



MEMO 59-2025

DATE: Thursday 25th September
TO: NNSWF Premier Clubs & Regional Member Zones
FROM: Ryan Doidge – NNSWF Technical Director
SUBJECT: Biological Maturation Assessments for 2026 Season

For Information or Action	Action required	When	NNSWF Contact	Total Pages
Information	-	-	Harrison Matthews	3

Registrations are currently open for players who potentially could be identified as a late developer for the upcoming 2026 season.

The age groups for which the Biological Maturation principle will apply for the 2026 season are as follows:

- Junior Development League (12's)
- Premier Youth League **Boys** (13's, 14's, 15's, 16's & players turning 17 in 2026)
- Premier Youth League **Girls** (13's, 15's & players turning 16 in 2026)

As part of Northern NSW youth competitions policy, players that are potentially disadvantaged from a physical perspective, due to later biological maturity, may be eligible to play in a lower age-category.

Although players may be similar in terms of chronological age, their biological age can vary substantially, by as much as 5 years, due to the timing of their adolescent growth spurt. Late developers can be significantly disadvantaged from a physical standpoint (height, weight, speed, strength).

To identify those players who may be late-developing players, Northern NSW will continue with the established two-step process.

Firstly, clubs and/or parents can self-assess a player's maturity classification following the steps and [submitting a form](#) on our website. Results of the pre-assessment will be sent back to the parent/carer and the Club's Technical Director within 3-4 business days.



Should the player be deemed a late developer, they can be registered for the second step of the process, which is a verification assessment conducted by NNSW on the following dates.

Session 1

Date: Wednesday 22nd October 2025

Time: 4:00pm-6:00pm

Location: University of Newcastle, Callaghan Campus

Session 2

Date: Wednesday 4th February 2026

Time: 4:00pm-6:00pm

Location: University of Newcastle, Callaghan Campus

All players will be required to attend one of the advertised Northern NSW Football assessments dates before they can register and play in a lower age category.

The following information seeks to provide clubs with some clarity regarding the eligibility of players for the upcoming season in relation to Biological Maturation Approved Players.

Players Who Are Assessed as Late Developers

Any player that is assessed as a “late developer” will be given approval to play down an age grade at their club provided that the club has a position(s) available in the team that the player is seeking to register with.

Players Assessed as “On Time Developers” or “Early Developers”

Any player that is assessed as an “on-time developer” or “early developer” will NOT be permitted to play down an age grade at their club.

No club/team will be able to register a player to play in an age grade below the player’s birth year if that player has been assessed as a “on time developer” or “early developer”.

Each club will be permitted to register a maximum of two (2) approved “late developing” players per team/age grade in the boy’s competition and a maximum of three (3) approved “late developing” players per team/age grade in the girl’s competition. Kindly note that, within the girl’s competition, there are dual aged teams hence why the allowance is higher.

NNSWF is committed to supporting players to find the correct environment that will assist with their development.



It is important that the player is put first. In some instances, players will need to play down due to being classed as a late developer. Likewise, there will be times when players need to play up an age group to provide an appropriate level of challenge.

It is also important that if a player is deemed as a late developer or early developer, they are still afforded the opportunity to train and when appropriate play with their correct age group, allowing coaches to benchmark when they should be integrated back into their chronological age group.

For more information on the process, please contact [Harrison Matthews](#).

Regards,

Ryan Doidge
NNSWF Technical Director
Northern NSW Football

MEMORANDUM