

Emerald Lakers Basketball Club

A Coach & Team Manager's Guide to

FILL-IN PLAYERS

Knox Basketball Inc (KBI) Junior Domestic Competition

Rules & Regulations – May 2024 edition

Prepared for Coaches and Team Managers

1. Purpose of this Guide

This guide explains the Fill-In rules that apply to every Emerald Lakers Basketball Club team playing in the Knox Basketball Inc (KBI) Junior Domestic Competition. It is written for coaches and team managers so you can make confident, rule-compliant decisions when a team is short on players for a game.

Using a fill-in player incorrectly can lead to forfeited games, lost premiership points and, in some cases, a player being declared ineligible for the rest of the season. The information in this document is drawn directly from the KBI Junior Domestic Competition Rules & Regulations (May 2024). Wherever a specific rule is referenced, you will see a citation such as “Rule 9(c)(iv)” so you can locate the original clause in the KBI document.

Important: If a situation is not clearly covered by this guide, contact the Emerald Lakers Club Secretary before fielding the player. The KBI Committee has final discretion on all eligibility decisions.

2. What is a Fill-In Player?

A “fill-in” is a registered player who temporarily joins another team within their own Club to make up numbers for a single game. Fill-ins exist to keep teams on the court, avoid forfeits, and give players extra court time – but they are strictly regulated to keep the competition fair.

Who can be a fill-in?

- A player already registered with Emerald Lakers for the current season.
- A cleared restricted player, but only for a maximum of two (2) games in the season they were cleared (Rule 3.3(e)).
- An Under-8 player, who may fill in for any Under-10 grade (Rule 9(c)(vii)).

Who cannot be a fill-in?

- A player registered to a different club. Playing such a player will forfeit the game (Rule 9(g)).
- A player who is unregistered or whose clearance/transfer has not yet been approved (Rule 3.5(f)).
- A 12BR or similarly designated restricted-grade player playing in a grade lower than their restriction allows (Rule 9(c)(viii)).

A caveat on unregistered players

KBI does not allow unregistered players to be used as an ongoing fill-in option. The rules are built around a one-game registration window, not a set number of fill-in appearances.

- A new player may take the court for their very first game, but a Registration Form must be lodged in the Junior Registrar’s Box by 9:00am on the Monday one (1) week after that first round (Rule 3.1).
- If the registration form has not been lodged within that window, the Registrar can notify the Club. From that point, the Committee may fine the Club for every game the player plays while still unregistered (Rule 3.5(d)).
- If the player keeps playing after the Club has been notified that they are unregistered, they are classed as ineligible and every game they have played will be forfeited (Rule 3.5(e)).
- For Under-8s specifically, escalating weekly fines apply, and if the form is still outstanding after a month the whole Club loses premiership points in every team until it is resolved (Rule 20(b)).

Practical rule of thumb: Think of it as one game to play and then the paperwork must follow. There is no open-ended “fill in as an unregistered player” allowance – a player must be registered (or become registered within the week) to keep appearing on the court.

3. Rule 9(a) – The First Game Sets the Team

Before you start thinking about fill-ins at all, Rule 9(a) is the foundation you need to understand. It is short, absolute, and it shapes every decision that follows.

“Within the player’s registered Club the first team in which the player participates for that season determines their team and grade.” – Rule 9(a)

What it means in practice

- The very first game a player takes the court for in a season locks in their “home” team and grade. Every other rule in this guide measures distance from that starting point.
- Rule 3.4(b) confirms that a player can move between teams within the Club without a transfer – but only before they play their first game for the season. Once the first game is played, a transfer is required.
- Rule 9(b) is the companion rule: “playing up” means a higher grade, not a higher age group. The two-game cap in Rule 9(c)(iii) is measured from the grade established by Rule 9(a).
- The third-game-up rule (Rule 9(c)(iv)) can later shift a player upward permanently – but 9(a) sets their starting grade.

Round 1 warning: Do not casually start a player in a higher grade just to make up numbers in Round 1. That higher grade immediately becomes their “home” grade for the season and you cannot simply drop them back down without a transfer.

4. Emerald Lakers Club Policy on Fill-Ins

The KBI rules above are the competition-wide minimum. Emerald Lakers has its own club policy that is, in places, stricter than the KBI rules. When the two differ, coaches and team managers must follow the stricter of the two.

The following guidance was issued by our Vice President, Wei, and applies to every Emerald Lakers team:

Club rules for using fill-ins

- Fill-ins must come from the same grade or lower. You cannot pull in a player from a higher grade or higher age group to strengthen a team.
- If the fill-in is from the same age group, they must come from a lower grade – not the same grade. (This also aligns with KBI Rule 9(d), which blocks movement between two teams in the same grade and age group.)
- The same player may only fill in twice per season for each receiving team. Track fill-in appearances against every team they help, not just the player’s home team.
- Under-8s may fill in for any grade with no cap on the number of games. (KBI Rule 9(c)(vii) specifically permits U8 players to fill in for any Under-10 grade.)
- Always let your age-group coordinator know when you are using a fill-in, whether before or immediately after the game.

Plan ahead – contact coordinators by Wednesday

If you know early in the week that you will be short on players, reach out to your coordinator by Wednesday at the latest. Early notice gives us the best chance of organising a legitimate fill-in rather than risking a forfeit or an ineligible player on game day.

Boys – Wei: boyscoordinator@emerald Lakers.com.au
Girls – Lisa: girlscoordinator@emerald Lakers.com.au

Side-by-side: KBI rule vs Emerald Lakers policy

Situation	KBI rule (minimum)	Emerald Lakers policy
Fill-in from a higher grade	Not allowed as a normal fill-in – “playing up” only goes the other way (Rule 9(b)).	Not allowed. Full stop.
Fill-in from the same grade, same age group	Not allowed where the Club has two teams in the same grade and age group (Rule 9(d)).	Not allowed – fill-ins in the same age group must come from a lower grade.
Fill-in playing up a grade (from a lower grade)	Allowed for a maximum of two games per player per season before they are re-graded (Rule 9(c)(iii)-(iv)).	Allowed, but a player can only fill in twice per season for each receiving team.
U8 player filling in at a higher age group	Allowed for any Under-10 grade (Rule 9(c)(vii)).	Allowed for any grade, unlimited games.
Notifying the Club when using a fill-in	Not explicitly required by KBI.	Always notify your age-group coordinator.

If in doubt, the stricter rule wins: If the KBI rule allows something but the Emerald Lakers policy prohibits it, follow the Emerald Lakers policy. Check with your coordinator before fielding the player.

5. The Core Fill-In Rules at a Glance

Before going into detail, the table below summarises the rules you will rely on most often. Each rule is explained in full in the sections that follow.

Rule	What it says	What it means in practice
9(c)(iii)	A player may play a maximum of two (2) games in a higher grade. On the third game up, they stay in the higher grade for the rest of the season.	You can fill in a player up a grade twice. The third time re-grades them permanently.
9(c)(iv)-(v)	The higher grade a player lands in on their third game up becomes their permanent grade – they cannot drop back down.	Plan fill-ins carefully. Three games up = no return to the lower grade.
9(a)	The first team a player participates in for the season determines their team and grade.	Round 1 choices matter. Don’t start a player in a higher grade unless

Rule	What it says	What it means in practice
		that is meant to be their permanent team.
9(b)	“Playing up” means a higher grade, not a higher age group.	Playing up in age group (e.g. 14s playing 16s) is a separate concept with its own rules – see Section 5.
9(c)(i)	A player may play in more than one age group with the same Club and qualify for finals in both – as long as the grade is the same.	A 14B player can play 16B all season and be finals-eligible in both. But 14B playing 16A is subject to the up-a-grade limits.
9(d)	A player may only play in one team if the Club has two teams in the same grade and age group.	If we have Lakers U14B(1) and Lakers U14B(2), a player can’t swap between them.
9(c)(vii)	An Under-8 player can fill in for any Under-10 grade.	No grade restriction applies when a U8 plays up to U10.
9(c)(viii)	A 12BR player cannot play any games in a lower grade than BR regardless of the age group.	Restricted-grade players must not be pulled down-grade as a fill-in.
3.3(e)	A cleared restricted player can fill in for a maximum of two games in the season they were cleared.	New clearances coming in? Two games maximum as a fill-in – track it.
9(g)	A player may not play for any Club other than the one they are registered to.	Never borrow a fill-in from another club. The game will be forfeited.

6. Playing Up a Grade – the Two-Game Rule

This is the rule that most commonly applies to fill-ins. KBI allows a player to play in a higher grade than their normal one, but only twice.

“A player may play in grades higher than his/her normal grade for a maximum of two (2) games, after which the player may not revert to a lower grade.” — Rule 9(c)(iii)

What happens on the third game up?

- The higher grade becomes the player’s permanent grade for the rest of the season.
- They cannot drop back to a lower grade, even to play a game they would normally be eligible for.
- Interclub Transfers cannot be used to get around this rule (Rule 9(c)(ii)).

Key timing nuance

The time of the game determines whether a player can still play in a lower grade on the same day. Once a game has counted as the third game up, later games that day in the lower grade are off-limits.

Example from Rule 9(c): Third game up in 14A was at 5:30pm. The player may not then play in 14B at 6:40pm the same day.

7. Playing Up in Age Group

Playing up in age group is different to playing up a grade. A player can play across two age groups at the same Club all season – subject to a few conditions.

- Permitted: A 14B player can play 16B throughout the season and qualify for finals in both teams if both make finals (Rule 9(c)(i)).
- Permitted: A 12B player may play a 10B team, if age permits (Rule 9(c)(vi)).
- Permitted: An U8 player can fill in for any U10 grade without the grade restriction (Rule 9(c)(vii)).
- Not permitted: A restricted player cleared from another Club cannot play across age groups in the season they are cleared (Rule 9(c)).

Special consideration: If Emerald Lakers' lowest team in a lower age group is a higher grade than the team needing a fill-in, the Club may apply to the KBI Committee for special consideration (Rule 9(e)). Contact the team coordinators before using such a player.

8. Cleared Restricted Players as Fill-Ins

When a player is cleared to Emerald Lakers from another Club mid-season, they can help other teams only to a very limited extent.

“A cleared restricted player can play as a ‘fill in’ player in an eligible age group for a maximum of two (2) games in the season in which they were cleared.” — Rule 3.3(e)

Consequences of exceeding two games

- The player is deemed ineligible.
- Every game they played above the limit is forfeited.
- All premiership points for those games are lost.

Action for team managers: Keep a running count of any cleared restricted player's fill-in appearances and flag them to the Club before a third game is played.

9. Fill-In Coaches and Working With Children Checks

Fill-ins are not limited to players. If your regular coach is unavailable, a fill-in coach can step in – but only briefly.

“Fill in coaches can be used without having a WWCC card however they are only allowed to coach three games after which they must apply for a WWCC.” — Rule 34

- All coaches and Club officials over the age of 18 must normally hold a current WWCC and a completed Basketball Victoria statutory declaration.
- The fill-in coach allowance is capped at three games per season per individual without a WWCC.
- After three games, the fill-in must lodge a WWCC application before coaching again.

10. Worked Scenarios for Coaches and Managers

The scenarios below walk through common fill-in situations at Emerald Lakers. Use them as a reference when you are weighing up a decision on game day.

Scenario 1 – Short on numbers in U14B

Situation: Lakers U14B has only four players available this weekend. The coach asks a Lakers U14C player to fill in.

Can they play? Yes – the U14C player is playing up a grade, which is allowed for up to two games. The coach must track this. If the C-grade player plays up for a third time during the season, they become a B-grade player for the rest of the season and cannot return to C grade (Rule 9(c)(iii)-(iv)).

Scenario 2 – The third game up

Situation: A Lakers 14B player has already filled in twice for 16A. The 14B coach wants them to play 16A a third time in Round 12.

What happens? If they play that third 16A game, they immediately become a 16A player for the rest of the season and cannot return to 14B (Rule 9(c)(iv)). Interclub transfers cannot be used to avoid this. Make sure both the player and their parents understand this before the game.

Scenario 3 – Same-day double-up

Situation: A Lakers 14C player plays their third game up in 14A at 5:30pm. Their own U14C game is at 6:40pm the same day.

Can they play the 14C game? No. Once the third game up is played, they may not play in the lower grade later that day (or for the rest of the season) (Rule 9(c)).

Scenario 4 – Two teams in the same grade

Situation: Emerald Lakers has two U12B teams – Lakers U12B(1) and Lakers U12B(2). Lakers U12B(2) is short and wants to borrow a player from Lakers U12B(1).

Can they play? No. A player may only play in one team if the Club has two teams in the same grade and age group (Rule 9(d)). The fill-in must come from a different grade or age group instead.

Scenario 5 – Under-8 filling in at Under-10

Situation: A Lakers U8 player is asked to fill in for the U10C team.

Can they play? Yes. An Under-8 can fill in for any Under-10 grade (Rule 9(c)(vii)). This is a specific allowance – no grade restriction applies.

Scenario 6 – New clearance in Round 6

Situation: A restricted player is cleared from another club to Emerald Lakers in Round 6. Two coaches in the weeks that follow each ask the player to fill in for their teams.

What's the limit? The cleared restricted player may fill in a maximum of two games in the season of their clearance (Rule 3.3(e)). A third fill-in appearance triggers forfeits for those games and loss of all premiership points.

Scenario 7 – A “strong” fill-in from a higher grade

Situation: Lakers U14C is short and a coach suggests using a Lakers U14A player to fill in, reasoning that the KBI rules don't explicitly forbid a player playing down a grade in every case.

Can they play? No – not at Emerald Lakers. Club policy prohibits fill-ins from a higher grade or higher age group. Fill-ins must always come from the same grade or lower. A 14B player filling in for 14C would also be blocked by the same policy. If you need a fill-in for 14C, look to a lower grade in the same age group (e.g. 14D) or a lower age group (e.g. 12C).

Scenario 8 – Borrowing from another club

Situation: A Lakers coach suggests borrowing a friend's child from another club to avoid a forfeit.

Can they play? Absolutely not. Players are not permitted to play for any Club other than the one they are registered to. The game will be forfeited (Rule 9(g)). Better to accept the walkover and notify the Committee Secretary correctly.

Scenario 9 – A brand new player as a fill-in

Situation: A Lakers U12 team is short and a sibling of a current player, who has never played at the Club before, is keen to help out.

Can they play? They can play their first game, but the Team Manager must make sure a Registration Form is lodged in the Junior Registrar's Box by 9:00am the Monday one (1) week after that game (Rule 3.1). If that deadline passes and the player keeps appearing as a fill-in, the Club risks fines per game (Rule 3.5(d)) and ultimately forfeited games once the Registrar notifies the Club (Rule 3.5(e)). The rules do not give an "X-game unregistered fill-in" allowance – it is a time-limited paperwork window, not a quota.

Scenario 10 – Fill-in coach without a WWCC

Situation: The head coach of Lakers U16A is away. A willing parent without a WWCC is stepping in.

What applies? The parent can coach up to three games as a fill-in without a WWCC (Rule 34). After three games, they must apply for a WWCC before coaching again. The Club should make sure the application is lodged early. Please let coordinators know if using a fill in coach.

11. Penalties and Consequences

Getting fill-ins wrong has real consequences for individual teams and, in some cases, the entire Club. The table below summarises the main penalty risks.

Breach	Consequence
Exceeding the two-game fill-in limit for a cleared restricted player (Rule 3.3(e))	Player deemed ineligible. All games involving the player forfeited. All premiership points lost for those games.
Playing a third game up and then reverting to a lower grade (Rule 9(c)(iv))	Player is now a higher-grade player; any lower-grade game played afterwards is a breach and the player risks being declared ineligible.
Playing a player registered to another Club (Rule 9(g))	The game is forfeited.

Breach	Consequence
Playing an unregistered player or one with a pending clearance (Rules 3.5(d)-(f))	Fines per game per Committee discretion. After formal notification, continued use forfeits premiership points for every Club team in the affected rounds.
Playing a 12BR (or similarly restricted) player below their restricted grade (Rule 9(c)(viii))	Ineligible player, forfeited game, loss of premiership points.
Using a fill-in coach without a WWCC for more than three games (Rule 34)	Coach cannot continue until a WWCC is applied for. Club may face additional WWCC compliance consequences.
Failing to lodge a Registration Form within one week of a new player's first game (Rules 3.1, 3.5(d)-(e), 20(b))	Committee can fine the Club per game once notified. Continued play after notification = ineligible player and forfeited games. For U8s, escalating weekly fines and eventual Club-wide loss of premiership points after one month.

12. Emerald Lakers Fill-In Checklist

Before you use a fill-in, run through this checklist. Keep a copy with your team manager folder.

- Is the player registered to Emerald Lakers for the current season? If this is their first-ever game, has a Registration Form been lodged (or set aside to be lodged by 9am the following Monday)?
- Are they in an eligible age group or grade combination for the team they are filling in for?
- If they are playing up a grade: is this their first or second game up, or their third? Track it.
- If they are a cleared restricted player: have they already filled in twice this season?
- If they are a restricted-grade player (e.g. 12BR), confirm you are not using them in a grade lower than BR.
- If we have two teams in the same grade and age group, confirm the player is not being moved between them.
- If the coach is a fill-in without a WWCC, confirm they have coached fewer than three games this season.
- Emerald Lakers check: is the fill-in coming from the same grade or lower? A higher grade or higher age group is not permitted.
- Emerald Lakers check: has this player already filled in for this team twice this season? If so, use someone else.
- Have you notified your age-group coordinator that you are using a fill-in – Wei for the boys, Lisa for the girls?
- If you already know by Wednesday that you will be short, contact your coordinator early so a legitimate fill-in can be arranged.
- If in doubt, contact your coordinator before tip-off. A walkover is better than a forfeit plus penalties.

13. Quick Reference – Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Fill-in	A registered Club player filling an empty spot in another team within their own Club for a single game.
Playing up (grade)	Playing in a higher grade than the player’s normal grade (e.g. a 14C player filling in for 14B). Capped at two games (Rule 9(c)(iii)).
Playing up (age group)	Playing in an older age bracket (e.g. a 14B player playing 16B). Permitted across the season with finals eligibility in both if the grade is the same (Rule 9(c)(i)).
Restricted player	An “A” or “AR” player from the last six months, or a representative player in the current calendar year (Rule 3.3(b)).
Cleared player	A player who has moved from one KBI club to another with an approved clearance. Restricted cleared players may only fill in twice (Rule 3.3(e)).
Ineligible player	A player who is not entitled to play in a given game. Their games are forfeited and premiership points are lost.
Unregistered player	A player for whom no Registration Form has been lodged. Allowed to play their first game only if the form is lodged by 9:00am the Monday one week later (Rule 3.1). Continued appearances without registration lead to fines and, after notification, forfeits (Rules 3.5(d)-(e)).
Walkover	Game awarded to the other team because the opposition did not field a legitimate side. Sometimes a better option than risking an ineligible fill-in.

14. Where to Go for Help

If the situation is not covered here, please contact your age-group coordinator before the game. The Club can, where appropriate, submit a request for special consideration to the KBI Committee under Rule 4 (Appeals Procedures) or Rule 9(e) (special consideration for fill-ins where no lower age group team exists at an equivalent or lower grade).

Emerald Lakers coordinators

Boys – Wei: boyscoordinator@emerald Lakers.com.au
Girls – Lisa: girlscoordinator@emerald Lakers.com.au

Please let your coordinator know whenever you are using a fill-in, and reach out by Wednesday if you already know you will be short for the weekend.

The full KBI Junior Domestic Competition Rules & Regulations (May 2024) remain the authoritative source. Where Emerald Lakers policy is stricter than KBI, the Club policy applies. This guide is a practical summary and does not replace either set of rules.