



FOOTBALL NSW GUIDELINES PLAYING IN A TEAM ABOVE YOUR OWN AGE GROUP

The FNSW recommended age limit to play in a team above a players own age group is - **TWO (2) YEARS**.

The approval to allow a player to play more than two (2) years above their age group should only ever be considered when there is good reason why a player is unable to play in their own age group or the age group directly above.

A reason may be that there is no team available to cater for their age or their strength, stamina and physique is so advanced that there may be a duty of care issue in relation to the safety of other players in their own age group.

A request to play more than two (2) years above an age group for reasons such as playing with their siblings or friends or on a different day or because they just want to, is not considered a suitable enough reason.

Approval to play more than two (2) years above:

Where a player wishes to play more than two (2) years above their own age, then approval is at the discretion of the Association/Branch subject to an assessment of the player based on the player's strength, stamina and physique.

What determines the stipulated age of the team?

The age of the team is determined by the name of the team.

- U15 is the 15's. – therefore anyone 13 or 14 is generally considered suitable to play in that age team without assessment. Anyone 12 years old or younger should be assessed.
- All Age – The common minimum age of AA players is 18 years, therefore when applying the two (2) year guideline, anyone under 16 years old should be assessed. Some Associations will not accept applications from players under 16 years as these players are automatically considered too young both physically and mentally.

Who conducts the Assessment?

This is a decision for the Association. An Association may consider using suitably qualified persons (such as accredited coaches) to conduct assessments or often it may be the coach of the team (in which the player wants to play) who assesses the player.

As well as assessing the player on their strength, stamina and physique, the risks associated with playing with and against players more than two (2) years above their age should be considered as well as the mental affect of playing at this level.

The final approval to permit a player to play more than two (2) years above is a decision for the Association with ample consideration given to duty of care of the player.

PLAYING ABOVE AGE CONSENT FORM - MUST BE COMPLETED

Where a person is applying to play more than two (2) years above their age, Parental or Legal Guardian permission must be obtained using the Playing Above Age Consent Form. The Consent Form must be completed and signed off by the relevant club and association prior to the player being approved to play in the older age team. The Consent form is available on the FNSW website listed under Club Resources in the footer menu.

Accepting the responsibility of approving players

If the Association does not want to accept the responsibility of assessing and approving players then they have the option of declining such applications and/or inserting a rule in their Rules and Regulations which prevents players from applying to play more than two (2) years above their own age. The Association cannot transfer the responsibility of assessment or approval to any other organisation or individual, it is a risk management and duty of care decision applicable to their own membership which the association is responsible for.

Where an Association wishes to address the matter of players aged under 18 years wanting to play in All Age then the Association may consider the following options:

1. Assess the individual player based on their strength, stamina and physique, OR
2. Establish a local rule stating that a player must turn 16 y/o to play in All Age, OR
3. Establish a local rule stating that a player must turn 17 y/o, or 18y/o, to play in All Age.

Why isn't there a strict Policy on this

The reason that there is not a strict policy on this is because in some areas of NSW there may not be teams available in all age groups and allowing a player to play more than two (2) years up may often be the only way a player can get to play.



PLAYING ABOVE AGE CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned as guardian of the participant named hereunder have read, understood, acknowledged and agree to the contents of this document and that I have had the right to obtain independent legal advice regarding sa me.

I, the undersigned as guardian of the participant give consent for the participant to play in the higher age group (as stated below) which I acknowledge is above what is my child's true age group and as governed by the age groups of participation.

In relation to this participant I acknowledge and accept that there is an inherit risk in the participant playing in an age group which is above/greater than the participant's current age including but not limited to participation against adults in All Age and senior competition. It is acknowledged participation in (soccer) football is a high exertion activity and a contact sport and that the participant has an equal if not greater risk of both general injury and injury from contact arising from participation in the higher age group. These may include muscle cramps, muscle soreness, pain, discomfort, fatigue, abrasion, laceration, bruising, bone dislocation or breakage, head injury including but not limited to concussion and other injuries that may require medical treatment or hospitalisation.

To the full extent permitted by law I as the guardian of the participant release, hold harmless and indemnify the club, association and Football NSW, and their respective board members, officers and employees and any related third party from any and all liability for any loss, damage, expense or personal injury including death that the participant may suffer as a result of the participation in (soccer) football competition in the higher age group due to any cause whatsoever including negligence, breach of contract, or breach of any statutory or other duty of care.

I as guardian of the participant am aware that by signing this document I am waiving certain legal rights on behalf of the participant that I or the participant has or may have had against the Club, Association, Football NSW, and their respective board members, officers, employees or related third parties and I reconfirm that there is an inherit risk in participation in the higher age group which includes but is not limited to the potential for serious personal injury or death.

Where I as guardian sign on behalf of a minor child, I also give full permission for any person connected with the Club and/or Association and/or Football NSW to administer first aid deemed as necessary, and in the case of serious illness or injury, give permission to call for medical and/or surgical care for the participant and to transport the participant to a medical facility deemed as necessary for the wellbeing of the child.

Club participant registered with			
Participant True Age Group		Age Group Consenting to Play	
Name of Participant		Name of Guardian	
Signature of Participant		Signature of Guardian	
Dated this.....day of20.....		Dated this.....day of20.....	
Name of Club Representative		Signature of Club Representative	
Name of Association Representative		Signature of Association Representative	

This form must be completed and returned to the Administrator of the Club for approval by the relevant Association prior to the participant playing in the older age group. It is an insurance requirement that this form must be kept on file by the Association for a minimum of 7 years from the date of signing.



Form B - Assessor's Decision

Office use only

PLAYER DETAILS	
Full Name	
Registration No	
Date of Birth	
Request Competition	

I have been requested to pass opinion on the above player's suitability to participate in a competition two or more years above their actual age division and/or a Senior Competition.

Please be advised that for this application to be processed a minimum of two weeks' notice is required. After considering the application material and assessing the player against the Assessment Guidelines, including witnessing the player **performing in activities at their current level**, it is my opinion that the player:

- Is **not** competent to perform at the level that has been requested.
- Is **not** competent to perform at the level that has been requested, however; is competent to perform at a maximum of level of competition.
- Is competent to perform at the level that has been requested.

Reason for Decision;

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Full Name	Signature	Position



Assessment Guidelines

There are several areas that an Assessor should examine when considering a player's potential for playing in a competition that falls outside of their eligible age group. These are, but not limited to:

1. Performance

- Performances at current level.
- Past performances as a Regional or State representative player (if applicable).
- Performances in local/regional events.

2. Fitness and Athletic Ability

Physical capacities are considered including aerobic capacity, speed, strength and agility (as observed in training practices and games).

3. Technical Competence

Core skills for outfield players include receiving, striking, heading, dribbling, tackling and defending. Core skills for goalkeepers include basic technique (handling), shot stopping, dealing with crosses, agility and distribution.

4. Tactical Ability

- The ability to read the game.
- A credible involvement in the game.
- The player exhibits sound decision-making ability.
- Flexibility in positional play.

5. Potential to Improve

Consideration of a number of factors, not least of which is 'will the player's involvement at the new level have the potential to develop their physical and athletic ability, their technical competence and their tactical awareness?' In other words is the request made for the player's benefit or simply to help the club field a team?

6. Competitive Ability

- A general assessment of the player's resilience.
- The player's strength, temperament, determination, and commitment.
- The player's ability to perform in adverse conditions.
- Their attitude to coping with setbacks and criticism.
- The¹ player's general ability to persist.

¹ All information in this document has been approved by the DDFA as of April 2023. FOOTBALL NSW GUIDELINES PLAYING IN A TEAM ABOVE YOUR OWN AGE GROUP is from the Football NSW website, PLAYING ABOVE AGE CONSENT FORM is from the DDFA website and provided by Football NSW, Play up assessment created by and approved by the DDFA in April 2023.