

Definition of a Bubble "A" Squirt Player

There are differing definitions of what a Bubble "A" Squirt player is depending on who you ask. Many times this stems from the reference point being what MN Hockey team designation the athlete last played on was. Unfortunately there is no constant using that as the basis for comparison, as each municipality is free to play at the level they designate with no MN Hockey oversight as to uniform skill requirements. Drastically different numbers of athletes and teams from one club to the next alters where players end up team wise. In addition, parent perception, and a coach's attachment to his club can create emotional obstacles as well. **Example:** An Edina coach is asked what level a player from Redwing is after seeing him and he says "solid C squirt". That player's parent and coach may be offended by that comment if the player is on the Redwing Squirt "A" team. It's ESP Select Hockey's job to help you select players who are at a target skill level, not players on certain teams. Since it is difficult to compare apples to apples without a reference point we've created a formula that will help to guide you through it. Below is a detailed breakdown of how the right players can be found when building an entire team from a specific community or when adding a few players from a neighboring community to complete a team. Examples of certain hockey associations are listed and analyzed as a guide to finding the right players. The terms we use to reference teams refers primarily to the size of the clubs not the level of commitment to their athletes.

Elite Tier Associations

Edina & Wayzata: *9-13 squirt teams*

For the sake of argument these two associations have the most depth of B level players of virtually any other clubs. We would categorize **all** their A players ineligible and several of their very best B players as well from those two associations most certainly above the level we wish to assemble teams at. The target players here will be found in the higher middle to simple middle of the B1 group with these clubs.

Top Tier

Eden Prairie, Woodbury, Eagan, Osseo-Maple Grove, Lakeville, White Bear, Stillwater, Rochester, Minnetonka, Blaine: *Associations that average 6-8 squirt teams with 4-5 traveling.* These clubs typically have just one "A" team along with 2 or 3 B1 squirt teams. Bubble is just below the very best "handful" of B players. All "A" team players are above the target.

High / Mid Tier

Prior Lake-Savage, Chaska-Chanhassen, Centennial, Andover, Eastview, Cottage Grove, Hastings, St. Cloud: *Generally 4-6 squirt teams with 3 or 4 traveling.* These clubs don't have quite the lofty numbers of the Elite & Top Tier Clubs. Generally you could look at the bottom 1 or 2 kids from the "A" squirt team and then 4-6 of the next 10 and 3-4 of the following 10 kids in the B group.

Mid Tier

Burnsville, Tartan, Forest Lake, Sibley, Shakopee, Moundsview, Apple Valley, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Farmington, Mpls Storm, Champlin, Jefferson, Orono, Mahtomedi: *Generally 4 or possibly 5 squirt teams* with typically 2 or possibly 3 traveling. Generally be the bottom 3-5 kids on their "A" team & then 4-9 of the next 12 players in the B squirt group. Variations in competitiveness may be seen year by year depending on the strength of the upcoming mite group etc.

Mid Low Tier

Mound, Spring Lake Park, Armstrong-Cooper, Kennedy-Richfield, North Metro, No. St. Paul, Simley, Hudson, Highland, Northfield, Owatonna, Waconia, Hutchinson: *Generally 2 traveling squirt teams total.* 5-7 second and third line kids from the Top team which could be either A or B1, and 4-9 of the top 10 players from the next team is a starting point but a conversation with our ESP staff may be appropriate prior to building a team in this Tier as strong years can vary year by year.

Lower Tier

Johnson-Como, Richfield, Redwing, Irondale, New Richmond, River Falls, Baldwin, N. Branch: Use the 18% calculation shown below to find your player range starting point, & work back 15-20 players from there. Look to snag a balanced mix of players within that group. Merging with another nearby club is a good idea if uniform skill drops off fast in your group.

Coaches from teams not listed should be able to fit themselves into the formula by comparing teams listed to their team by club size, win / loss records, & the outcomes of games with common opponents & or head to head. An alternative way to find a solid starting point, use an **18% calculation** of your "exact level size" (total player numbers) to find your top players & work back from there 15-20 kids to find the full range. **Example:** Club with 109 squirts $109 \times 18\% = \text{Player \# } 19$ to start. Work back through players 35-40 assembling a random mix of players in that range making you competitive.

Low Tier: 30-59 total squirts in a club use the 18% calculation. **Low Mid-Tier:** 51-79 total squirts means target the 9th through 25th most skilled kids. **Mid Tier:** 80-109 squirts means target the 15th through 34th best kids. **High Mid Tier:** 100-119 total squirts means grab the 19th through 38th most skilled kids. **Top Tier:** 120 -139 squirts targets the 24th through 48th most skilled kids. **Elite Tier:** 160 + squirts targets the 34th to 60th best kids.