

Netball Tasmania Age Exemption Guidelines

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This document aims to provide guidance to clubs and Associations in relation to age exemption matters. Netball Tasmania encourages clubs and Associations to be receptive to discussions around age exemptions with their members for all junior netball competitions for players under the age of 18 years old.

Please note these guidelines apply to community level netball and do not apply to representative or state level netball.

The benefit of permitting age exemptions is that players can participate with like-minded peers who have similar social capacities, degrees of skill, and levels of maturity. This model increases enjoyment of the game for all players.

The rate at which children progress through sequences of motor development does vary and whilst motor development is age related it is not age dependent.

From a Netball Tasmania point of view we recommend the following guidelines when dealing with matters relating to age exemption requests;

- First year players may seek an age exemption if they have not previously played netball at a club or school level and demonstrate a skill level under that of other players in their eligible age group.
- Approval should be granted to players who present supporting evidence from a doctor or teacher. Examples of when a doctor or teacher might support an age exemption include:
 - The player is physically smaller than others in their eligible age group.
 - The player's social skills are under-developed and do not meet that of others in their eligible age group.
 - The player has a congenital or cognitive medical condition which requires them to play in a lower age group.
- A player may apply for an age exemption if their requested age group matches that of their school grade. For example, if a 12-year-old is in grade 5, they may apply to play in an 11&under competition with other grade 5 students.
- The younger the age of the athlete in question the more lenient associations should be in approving age exemptions

It is imperative that in assessing age exemptions associations do not implement intrusive assessment methodologies and at all times treat all parties with respect ensuring that inclusivity is at the forefront of their approach.

If an age exemption is granted, Netball Tasmania advises that the player should be permitted to play a maximum of one year below their eligible age group and the exemption only be valid for one competition season. For the decision to be recognised in the following competition season, it is recommended that the player reapplies for the age exemption prior to the new season commencing.

Whilst not requiring a formal age exemption Netball Tasmania also acknowledges that from time to time players with a suitable level of talent and or potential may play in a competition above their age eligibility. These decisions are for the respective clubs and associations to make on a case by case basis.