



2026

**JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE
9s, 10s, 11s and 12 Years | RULES**





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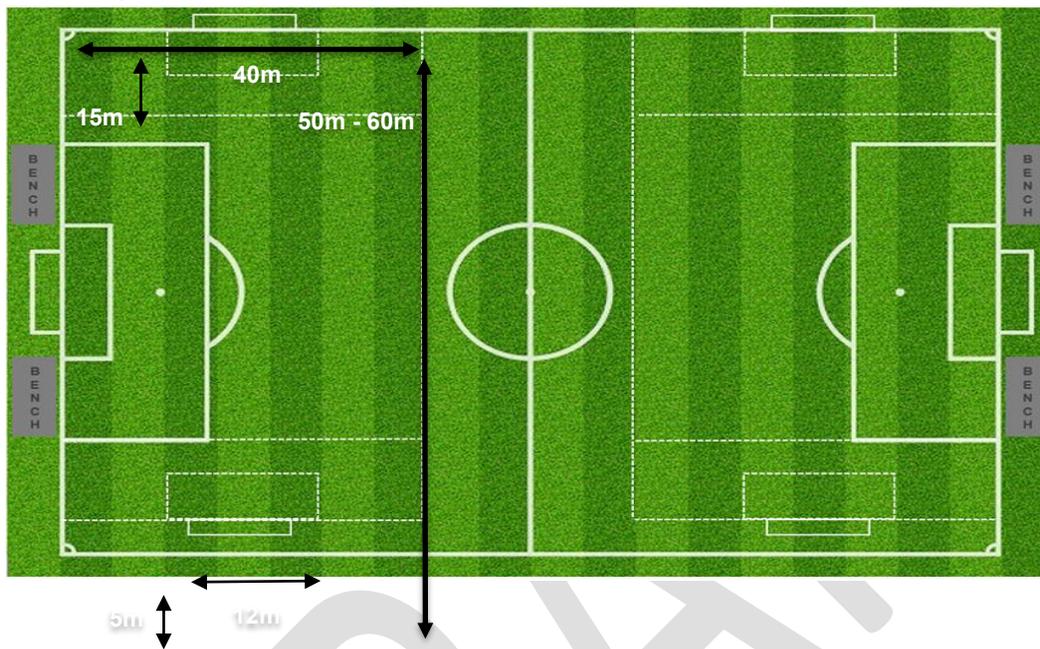
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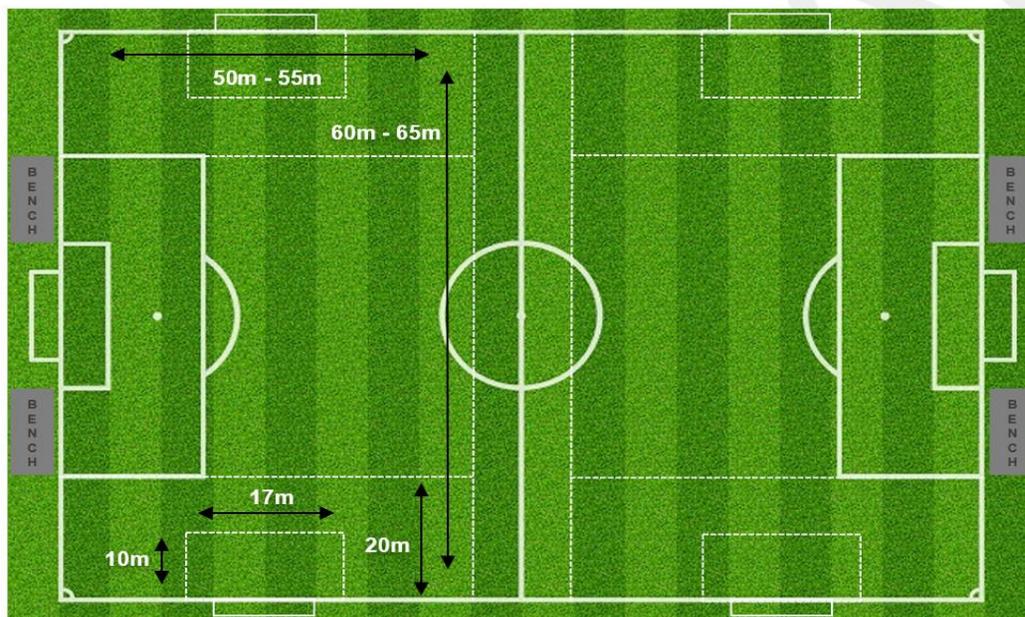
1. FIELD OF PLAY

The following dimensions shall apply for each age group. The field of play is to be marked with either permanent line marking paint or outlined with marker cones.

1.1. 9 / 10 YEARS DIMENSIONS



1.2. 11 / 12 YEARS DIMENSIONS





1.3. GOAL SIZE

5 metres x 2 metres Goals are to be used for all age groups. Portable goals or Bownets are permitted to be used provided they are secured appropriately.

1.4. GOAL KICK DROP OFF-LINE

A Goal Kick Drop-Off Line is to be marked on each field with either a permanent broken line marked with paint or with a marker on both touch lines. Measurements are to be applied as below:

a. 9 / 10 YEARS

15 metres from each goal line.

b. 11 / 12 YEARS

20 metres from each goal line.

1.5. PENALTY AREA

A Penalty Area is to be marked with either flat rubber cones or with permanent line-marking paint.

a. 9 / 10 YEARS

Perimeter: 12 metres x 5 metres

Penalty Mark: Not applicable

b. 11 / 12 YEARS

Perimeter: 17 metres x 10 metres

Penalty Mark: 7.5 metres

2. MATCH DURATION

The following match durations shall apply to each specified age group. Matches are to commence at the stipulated time on the fixture draw. In the event a team is late to a match no additional time shall be applied.

2.1. 9 / 10 / 11 / 12 YEARS

2 equal periods of 30 minutes with a maximum 5-minute half-time.

3. PLAYING NUMBERS

The following playing numbers shall apply.

3.1. 9 / 10 YEARS

Each team will be permitted to field a maximum of 7 players on the field of play at a time inclusive of 1 Goalkeeper. A maximum of 5 interchange players are permitted for each team.

3.2. 11 / 12 YEARS

Each team will be permitted to field a maximum of 9 players on the field of play at a time inclusive of 1 Goalkeeper. A maximum of 5 interchange players are permitted for each team.



4. AGE RESTRICTIONS

A Player's age is determined by the age they turn during that calendar year.

Year Born	Age Group
2017*, 2016	9 Years
2015	10 Years
2014	11 Years
2013	12 Years

*Players born earlier than 2017 are not permitted to be registered and participate in JDL.

Players are permitted to play up 2 years above their age where players meet the ages stipulated in the above table.

Clubs seeking to play girls in boy's teams may apply to NNSWF on an exceptional basis but must include a detailed report from the Club's Technical Director which is to be followed up by a mid-season report. The initial application and continuation to play after the mid-season report is at the absolute discretion of NNSWF.

Application must be submitted via the following prescribed form:

[Application for Female to Play in Youth Male Competition](#)

5. MATCH RULES

The following match rules shall be enforceable for all fixtures.

5.1. OFFSIDE

The following provisions shall apply:

a. 9 / 10 YEARS

Blatant offside shall be policed by the Game Leader and shall result in an indirect free kick being awarded to the non-offending team.

b. 11 / 12 YEARS

Offside shall apply.

5.2. DIRECT FREE KICKS

a. 9 / 10 YEARS

Direct free kicks (including penalty kicks) shall not be awarded.

b. 11 / 12 YEARS

Direct free kicks shall be awarded in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game for 11 and 12 Years matches only.



5.3. INDIRECT FREE KICKS

a. 9 / 10 YEARS

All free kicks shall be awarded as indirect. Infringements inside the penalty area shall be awarded as indirect with the free kick taken outside the penalty area.

b. 11 / 12 YEARS

Indirect free kicks shall be awarded in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game for 11 and 12 Years matches only.

5.4. GOAL KICK DROP OFF-LINE

All attacking players are required to remain behind the drop-off line when goal kicks are being taken or when the Goalkeeper handles the ball until the team in possession has taken a touch or the Goalkeeper releases the ball.

5.5. INTERCHANGE

The following provisions shall apply:

a. INTERCHANGE

A Team is permitted to name a maximum of 5 interchange Players on the Team Sheet. Unlimited interchange shall apply throughout both halves and during the half-time interval.

The interchange rule will apply for the following competitions:

- 12 Years.
- 11 Years.
- 10 Years.
- 9 Years.

5.6. GOALKEEPERS

The goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball anywhere in the penalty area.

To restart play after a save or gathering of the ball with their hands, the goalkeeper is allowed to kick or drop kick the ball directly from their hand, throw or roll the ball from their hands or play from the ground with their feet, within 6 seconds.

6. REGISTRATION PROCESS

All participating Players and Team Officials must be registered and active in the National Registration System to be considered eligible to participate in accordance with NNSWF Premier Competition Regulations.

7. MATCH OFFICIALS / GAME LEADERS

A Match Official or Game Leader must control each match. In the event a Match Official is not appointed to the match the team listed on the draw as the home team must provide a Game Leader.



7.1. MATCH OFFICIALS

Referees may be appointed to matches where available. Appointed Referees must be a registered NNSWF Match Official.

In the event Match Officials are not appointed or aren't available the team listed as the home team on the fixture draw will be required to provide a Game Leader to referee the fixture.

7.2. GAME LEADERS

The team listed as the home team on the official draw must provide a Game Leader to officiate the fixture. Game Leaders must always be present on the field of play during play.

The Game Leader should:

- Encourage all participants to have fun;
- Ensure the correct number of players are on the field;
- Check all players are wearing shin guards;
- Ensure the opposing team is outside the drop-off line for all goal line restarts;
- Actively police blatant offside and
- Ensure opposing players are 8m away from re-start and free kicks.

8. MATCH BALLS

The following provisions shall apply:

8.1. 9 YEARS

Size 3 match balls are to be used for all matches.

8.2. 10 / 11 / 12 YEARS

Size 4 match balls are to be used for all matches.

9. POINT SCORE METHOD

No results shall be officially recorded for any matches.

10. WEATHER PROCEDURES

In the event of any weather-related cancellations the Host Club must notify all opposing teams. The [NNSWF Hot Weather Policy](#) shall apply to all matches.

Postponed fixtures will not be formally rescheduled by NNSWF.

11. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

The following provisions shall apply in conjunction with NNSWF 2026 Premier Competition Regulation 37.

11.1. GENERAL MISCONDUCT

Game Leaders may caution players or dismiss players from the field for persistent or any misconduct. Team Officials are required to mentor and educate players who are cautioned or dismissed.



11.2. SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

Players or Team Officials guilty of serious misconduct are to be referred to NNSWF who can determine any sanction in accordance with National Disciplinary Regulations or the National Code of Conduct.

12. COLOUR CLASH

In the event of a colour clash, the team listed as the away team on the draw will be required to wear an alternate strip or bibs.

13. FIXTURE DRAWS

NNSWF shall supply fixture draws which will be made available via the Squadi network portal.

14. DUTY OFFICERS

Clubs are required to supply Duty Officers for each Match they participate in. Duty Officers must be supplied in accordance with Premier Competition Regulation 10.

15. MATCH RECORDS

It is the Clubs responsibility to record and maintain which players have participated in fixtures throughout the season. This is to be done via the Squadi competition management system and is to include all players, Coach, Manager and a Duty Officer.

16. COACHES

All Coaches will be required to attend the mandatory JDL coaching workshops delivered by Northern NSW Football. Any coaches who do not attend may not be permitted to coach during JDL matches.