



**NATIONAL
PREMIER LEAGUES**
NORTHERN NSW



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2026

National Premier Leagues

Men's Northern NSW

Competition Rules



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SCOPE & DEFINITONS

- 1.1. The National Premier Leagues Men's Northern NSW 2026 Competition Rules are to be read in conjunction with Northern NSW Football 2026 Premier Competition Regulations.
- 1.2. All definitions as outlined in the Northern NSW Football 2026 Premier Competition Regulations will apply in this document.

2. FEES

2.1. Participation Fee

(a) The total Participation Fee is approximately \$18,987.29.

(b) This Fee includes the following:

(i)	Competition Fee	\$7,887.69
(ii)	Contribution to Match Official appointments	\$275.00
(iii)	Australia Cup Entry (not inclusive of FA Rd 32 fee)	\$907.50
(iv)	Disciplinary Levy	\$577.50
(v)	Match Official Fees (approximate)	\$8,839.60
(vi)	2026 Van Egmond Jennings Awards Table	\$500.00

(c) The Participation Fee will be paid over four instalments:

(i)	Instalment 1	\$ 3382.56	31/03/2026
(ii)	Instalment 2	\$ 3382.56	30/04/2026
(iii)	Instalment 3	\$ 3382.57	30/05/2026
(iv)	Instalment 4	\$ 8839.60	31/08/2026

3. COMPETITION STRUCTURE

3.1. Each Club will be required to field and maintain the following Teams in NPL Men's NNSW Competition:

(a) Senior Competition:

- (i) First Grade.
- (ii) Reserve Grade;

3.2. The Senior Competition is comprised of 12 Clubs and played on a home and away basis over 22 rounds.

3.3. Points will be awarded in accordance with the 2026 Premier Competition Regulations.



4. FINAL SERIES

4.1. The senior Finals Series will be conducted under the following format:

(a) Finals Series Fixtures:

Week 1				
QF	Qualifying Final	2 nd Placed Team	v	3 rd Placed Team
EF	Elimination Final	4 th Placed Team	v	5 th Placed Team
		Loser Eliminated		
B1	Bye	1 st Placed Team	v	Bye
Week 2				
MSF1	Major Semi-Final	1 st Placed Team	v	Winner QF
MSF2	Minor Semi-Final	Loser QF	v	Winner EF
		Loser Eliminated		
Week 3				
PF	Preliminary Final	Loser MSF1	v	Winner MSF2
		Loser Eliminated		
B2	Bye	Winner MSF1	v	Bye
Week 4				
GF	Grand Final	Winner MSF1	v	Winner PF

(b) Weeks 1-3 finals host Venue is determined solely on the basis of first named 1st Grade Teams as outlined in Rule 4.1 (a).

(c) Reserve Grade Finals Series Matches will take place at the same Venue as their equivalent 1st Grade Competition Fixtures.

(d) The highest placed Team on the Official Points Table (1st Grade) reserves the right to nominate their preferred playing day.

(e) NNSWF reserves the right to schedule NPL Finals Series at their sole discretion, taking into account all other Matches in Premier Competitions.

(f) If winners for the 1st Grade Finals Series Matches outlined in Rule 4.1 (a), Weeks 1-3 cannot be determined at the conclusion of normal time, then the following will occur immediately after the conclusion of the match:

- (i) Extra time of 2 equal periods of 15 minutes will be played in accordance with FIFA Law 8;
- (ii) If at the conclusion of both periods of extra time, a winner has not been determined, penalty kicks will be taken in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game to determine a winner.

(g) If winners for the Reserve Grade Finals Series Matches outlined in Rule 4.1(a), Weeks 1-3 cannot be determined at the conclusion of normal time, then the following will occur immediately after the conclusion of the match:



- (i)** Penalty kicks will be taken in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game to determine a winner;
 - (ii)** For the avoidance of doubt, no extra time will be played in Reserve Grade Competition Fixtures for these Matches.
- (h)** For all Senior Grand Final matches outlined in 4.1 (a) Week 4, if a winner cannot be determined at the conclusion of normal time, then the following will occur immediately after the conclusion of the match:
- (i)** For 1st Grade, extra time periods will be 2 equal periods of 15 minutes.
 - (ii)** For Reserve Grade, extra time periods will be 2 equal periods of 10 minutes.
 - (iii)** If at the conclusion of both periods of extra time, a winner has not been determined, penalty kicks will be taken in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game to determine a winner.
- (i)** NNSWF will determine the Venue, kick-off time and playing date of all NPL Grand Finals at its sole discretion.
- (j)** NNSWF reserves the right to allocate changerooms for all NPL Finals Series matches at its sole discretion.

4.2. Senior Finals Eligibility

- (a)** The highest grade in which a Player is named as a starting Player, will be considered to be the grade in which that Player has participated in for that round.
- (b)** The grade a Player has played the highest number of their Matches as shown in Squadi is the lowest grade in which they are eligible to participate in the Final's Series.
- (i)** A Player is eligible to participate in the lowest grade they qualify for in accordance with 4.2 (b) and grades above.
 - (ii)** Should a player have played an equal number of their Matches in all grades they participated in, they will be considered eligible to participate in those grades.
- (c)** Subject to any suspension and/or age eligibility a Player is eligible to participate in the grade they have qualified for and grades above.
- (d)** Club may seek special dispensation for the specialist position of Goalkeeper. All requests will be considered on an individual basis by NNSWF.
- (e)** Should a Team be removed or withdrawn from a competition, NNSWF reserves the right to adjust finals eligibility requirements for remaining Clubs on the basis of a Player being eligible for the Team they have played the majority of matches for and the corresponding grades above.
- (f)** These eligibility criteria apply to all Promotion-Relegation Playoffs.



5. PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

5.1. At the conclusion of the Regular Season,

- (a)** the team finishing in 12th position of NPL Men's Northern NSW, will be automatically relegated to Northern League One.
- (b)** The team finishing in 11th position must take part in the Promotion-Relegation Playoff series as outlined in section 5.2
- (c)** The team finishing 1st in Northern League One will be automatically promoted to NPL Men's Northern NSW.

5.2. Promotion-Relegation Playoff (1st Grade Only)

(a) At the conclusion of the Regular Season, the following four teams will compete in the Promotion-Relegation Playoff to determine the 12th and final team for NPL Men's Northern NSW for season 2025:

- (i)** 11th placed team in NPL Men's Northern NSW
- (ii)** 2nd placed team in Northern League One
- (iii)** 3rd placed team in Northern League One
- (iv)** 4th placed team in Northern League One

(b) The playoff semi-finals will be played as follows over two legs:

- (i)** Playoff Semi-Final 1 first leg: 4th Placed team in Northern League One v 11th Placed team in NPL Men's Northern NSW
- (ii)** Playoff Semi-Final 2 first leg: 3rd Placed team in Northern League One v 2nd placed team in Northern League One
- (iii)** Playoff Semi-Final 1 second leg: 11th Placed team in NPL Men's Northern NSW v 4th Placed team in Northern League One.
- (iv)** Playoff Semi-Final 2 first leg: 2nd placed team in Northern League One v 3rd Placed team in Northern League One
- (v)** The team with the highest aggregate score at the conclusion of both semi-finals will advance to the Promotion-Relegation Playoff Final.
- (vi)** If the aggregate scores are level at the conclusion of Normal Time of the Semi-Final second leg, then the following will occur immediately after the conclusion of the match:

1. Extra time of 2 equal periods of 15 minutes will be played in accordance with FIFA Law 8;
2. If at the conclusion of both periods of extra time, a winner has not been determined, penalty kicks will be taken in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game to determine a winner.

(vii) For the avoidance of doubt, the away goals rule will not apply in the Promotion-Relegation Playoff

(c) The Promotion-Relegation Playoff final will be played as a standalone match as follows:

- (i)** Winner of Semi-Final 1 v Winner of Semi-Final 2



- (ii) If the scores are level at the conclusion of normal time, then the following will occur immediately after the conclusion of the match:
- (iii) Extra time of 2 equal periods of 15 minutes will be played in accordance with FIFA Law 8;
- (iv) If at the conclusion of both periods of extra time, a winner has not been determined, penalty kicks will be taken in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game to determine a winner.
- (v) The match will be played at a venue determined by Northern NSW Football

5.3. Should the team finishing in 1st place of Northern League One, be unable to be promoted the following alteration to the promotion and relegation system:

- (a) The team finishing 11th place in NPL Northern NSW will retain their position in the division for season 2027.
- (b) The team finish in 12th place in NPL Northern NSW will enter the Promotion-Relegation Playoffs which will be played as follows:
 - (i) Playoff Semi-Final 1 first leg: 4th Placed team in Northern League One v 12th Placed team in NPL Men's Northern NSW
 - (ii) Playoff Semi-Final 2 first leg: 3rd Placed team in Northern League One v 2nd placed team in Northern League One
 - (iii) Playoff Semi-Final 1 second leg: 12th Placed team in NPL Men's Northern NSW v 4th Placed team in Northern League One.
 - (iv) Playoff Semi-Final 2 first leg: 2nd placed team in Northern League One v 3rd Placed team in Northern League One
- (c) All other Promotion-Relegation Playoff regulations outlined in section 5.2 will remain.

5.4. Should any teams from Northern League One that qualify for playoffs be unable to be promoted, then the remaining qualified teams will move up one position in the playoff hierarchy. For example, if the team finishing in 2nd place in Northern League One is unable to be promoted then the team finishing in 3rd placed will be deemed to have finished in 2nd place for playoff purposes.

- (a) No further teams will be added to the playoffs in the situation outlined in 5.4, and the 11th placed team in NPL Northern NSW will advance directly to the Playoff Final.

5.5. If two teams from Northern League One that qualify for playoffs be unable to be promoted, the remaining two teams will advance directly to the Playoff Final.

5.6. If all three teams from Northern League One that qualify for playoffs be unable to be promoted, the 11th placed team in NPL Northern NSW will retain their position in the division for season 2027.

5.7. If all teams finishing in the top 4 position of Northern League One are unable to be promoted, the teams finishing in 11th and 12th place of NPL Northern NSW will retain their positions for season 2027.



5.8. For the avoidance of doubt Northern NSW Football, will at its sole discretion, determine whether teams in Northern League One meet the required minimum standards for promotion into NPL Northern NSW.

6. ADMISSION CHARGES

6.1. Scheduled Fixture

(a) The following fees are the maximum admission fees which can be charged for senior Matches:

(i)	Adults	\$10.00
(ii)	Concession	\$5.00
(iii)	Vehicles	\$2.00

(b) Clubs are not required to charge admission fees; it is at the club's discretion.

(c) Admission fees may only be charged for senior football:

- (i)** In the event of youth Matches (including 18 Years) occurring on the same day at the same Venue as senior Matches, admission fees may only apply from half time in the youth Match immediately preceding the first senior match.

6.2. Rescheduled Fixture

(a) Where a 1st Grade Team participates in a rescheduled fixture:

(i)	Adults	\$10.00
(ii)	Concession	\$5.00
(iii)	Vehicles	\$2.00

(b) Where only Reserve Grade participate in a rescheduled fixture:

(i)	Adults	\$5.00
(ii)	Concession	\$2.00
(iii)	Vehicles	\$1.00

7. CLUB PASSES

7.1. Each Club will be provided the following passes:

(a)	VIP	10
(b)	Committee	18
(c)	Players	60

7.2. Clubs are responsible for ensuring that all Club Associates adhere to the required terms and conditions noted on their specific pass.

7.3. Grand Final ticket prices will be determined by Northern NSW Football.

8. AGE RESTRICTIONS

8.1. For all instances, with the exception of 8.2 (a) a Player's age is determined by the age they turn during that calendar year.



8.2. 2026 Senior Grades

- (a) Minimum age to play in Senior Grades is 15 years old (must already be 15 years of age).
- (b) All Clubs, are required to register and maintain a minimum of 7 Players born 2007 or later in their Reserve Grade Roster.

8.3. A Player registered on the **First Team Player Roster** is not permitted to participate in a Youth Grade competition.

9. PLAYER REGISTRATIONS

9.1. The minimum number of Players permitted to be registered per Club is:

Seniors	1 st Grade, Reserve Grade	30
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9.2. Player Eligibility Exemptions

- (a) Players are not permitted to play down into an age group or grade lower than they are age eligible for with the exception of:
 - (i) In the event of an injury or unavailability to a Goalkeeper and the subsequent goalkeeper from the age group or grade below is unable to participate, Clubs must complete and submit the following form [Eligibility Form](#) allowing for permission to play the Goalkeeper from the corresponding next age group or grade above.
 - (ii) The [Eligibility Form](#) must be completed and submitted by a Club Executive or the Club Technical Director by or before 9am the next Business Day following the completion of the Match.
 - (iii) Clubs are responsible for collecting and storing applicable evidence to support the usage of a Goalkeeper from the higher age group which may be requested by NNSWF.
 - (iv) In the event a Player or Goalkeeper does not meet the above criteria, Clubs may apply in writing to NNSWF to request special exemption.
 - (v) Should a Club be found guilty of the using a Goalkeeper from a higher grade to gain Sporting Advantage, which may include taking adequate steps in assembling their squads appropriately, they may be subject to NNSWF Premier Competition Regulation 7.6 and corresponding sanctions.

10. PLAYER ROSTER PRINCIPLES

10.1. Each Club is subject to the requirements of the Player Roster Principles (PRP) as set out by Football Australia.

- (a) Each club must maintain a First Team Player Roster of a minimum 20 and maximum 23 players.
- (b) Should any Club's First Team Player Roster fall below the minimum 20 Players, for any reason, the Club will be required to nominate the appropriate number of Players from their Reserve Grade to fulfil the requirements outlined in Rule 10.1 (a), thereby maintaining the First Team Player Roster obligations documented by Football Australia. Overage Players will not be considered in this instance.



10.2. Clubs will be required to submit PRP documents to NNSWF as below:

Final Roster	Friday 13th February 2026 (5pm)
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10.3. Clubs will be permitted to make unlimited changes to their original First Team Player Roster during the following window:

Mid-Season Window	Monday 11th May 2026 to Friday 15th May 2026 (12pm)
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10.4. Reserve Grade

(a) Players born 2005 or earlier on the Reserve Grade Roster, will not be permitted to play 1st Grade Matches unless they have been added to the First Team Player Roster in line with Rule 10.2.

(b) Clubs are permitted to transfer overage Players into the First Team Player Roster in the window outlined in Rule 10.3.

10.5. Should a Player listed on a First Team Player Roster be deregistered outside of the allocated PRP windows, the Club will not be able to draft a replacement Player into its First Team Player Roster until the PRP window opens, with the exception of Rule 9.1 (c).

10.6. Changes to a First Team Player Roster will not be permitted in the event of a Player(s) suspension.

10.7. Any Club found to deliberately mislead or breach the PRP by knowingly providing incorrect information on a Player/s history will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by NNSWF.

11. MATCH DURATION

11.1. Each Competition Fixture shall consist of the following:

Competition	Match Duration	Half-Time Interval
1st Grade	2 x 45-minute halves	15 minutes (max.)
Reserve Grade	2 x 45-minute halves	15 minutes (max.)

11.2. Additional time for injuries and stoppages in 1st Grade may be added at the discretion of the referee.

12. MATCH BALLS

12.1. Approved match balls must be used in all NPL Competition Fixtures.

12.2. Mitre is the approved match ball for season 2026.

12.3. The following match balls must be used:

Competition	Match Ball Size	Match Ball Min. Quality
1st Grade	5	Top of the range Mitre (NPL Ultimax Pro or similar)
Reserve Grade	5	Mid-range Mitre



13. TEAM OFFICIALS & TECHNICAL AREA

13.1. Clubs will be permitted to the following number of Team Officials, substitute and / or interchange Players within in the Technical Area during a fixture:

Competition	Maximum Officials Permitted	Maximum Players Permitted
1 st Grade	6 Registered Team Officials	7 Substitute Players
Reserve Grade		5 Substitute Players

(a) All Team Officials & Players must be eligible to participate in the Match and named accordingly on the Official Team Sheet on Squadi.

13.2. All registered Team Officials must display their NNSWF Accreditation Pass at all times.

13.3. A Player or Team Official who has been expelled or is serving a suspension is not permitted to be in the Technical Area during a fixture in accordance with Regulation 37 of 2026 Premier Competition Regulations.

13.4. Anyone in the Technical Area who should not be in the Technical is still subject to the same sanctions as if they were allowed to be in the Technical Area.

14. SUBSTITUTION OF PLAYERS

14.1. 1st Grade

(a) Each competing Team may name a maximum of 7 substitute Players on the Official Team Sheet and at its discretion use 5 substitutes during a Match, 1 of whom may be the Goalkeeper;

(b) To reduce disruption to the Match, each Team will have a maximum of 3 opportunities to make substitutions during the game; substitutions may also be made at half-time which does not count towards the maximum of 3 opportunities. If both teams make a substitution at the same time, this will count as 1 of the 3 opportunities for each team.

(i) For Matches where Extra Time is required (Rule 4.1) each Team will have 1 additional opportunity to make a substitution.

14.2. Reserve Grade

(a) Each competing Team may name a maximum of 5 substitute Players on the Official Team Sheet and at its discretion use 5 substitutes during a Match, 1 of whom may be the Goalkeeper;

(b) To reduce disruption to the Match, each Team will have a maximum of 3 opportunities to make substitutions during the game; substitutions may also be made at half-time which does not count towards the maximum of 3 opportunities. If both teams make a substitution at the same time, this will count as 1 of the 3 opportunities for each team.

(i) For Matches where Extra Time is required (Rule 4.1) each Team will have 1 additional opportunity to make a substitution.



15. RESCHEDULED FIXTURES

15.1. Senior Competitions

(a) Senior Competition Fixtures postponed due to inclement weather, or any other causes will in the first instance be rescheduled to the next available catch-up round should that catch-up round fall within 30 days of the postponed fixture, with preference given to matchdays where multiple grades have been postponed.

(b) Should there be no available catch-up rounds within the parameters set out in 15.1(a), the matches will be replayed the second week after the postponement as follows, with due consideration given to previously scheduled Competition Fixtures

1 st Grade	Wednesday	8:00pm
Reserve Grade	Wednesday	6:00pm

(c) Should a match not be able to be rescheduled in line with 15.1 (a) or (b) then NNSWF will determine the best available date within reasonable timeframes.

(d) The use of schedule catch-up rounds will be at the discretion of NNSWF.

(e) NNSWF reserves the right at its absolute discretion to consider all available options to ensure that as many fixtures as possible are played during a period of inclement weather or postponements, and where any fixture may have a bearing on a final’s series position all endeavours will be made to reschedule fixture.

15.2. Should inclement weather persist and cause the postponement of rescheduled fixtures, NNSWF will liaise with the Home Club to determine new Competition Fixture dates.

15.3. The availability of Players or Team Officials will not be taken into consideration when determining rescheduled fixtures.

16. PRIZE MONEY

16.1. Prize money shall be awarded in accordance with the following table:

1 st Grade Premiers	\$10,000.00
1 st Grade Second Place	\$ 2,000.00
1 st Grade Grand Final Winners	\$ 4,000.00
1 st Grade Grand Finalists	\$ 2,000.00
Club Championship	\$ 2,000.00
Club of the Year	\$ 1,000.00

17. MEDIA & MARKETING

17.1. Clubs will be required to actively operate Social Media accounts that are up to date, relevant and provide information to their members in accordance with NNSWF’s Social Media Policy.

17.2. Clubs may be required to erect 3 NPL sponsorship banners on the inside of the playing field perimeter fencing with 1 banner erected behind each set of goalposts and the remaining banner on or as near as possible to the halfway line on the opposite side of the ground to the grandstand.



(a) Clubs who fail to adhere to this will be subject to a fine in accordance with Appendix A of the 2026 Premier Competitions Regulations.

18. AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

18.1. The club finishing in 1st in NPL Men's First Grade will be invited to participate in Football Australia's national second division competition, the Australian Championship, at the conclusion of the 2026 season.

(a) Should the club finishing in 1st position on the ladder be unable to accept this offer, then the team in 2nd position will be invited, and this will continue until the position has been taken up.



APPENDIX A – AWARDS

The following awards shall be presented to eligible recipients.

Award	Criteria / System	Method
Graham Jennings Medal (Player of the Year) *	Ongoing dual 3-2-1 Vote System	One set of 3-2-1 votes submitted by Match Officials of each Premiership fixture plus one set of 3-2-1 votes by an expert from our independent panel
Players Player Award *	1 off singular Vote System	Following the completion of the Premiership each Player on the respective 1 st Grade Roster will vote for the player they believe is the best in the league.
Media Award *	1 off 3-2-1 Vote System	Following the completion of the Premiership selected media who have actively covered the league will vote for the best player in the league.
Bill Mahoney Goalkeeper of the Year *	1 off 3-2-1 Vote System	1 st Grade Head Coaches vote at the conclusion of the Premiership season.
Young Player of the Year *	Highest eligible vote getter	Highest vote getter in the Player of the Year tally who is 21 or younger. In the event this player has won the Player of the Year the next highest vote getter within the criteria would receive the award.
Coach of the Year *	1 off 3-2-1 Vote System	1 st Grade Head Coaches vote at the conclusion of the Premiership season.
Fair Play Award	Scaled Disciplinary Infringement System	Awarded to the Club with the best disciplinary record throughout the Premiership season considering yellow / red card infringements & Code of Conduct offences across all Competition Grades.
Golden Boot *	-	Highest goal scorer during the Premiership season.
Dave Williams Medal Player of the Grand Final *	-	Technical panel assembled to determine the best player of the Grand Final.
Club of the Year	NNSWF Reporting System	Based on Club reporting system data.



NPL Men's Senior Club Championship		Taking into account only NPL Men's 1 st Grade and Reserve Grade: Men's 1 st Grade: Wins = 8 points / Draw = 4 points Men's Reserve Grade: Wins = 4 points / Draw = 2 points the club with the highest accumulated points based on the above will be the NPL Men's Senior Club Championship winners.
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***1st Grade only.**

(A) Clubs who fail to submit votes may be subject to financial sanctions in accordance with the NNSWF Competition Regulations 2026 Appendix A.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(1) A Player or Team Official is ineligible to win the following awards if the Player / Team Official is:

- (A) suspended as a result of receiving a Direct Red Card in Match;
- (B) suspended as a result of a determination of a body under the Disciplinary Regulations;
- (C) convicted of an anti-doping offence;
- (D) found guilty of serious misconduct as determined by FA; and / or
- (E) found guilty of breaching an FA Statute and NNSWF determines that as a result of such breach the Player is ineligible to win any of the aforementioned awards.

(2) Player / Team Official ineligibility only applies to the following categories:

- (A) Player of the Year;
- (B) Young Player of the Year;
- (C) Coach of the Year.