



**NORTHERN NSW**  
**FOOTBALL**

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**NORTHERN INLAND**

**2026**

**Northern NSW Football**  
**Northern Inland Premier League**  
**Competition Rules**



**NORTHERN**  
**NSW**  
**FOOTBALL**

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**NORTHERN INLAND**



# NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL

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### 1. SCOPE & DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. These Northern Inland Premier League Rules are to be read in conjunction with the Northern NSW Football – Northern Inland Competition Regulations.
- 1.2. All definitions in the Northern NSW Football – Northern Inland Competition Regulations will apply in this document.

### 2. COMPETITION STRUCTURE

- 2.1. The competition will be comprised of 12 clubs, all with First and Reserve grade sides
- 2.2. The competition is to be played as a full home and away series with the following exception
  - (a) Due to the geographical location of Namoi United FC, each season two to three clubs will be required to travel twice to Namoi United FC's home venue, therefore forfeiting one of their own home matches. This arrangement will be determined on a rotational basis
  - (b) In 2026 these teams are:
    - (i) Moore Creek FC
    - (ii) Demon Knights FC
- 2.3. Northern NSW Football – Northern Inland reserve the right to alter the format of each competition structure.
- 2.4. Points will be awarded in accordance the 2026 Northern NSW Football – Northern Inland Competition Regulations.

### 3. PLAYER REGISTRATIONS

- 3.1. Players and Team Officials must be registered in accordance with Northern NSW Football – Northern Inland Competition Regulations 2026.
- 3.2. A squad list must be submitted to NNSWF Northern Inland before Round 1 of all Competition Fixtures.
- 3.3. Clubs must fill the minimum number of players per team:

Age Group / Division	Minimum Number of Players
First Grade	11
Reserve Grade	11

### 4. AGE RESTRICTIONS

- 4.1. A youth players age eligibility will be determined by the age they are turning during the calendar year of competition.



4.2. A player must be turning 15 in the year of competition to play in the 2026 Northern Inland Premier League. Players born in the year 2011 or earlier may play in the 2026 Northern Inland Premier League.

### 5. FINALS SERIES

#### 5.1. Finals Series Fixtures

WEEK 1				
SF1	Major Semi Final	1 <sup>st</sup> Place Team	V	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Team
SF2	Elimination Final (Loser Eliminated)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place Team	V	4 <sup>th</sup> Place Team
WEEK 2				
PF	Preliminary Final (Loser Eliminated)	Loser SF1	V	Winner SF2
WEEK 3				
GF	Grand Final	Winner SF1	V	Winner EF

- (a) Week 1 Finals venues will be hosted by the highest ranked 1st Division team. Reserve Grade fixtures will be played at the same venue as 1st Grade.
- (b) Week 2 Finals Venues are to be held by the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Major Semi Final losers
- (c) The Grand Final Host Venue is to be held by the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Major Semi Final winners.
- (d) NNSWF – NI will take into consideration all Finals Fixtures in Weeks 1-2 that involve teams from the same region, who only have one team in the Final Series, and look to play these fixtures in said region to avoid unnecessary travel.
- (e) NNSWF reserves the right to schedule Northern Inland Premier League Finals Series at their sole discretion, taking into account all other Matches in Northern Inland Competitions.
- (f) If winners for Finals Series Matches outlined in Rule 5.3(a), Weeks 1-2 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 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) The periods of extra time for each age grade / division in regard to Rule 5.3(d,i) are as follows:

Competition	Periods of Extra Time
First Grade	2x 15-minute periods
Reserve Grade	2x 10-minute periods

(h) NNSWF will determine the Venue, kick-off time and playing date of all Northern Inland Premier League Grand Finals at its sole discretion.

## 6. FINALS ELIGIBILITY

### 6.1. Senior Finals Eligibility

(a) The grade a Player has played their highest percentage of their Matches in 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 rule 6.1(a) and any grade above.

(ii) For the avoidance of doubt, percentage is calculated based on the number of individual games the Player has played, and not the number of games the Team has participated in.

(iii) Should a player have played an equal percentage of their Matches in all grades they participated in, they will be considered eligible to participate in those grades.

(iv) In the event of low numbers in the Final Series, any 15/16-year-old player who has not met the eligibility requirements for Senior Finals stated above, may be called upon to play Finals Football for any Senior Division.

(b) The highest grade in which a Player takes the field as a part of the starting 11, will be considered to be the grade in which that Player has participated in for that round.

(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.



### 7. MOVEMENT BETWEEN AGE GRADES/DIVISIONS

(a) Players can move between Northern Inland Premier League First Grade and Reserve Grade freely and there is no limit to the number of times a player can participate in either grade but are reminded that final's eligibility applies.

(b) A player must not play back more than one Senior division per round than the last fixture they participated in.

(i) For the purpose of this rule:

**7.1.b.i.1.** Participation in a NIPL 1<sup>st</sup> Grade fixture refers only to players named in the starting eleven.

**7.1.b.i.2.** Participation in NIPL Reserve Grade, Local 3<sup>rd</sup> division and local 4<sup>th</sup> division refers to taking part in the match in any capacity as a player listed on the team sheet

**7.1.b.i.3.** Examples:

**7.1.b.i.3.1.** If a player starts in a NIPL 1<sup>st</sup> Grade fixture, they will be ineligible to participate in Local 3<sup>rd</sup> Division or lower in the following round.

**7.1.b.i.4.** If a player plays in an NIPL Reserve Grade Fixture, they will be ineligible to participate in Local 4<sup>th</sup> Division in the following round.

**7.1.b.i.5.** If a player starts in a NIPL Reserve Grade fixture and is also substituted from the bench in the NIPL 1<sup>st</sup> Grade fixture, they will still be eligible to participate in Local 3<sup>rd</sup> Division in the following round, but not Local 4<sup>th</sup> Division.

(c) Juniors participating in Senior competitions will be classed as a 'Senior' only regarding the rule on movement between Senior grades.

(i) All Junior players participating in Senior competitions will be eligible to play in their Junior fixtures no matter which Senior grade they participated in the round prior.

(d) A player registered to a Women's team may play into their club's team in a Men's competition. Subject to any restrictions that otherwise apply.

(i) For the avoidance of any doubt a female player who plays in their clubs 1<sup>st</sup> grade men's NIPL team must only compete in their clubs' women's 1<sup>st</sup> division team.

### 8. YOUTH PLAYING INTO SENIOR COMPETITIONS

**8.1.** Playing into a senior competition does not affect a youth players eligibility to play in their youth team.



**8.2.** A youth player may play into a senior team and will be considered a senior player for that team. They will be subject to the same restrictions (finals eligibility) that apply to senior players in that competition.

### 9. MATCH DURATION

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

### 10. MINIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS

#### 10.1. First & Reserve Grade

**(a)** As per NNSWF Northern Inland Competition Regulations.

**(b)** Any Club who does not have the minimum number of Players (7 players) to commence a Competition Fixture will be deemed to have forfeited that Competition Fixture.

**(c)** If a Club is unable to maintain a minimum of 7 players for the duration of a Competition Fixture, that Competition Fixture the non-offending team will be awarded a 3-0 win or if at the time of abandonment, the match score was higher the result will stand.

### 11. MATCH BALLS

#### 11.1. Match ball sizes:

Age Group	Match Ball Size
14yrs +	Size 5

**11.2.** The Home Team must supply three (3) match balls for both First and Reserve Grade fixtures.

**11.3.** The Home Club shall provide three (3) match balls to the Senior Match Official, no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of each Match.

### 12. TEAM OFFICIAL & TECHNICAL AREA

**12.1.** Clubs will be permitted to allow a maximum three (3) registered Team Officials and five (5) registered substitute Players in the Technical Area during the fixture:

**(a)** All Team Officials and substitute Players must be named on the Official Match Card.

**12.2.** A Player or Team Official who has been expelled or is serving a suspension is not permitted in the Technical Area during a fixture in accordance with Regulation 32 of 2026 Northern NSW Football – Northern Inland Competition Regulations.



### 13. SUBSTITUTION/INTERCHANGE OF PLAYERS

#### 13.1. Substitution

- (a) Substitution will apply to Northern Inland Premier League First Grade
- (b) A Team is permitted to name a maximum of 5 Substitution Players on the Team Sheet.
- (c) A Team will be permitted to utilise 3 substitution periods in the game:
  - (i) A Team's substitution periods can be used at the discretion of that Team.
  - (ii) Teams may make substitutions during the half-time period, which will not count towards their 3 substitution periods.
- (d) In the event of an injury causing a Player to be unable to continue in the match, an Injury substitution may be permitted, for the injured Player only, at the discretion of the Match Official which will not count toward the three substitution periods.

#### 13.2. Unlimited Interchange (Reserve Grade)

- (a) A team is permitted to list a maximum of five (5) interchange Players on the match card and may make an unlimited number of interchanges during a fixture.
- (b) Unlimited Interchange applies to all competition fixtures except for Northern Inland Premier League 1<sup>st</sup> Grade fixtures.

### 14. HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- 14.1. The team who appears first on the Official Fixture Draw will be considered the Home Team.
- 14.2. The Home Team must supply three (3) match balls for each fixture.
- 14.3. The Home Team must supply adequate seating for Substitutes and Team Officials of the Away Team.
- 14.4. The Home Team must provide a form of sun shelter for the Away Team.
- 14.5. The Home Team must rope off both technical areas for a clear division between spectators and teams.
- 14.6. The Home Team must display any sponsorship signage as directed by NNSWF.

### 15. RESCHEDULED FIXTURES

- 15.1. Fixtures postponed due to inclement weather, or any other causes will in the first instance be rescheduled to the next available catch-up round.



**15.2.** Should there be no available catch-up rounds, postponed fixtures must be rescheduled within 3 weeks of the original postponement NNSWF will determine the playing date and time of the fixture at its discretion.

**15.3.** NNSWF reserve 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 bearing on a final's series position all endeavours will be made to reschedule fixtures.

**15.4.** Should inclement weather persist and cause the postponement of rescheduled fixtures, NNSWF will liaise with clubs to determine new Competition Fixture dates.

### 16. WINNERS MEDALLIONS / AWARDS

**16.1.** The winner of the Minor Premiership will be awarded a set of 19 medallions per grade.

**16.2.** The winner of the grand final will be awarded a set of 19 medallions per grade.

**16.3.** The runner up of the grand final will be awarded a set of 19 medallions per grade.

**16.4.** Further medallions may be purchased from NSNWF by a qualifying team, at their own cost.

**16.5.** The leading goal scorer at the conclusion of the premiership season will be awarded the golden boot award (1<sup>st</sup> and Reserve Grade).

**16.6.** The goalkeeper will the most clean sheets at the conclusion of the premiership season will be awarded the Golden Glove award (1<sup>st</sup> and Reserve Grade).

**16.7.** The player who accumulates the most points (by referees) at the conclusion of the premiership season will be awarded the NIPL Player of the Season award (1<sup>st</sup> and Reserve Grade)

### APPENDIX A – AWARDS

Award	Criteria / System	Method
Golden Boot		Highest goal scorer during the Premiership Season.
Golden Glove		Goalkeeper with the most Clean Sheets