

The FNSW recommended age limit to play in a team above a player's 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 ability, 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 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, approval is at the discretion of the Association 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. For example:

- U15 team – anyone 13 years old and over is generally considered suitable to play up into that age team without assessment. Anyone aged under 13 years 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 often considered too young for these age groups both physically and mentally.

Who conducts the Assessment?

This is a decision for the Association. An Association may consider using suitably qualified persons (e.g. 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 their mental capacity to play 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, permission must be obtained from their parent or legal guardian 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 Playing Above Age Consent Form is available on the FNSW website listed under Resources.

Accepting the responsibility of approving players

If the Association does not accept the duty of care and responsibility of assessing and approving players, then the association has the option of declining such applications or including 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 which the Association is responsible for.

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

1. Assess each 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 a nominated age to play in All Age.

Policy

Application to play more than two years above is available to players on Application to their Association. There is no strict policy due to there being some regional areas where there may not be sufficient players or teams available in all age groups and allowing players to play more than two (2) years above may be the only way they can have the opportunity to play.