

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.