

JUNIOR GRADING TRIAL GUIDELINES (Seasons 2024, 2025 & 2026)

1. JUNIOR COMPETITION

- 1.1 In the NENA competition, the junior and senior grades are separate competitions and therefore separate grading rules apply.
- 1.2 The Junior NENA competition is a single sex female (including gender identified) activity. Grades may be played mixed. Boys (including gender identified) are eligible to play in a mixed grade until the age of 12 years.
- 1.3 Refer to NENA By-Law 1 for Playing Conditions and Rules minus 1.12, refer 8. **FAIR GAME RULE (MERCY RULE)**
- 1.4 Refer to NENA By-Law 9 for Forfeits.
- 1.5 Refer to NENA By-Law 10 for Finals.
- 1.6 Refer to NENA By-Law 11 for Clearances
- 1.7 Refer to NENA By-Law 12 for Suspension

2. JUNIOR GRADES

- 2.1 The Junior NENA competition will consist of:
 - 2 (two) x 17U grades named Inter 1 and Inter 2 and be competitive;
 - 2 (two) x 13U grades named Junior 1 and Junior 2 and be competitive;
 - 2 (two) x 10U grades named Sub Junior 1 and Sub Junior 2 and be non-competitive.
- 2.2 Age eligibility:
 - Inter grades - a player must not turn 18 in the year of competition except if enrolled at secondary school of the current season (*refer Junior Player Exemption*);
 - Junior grades - a player must not turn 14 in the year of competition;
 - Sub Junior grades – a player must not turn 11 in the year of competition;
 - Junior players must turn 7 years of age in the year of competition.

PENALTY: If any ineligible player plays in the competitive junior competition, the penalty shall be automatic loss of points and goals scored to the infringing team and the 2 premiership points awarded to the opposing team. If the infringing player was part of the losing team, the club whom the player played for will be fined as set at the AGM. Any Association NENA Best and Fairest player votes awarded to the infringing team will be forfeited.
- 2.3 Match Length
 - Inter grades to play 15-minute quarters and will play for premiership points, Association player votes and play finals per grade;
 - Junior grades to play 12-minute quarters and will play for premiership points, Association player votes and play finals per grade.
 - Sub junior grades to play 10-minute quarters with modification to equipment, rules and game structure as per adopted modified netball rules to emphasise all-round skill development and opportunity for all players to experience different positions.

NOTE: Scores and ladders for Sub Juniors grades will be kept for use by the NENA Management Committee only and will NOT be published or displayed.

3. JUNIOR PLAYER REGISTRATIONS refer to NENA By-Laws 7

In addition, for junior player registrations:

- 3.1 A junior player may play for 2 (two) clubs within the Association during a season. That junior player must be registered to both clubs. The ability to play for two clubs is limited to non-competitive grades only.

4. JUNIOR GRADING

- 4.1 All clubs shall attempt to fill all grades.
- 4.2 Clubs who have 10 (ten) eligible players per age group in the junior competition must fill both grades unless a grade exemption is sought.
- 4.3 Games will commence on Game Day with a minimum of 5 players per team on the court with positions left vacant at the discretion of the participating team coaches.
- 4.4 It is at club discretion if players are graded into teams within a grade group based on age and/or ability.
- 4.5 All clubs to submit their junior player list (as per approved junior template) with eligible players and including those eligible juniors who nominate to play in the NENA senior competition only. Junior player template for team nomination to include full time players name and surname, date of birth, anticipated player grade for upcoming season and playing netball history from 2 previous years (if known). Club junior player lists will be distributed to all clubs for the Junior Round Table meeting to discuss numbers and any potential junior grade exemptions.

PENALTY: A club who does not submit a completed junior player template will be fined as set at the AGM.

5. JUNIOR GRADE EXEMPTIONS & REGRADING

Pre-season

- 5.1 Junior grade exemptions will be considered if a Club at the Junior Round Table meeting can demonstrate the justification of the exemption, through age, availability and/or ability grading. If two or more clubs wish to have the same grade exemption, this will be discussed at the Junior Round Table meeting with the preference of 1 (one) exemption per grade.
- 5.2 Junior grade exemptions are to be officially sought in writing to the NENA Secretary 14 days prior to a NENA Management Committee General meeting before the season commences.
- 5.3 Exemption decision will be at the discretion of the NENA Management Committee by way of majority vote. If the vote is equal the exemption will not be granted. NENA to minute clubs who votes for and against to ensure clubs are accountable for their decisions.
- 5.4 Clubs may share players during the season across all junior grades and competitions, but not during finals. A player who takes the court for their non registered club, NENA By-Laws 6. Qualify applies i.e. the game in that grade is recorded as a game played for the registered club.

During the season

- 5.6 All junior exemptions will be reviewed and voted upon after the 4th and 7th rounds of the season. The review will consider results and the grade competition as a whole. All clubs will be given the opportunity to discuss and consider the exemption(s) in the interest of junior development and club circumstances. Clubs will again vote on the exemption(s). The vote will be by way of majority vote. If the vote is equal, the exemption granted at the beginning of the season will stand.
- 5.7 If a junior team is re-graded during the season:
- The individual NENA Best & Fairest votes will transfer to the new grade.
 - Premiership Conditions, *refer to Section 9.*

6. JUNIOR QUALIFYING

- 6.1 A player must play three (3) weeks of programmed matches in the junior competition for the Club which they are registered to be eligible for finals.

- 6.2 Finals matches do not count as qualifying games.
- 6.3 Any player who takes to the court will be recorded on the scorecard, and that game documented as an official game for that player in that junior grade.
- 6.4 A player may play in only 2 (two) junior grades on the same day. Both matches will be recorded for that player on that day, but only the highest grade will count for qualifying.
PENALTY: Club will be fined a sum set at the Annual General Meeting.
- 6.5 A player may not move down more than one grade for her Club at a time per programmed weekly match.
- 6.6 Once a player has played 9 (nine) games in a grade they are deemed to be qualified in that grade and cannot play in a lower grade. Junior non-competitive teams are exempt from this ruling.
- 6.7 Clubs are encouraged to apply at the beginning of the season to be exempt from the 9 (nine) game up qualifying rule (NENA By-Law 6.7) if they can demonstrate they may struggle due to minimal playing numbers.
- 6.8 Any qualified player who has not played nine (9) games in any one grade before finals, can play no lower than the grade where most matches have been played all season. Where equal games are played, the player must play in the higher grade.
- 6.9 An injured qualified player may be granted permission by NENA Executive Committee to return to game fitness in one grade lower on written request. Request must be accompanied by a Medical Certificate.
- 6.10 In the event that there are two teams representing the same club in the same grade, a player who plays 6 games in one team becomes qualified for that grade of that team and shall not be eligible to play for the other team.
PENALTY: A team which plays an ineligible player in a lower grade must forfeit their points, goals scored and best player votes for the infringing player.

7. JUNIOR PLAYER EXEMPTIONS

- 7.1 A player turning 18 years of age in the year of competition who is enrolled in secondary school does not require a player exemption.
- 7.2 An exemption can be requested for a player to play in a lower grade which has age restrictions (17U, 13U and 10U) through the Club Secretary with supporting evidence.
- 7.3 Junior player exemptions are to be officially sought in writing to the NENA Secretary 14 days prior to a NENA Management Committee General meeting before the season commences.
- 7.4 The NENA Management Committee is to remain the final authority for the player exemptions and may withdraw them at any time.

8. FAIR GAME RULE (MERCY RULE)

Non-Competitive Grades (Replaces NENA By-Law 1.12)

- 8.1 When a Sub Junior 1 or Sub Junior 2 team is leading by 20 goals, and/or if the game is predominately being played down one end of the court for the first half (regardless of the score), coaches will meet to declare the game over. Time will be held, and coaches will restructure both sides (*this may include swapping players between clubs*) to allow a more even game across the court for all players involved.

Competitive Grades

- 8.2 When a Junior 1 and Junior 2 team is leading by 30 goals, scoring stops but play continues. Coaches must meet at the next break to declare the game over. Coaches will restructure both *sides* (*this may include swapping players between clubs*) to allow a more even game across the court for all players involved. At this break when the game is declared over, umpires will complete their end of match procedure including Best & Fairest votes, before restarting the game for the remaining time, under the Fair Game Rules adjustments.

- 8.3 When a Inter 2 and Inter 1 team is leading by 60 goals, scoring stops but play continues. Coaches must meet at the next break to declare the game over. Coaches will restructure both *sides (this may include swapping players between clubs)* to allow a more even game across the court for all players involved. At this break when the game is declared over, umpires will complete their end of match procedure including Best & Fairest votes, before restarting the game for the remaining time, under the Fair Game Rule adjustments.
- 8.4 The Fair Game Rule is not implemented during the finals series.

9. PREMIERSHIP CONDITIONS *refer to NENA By-Laws 8*

In addition, for competitive junior grades that are regraded:

A junior team that is regraded up or down following an exemption review(s) (refer 5.6) shall be placed into equal 4th (fourth) position in the grade they are regraded to, that is, with the same number of competition points, wins, losses as the team which is currently placed 4th (fourth) prior to the regrade.