

CEVA JUNIOR GIRLS' POWER LEAGUE EXPLAINER – 2023 SEASON

GENERAL

Power League is a series of 4-5 tournaments running January through April for five divisions (12s, 14s, 16s, 18s, Open). The number of tournaments in a season depends on the age group – 14s and 16s play 5 tournaments because they're our biggest two age groups. The 12s, 18s, and Open play 4 tournaments.

Teams sign up for the season and are expected to participate in all Power League tournaments. A team's ranking carries over from one tournament to another and teams can either move up or down in the rankings depending on how they perform at each tournament.

Teams will generally play 4-5 matches at each Power League tournament. Most matches are best 2-of-3, however there are occasional instances where a match will be played as 3 sets to 25 points no matter the result of the first two sets or played as 1 set to 25 points (generally seen at the end of a day or when teams have already played several matches).

POWER LEAGUE QUALIFIER

The first 1-2 tournaments per age group are called Power League Qualifiers. The 14s and 16s play 2 qualifiers – once again, because they're the biggest age groups. Other groups play 1 qualifier.

Qualifiers are a chance to establish your starting rank for the PL season. Teams will be in groups of 24 or 32 (24 in the 12s division, 32 in the other divisions, broken into pools of 4). These groups will play several matches, including "crossovers" with another pool in the same facility, and teams can drastically increase their starting position based on their results at qualifiers. Some teams, by the nature of the system, have less opportunity to "move up" due to their position in the group – i.e., the #1 seeds in pools have less of a chance to "improve" their "ranking" because they're already quite high.

In the first PL qualifiers, teams are not assigned a specific seed – they are roughly grouped into #1 seeds in pools, #2 seeds in pools, etc. After the first PL Qualifier, teams will have seeds assigned to them. Seeds will be published on the CEVA website after each tournament throughout the season.

THE INITIAL SEEDING PROCESS

As noted, teams are not assigned a specific seed for their first Power League Qualifier. The Junior Girls' Committee used to spend many hours trying to assign an exact seed to each team in Power League, which was an arduous process that got bogged down in minutia. For the 2021-2022 season, the committee made a change whereby their job was to figure out who the "top 8" teams were in an age group, the "next 8," then the "next 8," and so on. These groups of teams are then randomly assigned to pools in the Qualifier. The committee takes care to avoid having teams from the same club randomly assigned to Qualifier pools, as well as avoiding potential crossover matchups between teams from the same club. Additionally, if a club's "lower" team in an age group got randomly seeded above a club's "higher" team, the two teams are switched. For example, if a 12-2 team was randomly seeded above a 12-1 team, those two teams are switched.

It's far more important for the committee to determine who should be in the overall "top 24 or 32" and the subsequent groups of 24 or 32. Because teams can move within those groups during the Qualifier, the committee put less emphasis on determining who should be assigned each specific seed, and more emphasis on getting the overall groupings right.

12s DIVISION

This division plays one Power League Qualifier in January. Teams are placed in groups of 24 – broken into six pools of 4. Each team plays their pool, then plays one crossover against a team from another pool.

This division plays three regular Power League tournaments. Based on results from the qualifier, teams are placed into 6-team "flights" – broken into two pools of 3. Teams play their pools, then play in a 6-team bracket where their first match is against a team from the other pool.

After each Power League tournament (not including qualifiers), the top two finishing teams in each flight move up to the next-highest flight. Conversely, the lowest two teams move down to the next-lowest flight.

14s & 16s DIVISIONS

These two age divisions play two Power League Qualifiers. Teams are placed in groups of 32 – broken into eight pools of 4. Each team plays in their pool, then can play either 1 or 2 crossovers against another pool's teams. The second crossover is dependent on the first crossover's result.

In the second qualifier, the top 16 teams from the first qualifier are placed into their own grouping. Other teams remain in groups of 32.

Each division also plays three regular Power League tournaments (five tournaments total). Based on the results from the qualifiers, teams are placed into 8-team flights that consist of regular pool play, followed by one crossover match. In the crossovers, like finishers play each other – for example, the two first-place teams play each other, the two second-place teams play each other, etc. This was a format change made in the 2019-2020 season to shorten the days for these ages.

After each Power League tournament (not including qualifiers), the top three teams from each flight move up to the next-highest flight. This means the two first place teams, plus the winner of the crossover between the two second place teams, would move up. The lowest three finishers move down – meaning the two fourth place finishers, and the loser of the third-vs-third crossover would move down.

18s DIVISION

This division plays one Power League Qualifier in January. Teams are placed into groups of 32 – similar to the first qualifier for the 14s and 16s).

Each division plays three regular Power League tournaments and plays the same crossover format as the 14s and 16s in those tournaments. The top three teams in each flight move up after each event, and the bottom three teams in each flight move down.

SEED CHALLENGES

Teams in the 18s and Open divisions may request an adjustment to their initial group placement by sending it in writing to the CEVA office. The request must include rationale and results from the current season. The deadline to do this is the Monday night of MLK weekend. Late requests aren't considered.

OPEN DIVISION

Any team 14s or higher may register in the Open Division for the season. This division is age-mixed, meaning younger teams may play older teams. The intention of this division is to allow for a higher level of competition for teams. The division's schedule and format mirrors the 18s Power League.