



Grading Policy and Procedures

PURPOSE

To provide a framework to help clubs group teams into appropriate divisions in the netball competition.

GOALS

To deliver a competition catering for all age, skill and ability levels, within the resources available, which:

- encourages and promotes continuing involvement in netball;
- provides an opportunity for teams to develop skills and team work.
- supports the fun and participative elements of sport; and
- provides an opportunity for on-going skill development of individuals.

To establish individual competition divisions which:

- comprise teams which display a similar matching of skills;
- offer a reasonably level standard of competitive; and
- fosters individual and team skill development.

To manage a comprehensive grading process to support the competition comprising of divisions which match the evolving needs of the North Canberra Netball Competition.

To comply with the various rules and by-laws of the Associations and governing bodies associated with netball and the delivery of sport.

SCOPE

The scope of the grading policy will be limited to North Canberra Netball Competition. The policies and principles apply primarily to the competitive netball categories. (An outline of the policies applied for modified netball is at Attachment A).

The NCNC comprises the following categories:

CATEGORY	TARGET AGE RANGE	MAXIMUM AGE (as at 31 Dec)
SET/GO Tiers	7-10 years	10 years
Juniors	11-12 years	12 years
Intermediates + Mixed	13-15 years	15 years
Cadets + Mixed	16-18 years	Attending School
Seniors	18+ years	Nil

DEVELOPMENT OF PLAYERS

Players younger than the target age range for a category can participate in a higher division. Under the by-laws, only maximum ages apply (except for the open category). In these circumstances, the club or team involved should consider the skills and maturity level of the player/s to ensure that acceleration will not negatively impact their development or enjoyment of the game.

COMPETITION STRUCTURE

The number of teams wishing to participate in each category is the main influence on the competition structure. The competition is played across two venues to ensure that participation is not limited and that netball in the north Canberra can continue to grow and prosper. This policy both supports participation and increases the depth of the competition - which expands the opportunities for development. The times and venues of matches will vary for most divisions in each category, with many divisions scheduled to play at both venues (Lyneham and Charnwood) for half the season. Dependent on total team nominations for each category, the proposed categories will be grouped into the following divisions:

CATEGORY	DIVISIONS
Set	Tier 1, Tier 2
Go	Tier 1, Tier 2
Juniors	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Intermediates	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Intermediates Mixed	1
Cadets	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Cadets Mixed	1
Seniors	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SIZE OF DIVISIONS

The size of each division is finally determined by the number of teams graded in each division. Where possible, for fourteen round seasons, divisions will be made up of eight teams and an even number of teams to avoid byes. The number of rounds is determined by the Saturdays available outside of school holidays or long weekends and Netball ACT's schedule for junior championships.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by Canberra and Belconnen Netball Associations considering any feedback from affiliated clubs and entity teams.

GRADING PROCESS

STEP 1: PLANNING (NCNC CONVENORS)

- Calculate the maximum number of games able to be played each Saturday based on the ACT calendar and the number of courts available for grading and season rounds.
- Finalise the number of teams entered and determine the number of byes required if any (ideally none).
- Calculate division sizes, i.e., 8 teams, 6 teams, dependent on the number of rounds in the season and byes - endeavouring to equalise the number of times teams play each other.
- Determine if any split rounds needed to maximise the number of times teams play each other.

STEP 2: NOMINATION OF TEAMS (CLUB CONVEORS)

- Full details of teams nominating for the competition needs to be provided to the NCNC by the due date. The minimum information required will be set out in the registration requirements. A comprehensive grading process, and ultimately NCNC's capacity to determine a suitable division for individual teams (and minimise disruption for the competition, is highly dependent on:
 - complete team and player information provided by clubs; and
 - informed decisions based on a knowledge of the competition or careful consideration of the guidance provided.
- Clubs which have more than one team in the same category are advised to grade their teams to avoid having divisions comprising multiple teams from the same club, if possible and if this is a consideration for the club.
- Requests to move down (comparative to the previous season) should firstly consider the natural age shift for modified, junior and intermediate categories (on average, two to three whole divisions move up to the next category each year).
- Requests to move down should be supported by the previous season's results.

Retention of Team Identity (Original Team)

- It is preferable that teams of the same or mostly the same players retain the same team name. A team, which has retained at least five players from the previous season, is recognised as retaining its identity.
- Detail needs to be provided by clubs on Team Nomination form to indicate whether the team is retaining its identity or is a new team. The individual player history information sought assists to identify the composition of the team as same, similar, or different.

Nominate for Division

- Each team is to nominate a preferred division. Clubs take primary responsibility for nominating a division that supports the goals of this policy. Club grading is recommended as a means of benchmarking teams and nominating a suitable division and to determine an appropriate team fit for new players.

STEP 3: GRADING / TEAM RANKING

Based on information available from the previous season and team nominations provided by clubs, teams will be ranked in comparative order and allocated an initial ranking in the new season's competition. The basis for ranking will be a combination of the following:

- Clubs' recommendations/nominations;
- Previous season's performance - win/loss ratio and goals for/against percentage;
- The natural age shift for teams progressing through the modified, junior and intermediate categories. This general principle does not apply equally to senior teams.
- A comparative assessment of the best fit for new teams.

Ranking Procedures:

- Rank teams according to divisions nominated by clubs.
- Apply the by-laws that set out automatic progression for premiers (for teams of five of the same players).
- Consider comments on team entry sheets noting significant changes to a team's composition, change of team names, requests to shift up or down.
- Refer to the previous season's final ladder positions, including percentages. Finals results can be variable but are taken into consideration.
- Refer to the previous season's match results to identify teams with results inconsistent with the average performance of teams in a division and consider adjustments that might be necessary to improve a team's opportunities to experience wins and losses. – For teams which have lost consistently in a season, consider grading them down so that they can experience some wins.
- For teams which have won consistently throughout a season, an opportunity to challenge should be explored.
- Identify teams with an established history to provide a benchmark against which to trial new teams in grading.
- Allocate new' teams to a division based on 'best fit' and a comparison of like-age and experience teams.
- Allocate an initial rank for all teams in the category.

Allocation of Divisions:

- Divide categories into divisions of 8 where possible (nominate a division for each team).
- Allocate teams to divisions on the overall ranking within the category for the season. There may be some varied division numbers depending on the total number of teams in a category.
- Identify 'benchmark' teams with consistent competition history and team composition.
- Prepare the fixture using a typical round robin fixture. Adjust the fixture if necessary, to accommodate individual team bye requests; to avoid a situation where teams play each other twice unnecessarily during the season; and to test majority new teams (without competition history) against benchmark teams.

STEP 4: REGRADING

- Provide clubs with an opportunity to provide feedback and to request adjustments to divisions before the end of round 4.
- Evaluate the feedback and results from the first 4 round matches and adjust teams where appropriate.
- Re-publish fixtures for round 5.

STEP 5: REVIEW OF GRADING DECISIONS

- An opportunity will be provided for clubs to during the first 4 rounds of the season
- Requests for review of division placements decisions must be supported by information that will allow for an informed impartial decision based on the performance of teams in a category.

- Individual requests to review grading decisions based on the match time or venue for season rounds is not the primary consideration and cannot be accommodated.
- Convenors will consider all appeals (and make any adjustments necessary) before settling final composition of divisions beyond round 5.
- NCNC will provide a response to all clubs that lodged requests for review which have not been agreed or are unable to be accommodated (for example, where a review of a grading decision was not validated by a review of results for a category as a whole).
- A form will be available for clubs to provide feedback and/or lodge a request for a draw adjustment. All requests should provide the minimum information sought on the form and be submitted to the NCNC by the appropriate Club contact not individual team officials.

Step 7: SEASON FIXTURES

Season fixture using the PlayHQ platform - entering teams into the participation module and allocating teams from each category into a division and creating a competition draw. Adjustments can be made after round 4 but before round 5.

APPEALS

Except for teams participating in the non-competitive SET/GO Tier category, the draws will not be adjusted after the final fixtures are published (round 5).

The circumstances warrant an adjustment that is consistent with this policy without disadvantage to other teams. Adjustments to draws after the commencement of competition rounds can negatively impact on the competition standing of other teams and cause considerable inconvenience.

Teams that elect not to participate in any matches during the first 4 rounds will be ineligible to seek a review of grading decisions.

This applies to teams that field less than five players registered in that team during the first 4 rounds.

Requests to move divisions after the fifth round of competition will not be considered.

Notwithstanding this, NCNC maintain the discretion to review grading decisions based on ongoing match evaluation and adjust in accordance with the by-laws.

SET/GO TIER

NCNC follows the guidelines as per Rule 15 of the International Netball Federation Rules of Netball, variations to the rules may be made for matches that are not international play. The SET and Go Tier official rules can be found [HERE](#). Below are the modifications suited to the North Canberra Netball Competition (NCNC) and teams are placed into their respective categories based on age alone.

- SET Tier (7–8-year-old as at the end of 31 Dec)
- GO Tier (9–10-year-old as at the end of 31 Dec)