



Cup Playing Formats, and Setting Quarterfinal & Semifinal Match-ups

You also need to read the Cup Bracketing and Seeding Document that accompanies this document

General Principles for choosing Playing Formats:

See the Bracketing Notes worksheet for playing format options based on the number of teams.

- 1) Four team brackets are preferred and should be used unless the number of teams makes it impossible.
- 2) When the number of playing dates permits, 5 team brackets plus 4 team brackets are preferred to using 3 team brackets.
- 3) Quarter Finals will NOT BE USED when there are fewer than 12 teams in an age group.
- 4) Quarter Finals will ALWAYS be used when there are 16 or more teams in an age group.
- 5) A knockout round of 16 will not be used unless the number of teams in an age group is 32 or more.
- 6) No playing format will be used that would make it possible for the last place team in a 3 team bracket to be considered for advancement to a knockout round.
- 7) The playing format for each age group will be published along with the bracket seeding for the age group.
- 8) Wildcards will ONLY be drawn from the bracket level immediately below the bracket level at which a team from EVERY bracket is taken. For example:
 - a. When all top teams are taken and wildcards are needed to fill out quarterfinal or semifinal matchups, wildcards will ONLY be taken from the teams that finished second in their brackets.
 - b. When all first and second place teams have been taken and wildcards are still needed to fill out quarterfinal matchups, wildcards will ONLY be taken from the teams that finished third in their brackets.
- 9) Teams from the same club will not be set to play each other in preliminary brackets.
- 10) Teams from the same preliminary bracket will not be set to play each other in the first knockout round.

Setting up Brackets for Ladder Advancement

Brackets should be arranged so that the groups with the top 2 seeds are on opposite sides of the bracketing ladder so they cannot play each other until the final.

Quarterfinal Ladder matchups, assuming all seeds advance in order, are set out below. Select the appropriate bracket or wildcard number to fill in the matchups. Team listed first should host. The preferred seeding into quarterfinals is:

QF	SF
Seed 1 vs Seed 8	Winner 1v8 v Winner 4v5
Seed 4 v Seed 5	
Seed 2 v Seed 7	Winner 2v7 v Winner 3v6
Seed 3 v Seed 6	

When teams are seeded into brackets, use a serpentine that places the highest seed in bracket A, the next seed in bracket B and so on. The following matchup templates show how seeds are placed into brackets when there are from 12-28 teams. Similar arrangements would be made for more or fewer teams.

QF Matchup Templates for 3-7 team brackets

With 3 brackets, it looks like this (top 2 +2 wildcards):

A	B	C	QF Matchups:	A1 v WC2
1	2	3		C2 v B2
6	5	4		
7	8	9		B1 v WC1
12	11	10		C1 v A2

With 4 brackets it looks like this (top 2 – NO wildcards):

A	B	C	D	QF Matchups:	A1 v B2
1	2	3	4		D1 v C2
8	7	6	5		
9	10	11	12		B1 v A2
16	15	14	13		C1 v D2

With 5 brackets it looks like this (top 1 + 3 wildcards):

A	B	C	D	E	QF Matchups:	A1 v WC3
1	2	3	4	5		D1 v E1
10	9	8	7	6		
11	12	13	14	15		B1 v WC2
20	19	18	17	16		C1 v WC1

With 6 brackets it looks like this (top 1 + 2 wildcards):

A	B	C	D	E	F	QF Matchups:	A1 v WC2
1	2	3	4	5	6		D1 v E1
12	11	10	9	8	7		
13	14	15	16	17	18		B1 v WC1
24	23	22	21	20	19		C1 v F1

With 7 brackets it looks like this (top 1 + 1 wildcard):

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	QF Matchups:	A1 v WC1
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		D1 v E1
14	13	12	11	10	9	8		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21		B1 v G1
28	27	26	25	24	23	22		C1 v F1

Adjustments to Avoid Bracket Conflicts

Wildcard adjustments will need to be made if the wildcard(s) will create matchups with a team from the same bracket.

With one wildcard, swap the wildcard with the lowest seed (1 is highest seed and 8 is lowest

seed) that avoids the conflict.

With two wildcards:

- If the conflict is with A1, swap the wildcards.
- If the conflict is with B1, do not swap wildcards, but exchange the wildcard facing B1 for the next lowest seed (1 is highest seed, 8 is lowest seed) that does not create a conflict.

With three wildcards:

- If there is a conflict with A1, exchange WC3 with WC2.
- If there is a conflict with B1, exchange WC2 with WC1.
- If there is a conflict with C1, exchange WC1 with the next lowest seed (1 is highest seed, 8 is lowest seed) that does not create a conflict.