. (Total 22 matches).

17 teams - Split into three sections as above but with section C reduced to 5 teams (Total 21 matches A & B, 20 in C).

16 teams - Split into two sections, A and B, each of 8 teams. (Total 22 matches).

15 teams - Split into two sections, section A to contain 7 teams & section B 8 teams (Total 20 matches in A & 21 in B).

14 teams - Split into two sections, each of 7 teams. (Total 19 matches).

13 teams - Split into two sections, section A to contain 6 teams & section B 7 teams.(Total 17 matches in A & 18 in B).

Sometimes we have to make the split before all teams have completed their phase 1 fixtures. We do this because we do not want a situation where say 14 of the 18 teams have completed their phase 1 fixtures and would then have a couple of weeks without a game waiting for the other 4 teams to play their remaining matches.

Most of the time this does not present a problem as, even with two or three games left, teams will not be able to gain sufficient points to move them into a different section. However it is possible that we may have to 'predict' where a couple of teams will finish. Generally we have got this about right in the past and in the many years we have been doing it we have only had one complaint.

Teams who have not completed their phase 1 fixtures at the time the split is made will have to play them before the end of the season. All games must be played.

Why do we do this ?

1. We have no way of determining the strengths of teams or their composition by age before the season starts therefore it would be virtually impossible to have an Under 13 and Under 14 division or an 'A' and 'B' division based on a team's playing ability. Even if we could do this it is unlikely that there would be an 'equal' split of the teams. This year (2010) 19 teams have entered the U14 division but it would be unlikely that 9 are U13 and 10 are U14. Some of course will contain both U13 and U14 players.

2. Teams seem to have a problem getting in more than 22 matches. If you look at the league tables for the last five years the total number of matches played is about 22/23 and there are always clubs struggling to get their games in by the end of the season. In 2009/10 the U14 division teams played 22 matches and needed until the middle of May to complete them. We also have to allow for spells of bad weather etc.

3. We get worthy league champions as the eventual winners will have played all of the top teams on a home and away basis.

4. The weaker teams play the majority of their matches against teams that are around their own standard.

5. The alternative to finding a way to accommodate all the teams who want to play would be to refuse entry to some. What criteria would we use to decide which teams would not be accepted into the league? The last thing we want to do is to turn children away from the game.