

Short description of revised U18:

After much discussion and brainstorming AJSL is announcing a change to the U18 age group. We understand last year presented a variety of issues especially for our U18 players. This year we are shaking it up with team managers, team captains, more flexibility and team development. We are also allowing the teams to take more ownership of their experience this year.

The new U18 outline emphasizes building a strong, collaborative team environment led by dedicated team leaders working with the team captain. Combined they will establish playing style, positions, and complete required tasks. Additionally this new style provides an opportunity for those in the U18 age group to be active in the development of the team and allows more freedom for the team members to take ownership of their experience. Team managers (a parent/guardian of one of the players) will be responsible for communications, playing time, and overall administrative tasks. The team captain, along with the players, will be responsible for the overall team development, playing style, and positions following AJSL game rules.

U18 Q and A

Changes

- Q: What is changing for the U18 age group this year?
- A: AJSL is implementing a new structure for U18 teams that focuses on the team, team captains, increased flexibility, and more opportunities for team members to take ownership of their experience while being supported by a team manager.
- Q: Why is AJSL making these changes?
- A: After reviewing difficulties from previous seasons and listening to feedback, these changes are designed to address those challenges and create a more positive, engaging experience for all U18 participants.
- Q: How does this new structure benefit U18 players?
- A: The updated approach encourages a collaborative environment, gives players a greater voice in team matters, and allows for more individualized development and ownership.

Formation of teams

- Q: How will teams be formed in this new approach?
- A: AJSL is introducing a core 5 concept to anchor each U18 team. This concept builds a core team of 5 and completes the roster using the traditional blind draw process to form a complete team.

- Q: How is this core 5 created?
- A: This is where team ownership begins. An eligible player can decide on their own to become a team captain. They develop a roster and team name with 5 players and two team managers. They must submit this roster to the AJSL Registrar email Tom.F@ajsl.org prior to the blind draw to secure their team's spot. See team development checklist for more information on team creation.

- Q: How are these teams balanced for fair competition?
- A: The majority of the team roster will be developed using our standard blind draw to ensure teams have a mix of experience and skills. Additionally, all core 5 team list submissions must consist of a mix of 3 boys 2 girls or 3 girls 2 boys.

- Q: What if I don't know of a team or my child doesn't want to be a team captain.
- A: That's OK! Please register as you normally would and your child will be placed into the blind draw and placed on a team just like any other year.

- Q: Do you plan on limiting the number of teams with this new approach?
- A: Yes, our goal is to secure 4 teams to start. So, get team information into the Registrar as soon as you have developed your teams, appointed team managers and secured a sponsor. A waitlist will be maintained if needed for additional teams.

- Q: How do I register to play in the U18 age bracket?
- A: All U18 players must register as always on the AJSL webpage on inperson on February 1st at the Austintown Township Administrative offices (82 Ohltown Rd).

- Q: Who will be leading the U18 teams?
- A: Each team will have dedicated team managers working alongside the team captain. Together, they will set the playing style, assign positions, and manage required team tasks.
 - Each team will need two Team Leaders. These team leaders will be over the age of 18 and are required to complete all training and background checks prior to the coaches meeting held March 25th.

- Q: What responsibilities does the team manager have?
- A: The team manager, who will be a parent/guardian of a player of the team, is responsible for communications, playing time, arranging concession coverage, and overall administrative duties for the team.

- Q: What is the role of the team captain and players?

- A: The team captain and players are responsible for team development, establishing playing style, and deciding positions. They will have more freedom and input in shaping the team's experience under adult supervision.
- Q: What happens if a player submitted to the Registrar by a team captain never registers online?
- A: The team captain must replace the individual by March 10, 2026 or all other eligible players will be added to the blind draw pool.
- Q: What happens if a team manager (adult representative) does not complete the required training and background check?
- A: Team managers (adult representative) must complete all required items by March 10, 2026 or all eligible players will be added to the blind draw pool.
- Q: How does a U18 team get a team sponsor?
- A: It is the responsibility the team captain to secure a sponsor for their team. The sponsorship can be of any level.
- Q: What happens if a U18 team is unable to secure a sponsor?
- A: All eligible players will be added to the blind draw pool. *Contact the AJSL Registrar or AJSL Vice President if you are having difficulty finding a sponsor for your team.

