

Emerald Lakers Basketball Club

FILL-IN PLAYERS – CHEAT SHEET

For coaches, team managers and parents

Once the season gets going, the word “fill-in” comes up a lot. Here is what it means and how it works at Emerald Lakers – the short version, in plain English.

What is a fill-in?

A fill-in is a player from another Emerald Lakers team who steps in for one game to help a team that is short on players. Fill-ins are a friendly way to keep a team on the court when a few players are away – sick, on holiday, at a family event, or injured.

The three rules to remember

1. Same or lower grade AND same or younger age group.

A fill-in must satisfy BOTH conditions. The fill-in’s grade must be the same or lower than the team they’re helping, AND their age group must be the same or younger. Never a higher grade, never an older age group. Example: a U12C team can take a fill-in from U12D, U10C or U10D – but NOT a U10B (higher grade) or a U14C (older age group).

2. Two games playing up, total per season.

If the fill-in is coming from a lower grade (playing up), they can do that a maximum of two times across the whole season. This is cumulative across every higher-graded team they fill in for – not twice per team. On the third game playing up, the player is permanently re-graded into that higher grade for the rest of the season. Example: a U10.3 C-grade player plays two fill-in games for U10.2 BR, then one game for U10.1 B. Their grade now becomes U10.1 B.

3. Under 8s are a special case.

U8s can fill in for any Under 10 grade with no game limit. Plenty of court time for our youngest players.

For coaches and team managers

If you can see by Wednesday that you will be short, contact your age-group coordinator early. Early notice gives the best chance of finding a legitimate fill-in rather than risking a forfeit on game day.

Before the game, run through this:

- Fill-ins must be from the same or lower grade AND same or younger age group – both conditions, not either / or.
- Track playing-up games across the whole season per player – max two total, across every higher-graded team they fill in for. The third game up = permanent re-grade.
- Always let Wei or Lisa know when you are using a fill-in, before or immediately after the game.
- Never borrow a player from another club – that is an automatic forfeit.
- If no eligible fill-in exists because your team is in the lowest grade, contact your coordinator early – the Club can apply to KBI for special consideration (KBI Rule 9(e)).
- A walkover is always better than fielding an ineligible player.

Same-day timing – third game up only

KBI Rule 9(c) includes a subtle timing clause. It only matters in the narrow case where a player plays their THIRD game up a grade on the same day as their normal team’s game. The third-up game permanently re-grades the player, so any game in their old lower grade later that same day is no longer legal.

How the order works on the day

OK: play the lower-grade game FIRST, then play the third-up game later. At the time of the lower-grade game the player is still in that grade.

Not OK: play the third-up game first, then try to play the lower-grade game later that day. After the third-up game the player is locked into the higher grade.

Example: a 14C player whose third game up is 14A at 5:30pm cannot then play 14B at 6:40pm. *For 1st and 2nd fill-in games up, the timing on the day does not matter.*

For parents

If your child is asked to fill in for another team, it is a great chance for extra court time and to meet kids from other teams. Check two things with the coach: is the receiving team at the same or lower grade than your child's team, AND in the same or older age group? And has your child already played up twice anywhere this season?

If your child's team is short, talk to the coach or team manager early in the week. They will arrange a legitimate fill-in where possible, or seek special consideration from KBI if your team is in the lowest grade and no other team fits the rules.

Common questions**Could a player get “stuck” in a higher team by filling in?**

Yes – this is the most important thing to track. Under KBI Rule 9(c), a player who plays up a grade three times during the season is permanently re-graded into that higher grade. The two-game count is cumulative across every higher team they fill in for, not per team. Example: filling in for U10.2 BR twice, then U10.1 B once, re-grades the player to U10.1 B. If you are uncertain, check with the coach or coordinator before the game.

What if our team is in the lowest grade and no one fits these rules?

This can happen – for example a U12D team in a club where no U10 or U11 team is at D grade. In that case, contact your coordinator early. The Club can apply to KBI for special consideration under Rule 9(e), which exists precisely for this situation. Sometimes a walkover is still the right call, but special consideration is the legitimate route to explore first.

Can we bring in a friend from another club, just for one game?

No. Players can only play for the club they are registered with. Bringing in a friend from another club means the game is forfeited, no matter how good or willing the player is. A walkover is the better option.

What about a brand-new player who has not registered yet?

They can play their first game while their Registration Form is being lodged – but the form must reach the Junior Registrar by 9:00am the Monday after that first game. There is no open-ended “unregistered fill-in” allowance.

Who do I contact?

Parents – your team coach or team manager first, then your age-group coordinator if it is a broader question. Coaches and team managers – contact your age-group coordinator directly.

Emerald Lakers age-group coordinators:

Boys – Wei: boyscoordinator@emerald Lakers.com.au

Girls – Lisa: girlscoordinator@emerald Lakers.com.au

Thank you for being part of the Emerald Lakers family. Fill-ins work best when we all pitch in – your flexibility helps keep every team on the court.