



Spotswood Football Netball Club

‘Playing Out of Age Policy’

| Revision | Issue Date | Description | Originator | Checker | Approver |
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| A | 29/01/2025 | Issued for Use | I. Elmore | G. Finlay | A. Given |
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Policy Context

The Spotswood Football Netball Club (SFNC) accepts that from time to time a junior player may request to play a season up an age group within the club.

This policy outlines the club position on any junior member seeking to play out of their age group. After considering and reviewing the below, a playing out of age request may be made with approval from the club Committee. It is also to be read in conjunction with WFNL By Law 4.1.2.1 which may also restrict a player's eligibility to play out of age.

Request to Play Up an Age Group

SFNC's ongoing position is that junior members should play in their actual age group each year of membership. The junior player should accept to play in their actual age group as first preference.

An application to play out of age group may be submitted for consideration and if approved it is only applicable for the season it is approved.

Applications will not be considered for playing with friends, nights of training, game day timings etc. These should be discussed with the club and may be accommodated where possible.

The club committee will consult with the following roles in determining its decision

- Junior Coaching Coordinator
- Coach of the age group junior members are due to play with
- The coach of the older team/division the junior member wishes to play with
- Junior Development Committee/ Junior Administrator

In making its determination, the club committee will consider and assess the following as a priority

- a) Does the junior member have the required skill level, maturity and physicality to play against the higher age group/ division?
- b) Are junior members allowed to play in the higher age group by the WFNL By Laws or is league approval required?
- c) Does the current age group have sufficient numbers to field a team and the junior member playing up will not disadvantage the ability to effectively field a team?
- d) Will the current team/ age group be negatively affected by the team members playing permanently up (e.g. in some cases, losing a skillful player/s can have an adverse effect on the team and division they are graded in)
- e) Does the team they are requesting to play in have sufficient numbers?
- f) Will true age players be negatively impacted by the player joining the higher age group?
- g) Is the better option that the junior member to play in their own age group and have opportunities to play an occasional game in the higher age group/ division for skill development? In such cases the Club will still consider the above criteria but with a view to giving the player an opportunity to experience playing in a higher age group.

League approval is still required and the process and timing to apply to play a game up an age group is outlined below.

Once a decision is made by the Club Committee, no further applications by that junior member can be made within that playing season.

If approved, the junior member will not be able to take the field until all documentation is signed by parent/ guardian, club and approved by the WNFL.

If a player and/ or parents/ guardians are aggrieved by the club committee decision, then the matter must be referred to the SFNC Club President. The final decision on whether the Club supports the player playing a season up an age group rests with the SFNC Club President.

If a player and/ or parents/ guardians wish this decision to be reviewed, then the matter must be referred to the SFNC Club President for mediation. The party who would like the decision reviewed must provide their rationale in writing with any supporting documentation to the President of the SFNC.

- The President will review all circumstances of the submission and make a final decision.
- The final decision once determined by the SFNC Club President is final and cannot be reviewed.

Should the WFNL refuse dispensation to allow the player to play up an age group, the Club will assist to seek a review of the decision but notes that successfully overturning such a decision is difficult given the discretionary nature of the league's power of approval.

For players seeking to play an occasional game up an age group, the coach of the upper age team must seek approval of the junior administrator by no later than Friday night before the scheduled game. The junior administrator will consider the above criteria, the WFNL rules and any impact on finals eligibility before approving. The junior administrator will facilitate the completion of the required dispensation form for submission to the WFNL.

Request to Play down an Age group

A request to play down an age group based on disability or physical size considerations must be made to the WFNL via the club committee. More information can be found in the [National Community Football Policy Handbook Section 4.1](#).

For clarity around the playing out of age requirements, queries should be made to SFNC Junior Administrator.