

**2022  
FOOTBALL NSW  
NPL YOUTH  
COMPETITION**



**FOOTBALL  
NSW**

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## OVERVIEW

The NSW National Premier Leagues (**NPL**) Youth Competition is the official Football NSW (**FNSW**) development league for players aged U13 to U18. It was established to underpin the FNSW NPL senior leagues and provide talented young players with links to further development opportunities.

During the early part of 2021, extensive consultation has taken place with the broad football community, including one-on-one meetings with clubs and the relevant Standing Committees, several group forums and with Football Australia. Opinions were diverse and feelings were strong, and Football NSW was faced with making a difficult decision that not all stakeholders will ultimately agree with.

Cognisant of the strong, and often differing views around what is the best structure and framework for Youth development, Football NSW felt it important to support the preference of the majority of NPL clubs, and their respective Standing Committees, for a tiered model.

The model adopted supports one of the key recommendations that emerged from Football Australia's (**FA**) Performance Gap analysis, namely the desire to provide a minimum of thirty matches per season, and supports Principle V of Football Australia's XI Principles, namely to increase the number of match minutes played by the state's talented young players.

The following information provides details of the vision for and structure of the 2022 NPL Youth Competition, as endorsed by the FNSW Board.

## FNSW NPL YOUTH VISION STATEMENT

FNSW will guide clubs on the best practise approach to providing talented Youth players an opportunity to experience an enhanced football environment, with more high-quality training and playing opportunities than is possible in community football. This will assist to prepare them for the technical, tactical, physical, psychological and social challenges of football in NSW and in national talented player programs and competitions.

## TALENTED PLAYER PATHWAY

The NPL Youth Competition is an integral component of the state and national talented player pathway.

It provides a clear pathway to NPL senior competitions, as well as links to other talented player programs conducted by FNSW, A-League clubs and FA.

## 2022 FNSW NPL YOUTH COMPETITION STRUCTURE

The following provides further details of the general structure of the NPL Youth Competition:

- 2022 FNSW NPL Youth Competition Structure – [Click Here](#).

### Participating Clubs

- FNSW 2022 NPL NSW Men's, NPL 2 NSW Men's, NPL 3 NSW Men's Clubs.
- Includes A-League Clubs within FNSW's jurisdiction (i.e. Sydney FC, Central Coast Mariners FC, Western Sydney Wanderers FC, Northbridge Bulls FC) plus Newcastle Jets FC.

### Age Grades

The NPL Youth Competition will cater for the following age groups in 2022:

- U13's (for players born on or after 1 January 2009);

- U14's (for players born on or after 1 January 2008);
- U15's (for players born on or after 1 January 2007);
- U16's (for players born on or after 1 January 2006); and
- U18's (for players born on or after 1 January 2004).

Consideration will be given for Biological Maturation (**BM**) factors. Players deemed as late developers, in accordance with FNSW's regulations may play "down" an age group. Only one player per team will be permitted to register as a BM player. Decisions on BM will be made in collaboration with the FNSW Men's Technical Director and the relevant club.

Further information about BM can be found here: [Click Here.](#)

### Number of Teams and Players per Team

Each NPL club will be required to have one team in each age group. The number of permissible players per team for the NPL Youth Competition has been developed taking into consideration the increase in Competition fixtures (from 22 to 30). Following is a table identifying the maximum squad numbers per team in each age group:

Age Group	Squad Size	Bio Maturation	Number of Teams
U13's	16+1 additional Goalkeeper	1 Max	1
U14's	16	1 Max	1
U15's	16+1 additional Goalkeeper	1 Max	1
U16's	18	N/A	1
U18's	18	N/A	1

Please Note: The additional Goalkeeper position in the U13's and U15's age grades can only be filled by a Goalkeeper. If a Club does not register two Goalkeepers, the squad size will remain at 16.

### NPL YOUTH ANNUAL SCHEDULE

As recommended by the FNSW Technical Department, best practise for NPL clubs is to provide, at a minimum, the following annual schedule for their youth programs:

#### NPL Youth, NPL 2 Youth, NPL 3 Youth

- 40-week training and competition program (for example, 6-8 weeks October/November to December plus 32-34 weeks January to September);
- Three training sessions per week (plus one game a week in the competition phase);
- For players selected into the FNSW Talent Support Program (**TSP**), training may be replaced by TSP games on a fortnightly basis; and
- With TSP taking place on Monday evenings, where possible, training nights are to take place on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday evenings.

All coaching/training/game-related costs associated with the implementation of a talented player development program, for the schedule as detailed above, must be included within the capped Player Registration Fee (**PRF**).

If a quality training and playing environment is provided, programs based on the above schedule deliver sufficient football training and playing opportunities for talented young players to develop optimally. There should be no need to seek additional football-specific training for the majority of players (noting that cross-training in other non-football activities would be suitable for talented young players). Football NSW encourages clubs to clearly provide information to parents about these principles.

Accordingly, clubs are **NOT PERMITTED** to charge players for extra football training over and above the recommended number of training nights detailed above. If they wish to offer additional sessions as part of their program, they must be included within the capped PRF.

### Coaching Qualifications

Following are the minimum coaching qualifications required by Coaches for each respective League and grade of the Competitions:

- 2022 NPL Youth, NPL 2 Youth, NPL 3 Youth – [Click Here](#)

### Trial Phase

NPL clubs are responsible for conducting trials for their respective programs but must not do so prior to the trial date prescribed by FNSW.

The trial phase is **NOT** considered to be part of the 36 to 40-week training and competition programs indicated above. Trial dates vary between clubs, however, if a club has a certain number of weeks set aside for trials, those weeks do not count towards the 36 to 40-week training and competition youth programs clubs should be conducting.

It is also important to note that clubs are **NOT PERMITTED** to charge players a fee to trial.

Further, clubs cannot charge retention fees to players to secure a place in a program (unless those fees are to be offset against the capped PRF).

Please be reminded that a club (the **second club**) must not permit players that are registered to another club (the **current club**) to train or trial with the second club until the 2021 football season is completed.

Further to this, neither the second club nor its staff must intentionally or recklessly induce or attempt to induce, whether directly or indirectly, a player registered to the current club to train or trial with the second club.

Failure to comply with this directive may result in sanctions being imposed on clubs (and on club staff) involved in these activities as determined by Football NSW in its absolute discretion.

The date that clubs are permitted to commence trial from the following:

Commencement: Sunday, 10 October 2021\*

\*Denotes subject to change.

Please Note: Until 25 December 2021, clubs are not permitted to hold training or trials on Saturdays.

## Training Phase

The **training phase** for the **2021/22** season, incorporating a break over the Christmas and New Year period, is as follows:

Commencement: October/November 2021

Conclusion: February 2021

As trial dates vary between clubs, a club's training phase can commence immediately following the completion of that club's trial phase.

During the training phase, it is expected that clubs deliver a detailed pre-season plan which includes both training and match day experiences. It is recommended that players are exposed to high performance programs that develop individuals to play as part of the team. It is important to note that clubs are **NOT PERMITTED** to charge players an additional fee for training during the November to March period (sometimes referred to as "pre-season" or "off-season"). Training from November to the start of the game phase must form part of the annual 36 to 40-week NPL Youth, NPL 2 Youth and NPL 3 Youth programs as detailed above.

Clubs will be permitted to coordinate their own friendly matches with FNSW-affiliated clubs or Association during the training phase period. These matches must be organised in accordance with FNSW regulations, with clubs required to submit friendly match application forms for approval by FNSW.

Scheduling of friendly matches against non-affiliated teams is not permitted, as players would not be covered by the FNSW insurance program if such matches were to be played.

## Game Phase

The **game phase** for the 2022 NPL Youth Competition has been set for the following period:

Premiership Commencement: 19/20 February 2022\*

Premiership Conclusion: 10/11 September 2022\*

Championship Series Commencement: 17/18 September 2022\*

Championship Series Conclusion: 24/25 September 2022\*

\*Denotes subject to change.

All training and matches must cease on the Championship Series Conclusion date. This will allow players a break between the end of the season and the commencement of trials for the 2023 season.

Match schedules for the NPL Youth, NPL 2 Youth and NPL 3 Youth Competitions are scheduled to be released during the first week of December 2021 and will be accessible via the Competitions page on the Football NSW website - [Click Here](#).

## Championship Series

The following format will be used for the Championship Matches of the NPL NSW Youth, NPL 2 NSW Youth and NPL 3 NSW Youth Competitions:

Round	Match Number	Title	Teams
1	1	Semi Final 1	1st v 4th
	2	Semi Final 2	2nd v 3rd
2	3	Grand Final	Winner Match 1 v Winner Match 2

## Promotion and Relegation from 2022 to 2023 – Boys' Youth Competitions

Eligibility for promotion and relegation will be determined by use of Club Championship rankings as defined below:

Grade	Points Multiplier
U14's	Premiership points x 1
U15's	Premiership points x 1
U16's	Premiership points x 1
U18's	Premiership points x 1

The principles by which clubs will become eligible for promotion to the 2023 Competitions at the conclusion of the 2022 football season are as follows:

- i. The two (2) highest ranked clubs, based on Club Championship rankings, will be eligible for promotion; and
- ii. The two (2) lowest ranked clubs, based on Club Championship rankings, will be eligible for relegation.

## Player Registration Fees

Clubs participating in FNSW competitions are required to comply with the capped Player Registration Fee (**PRF**) set by FNSW for certain competition and age grades:

### Capped Player Registration Fee (GST Inclusive)

Competition	Grade	*Maximum total amount a club can charge a player (inclusive of FFA NRF and FNSW Capitation)
NPL NSW Youth	U13's – U18's	<b>**Up to \$2,850</b>
NPL 2 NSW Youth	U13's – U18's	<b>**Up to \$2,850</b>
NPL 3 NSW Youth	U13's – U18's	<b>**Up to \$2,850</b>
<p>* FA NRF and FNSW Capitation Fee to be determined.            **This is the maximum amount a club may charge a player to participate in the relevant program.</p>		

It is to be noted that the capped PRF is the **maximum** a club can charge and includes the FA National Registration Fee (**NRF**), the FNSW Capitation Fee and the Club Registration Fee. Clubs are free to set their own Club Registration Fee. That fee may be below the capped PRF but it must **not** exceed it.

## APPAREL AND EQUIPMENT

All clothing, apparel and equipment costs must be included within the capped PRF. Training and match apparel is to be supplied by the club, and must include the following items as a minimum:

- playing shirt x 1
- playing short x 1
- playing socks x 1
- tracksuit (jacket and pants) x 1
- training shirt x 1
- training shorts x 1
- training socks x 1
- polo shirt x 1
- kit bag x 1

The above apparel is to be provided within the cost of the program, i.e. a fee for the apparel cannot be charged over and above the capped PRF. Clubs may choose to provide additional training and playing items but must do so within the capped PRF. Any other “special” club apparel items, such as beanies etc, can only be offered for sale as an option (i.e. not mandatory) and at a reasonable cost.

**If players are required to wear any technology devices (e.g. GPS units) for football analysis, then these must be provided by the club within the capped PRF – noting that these items would then be retained by the club for analysis and re-used in subsequent years.**

## SUPPORT SERVICES

Should the club offer any other products and services such as video analysis, statistics, general dietary and wellbeing education etc., these are also considered part of a quality football program and must be provided within the capped PRF.

To clarify, all ancillary high-performance training and equipment costs (e.g. for sports science/sports medicine, physiotherapists and strength and conditioning) must be included within the capped PRF.

It should be noted that medical coverage at matches (Level 1 Sports Trainer at a minimum) must also be included within the capped PRF, however, one-one appointments with physiotherapists etc. outside the training/game day environment would be at the cost of the individual, with the practitioner that the individual chooses.

## CLUB FUNCTIONS

End-of-season presentations/functions, the cost of trophies/medals and a team photograph for every player in a club’s youth program must be included within the capped PRF.

In relation to shirt presentations, season launches, end-of-season functions and other specific program-related functions, the capped PRF must cover the admission/participation of at least the player, and ideally one parent. Clubs may then charge a reasonable fee for additional family members and friends who wish to attend.

If a club cannot deliver these functions within the capped PRF, then attendance at the function must be optional for youth players. Any cost for youth players, and their families and friends must be reasonable and must be on a ‘cost-recovery’ basis and no higher.

Selection/game time must not be adversely affected by a player’s non-participation in any function.



## CLINICS AND CAMPS

- If clubs run school holiday clinics, they must be advertised to the general public and not just targeted at the club's own youth and junior players. Participation in those clinics cannot be compulsory for players in the club's programs, and selection/game time cannot be adversely affected by non-participation.
- An activity (camp, tournament etc) that involves travel and overnight stays can be levied as an additional fee provided participation is not mandatory and that selection/game time is not adversely affected by non-participation. However, please note:
  - The activity must be provided to players/parents as a separate and optional activity;
  - The cost of participation in the activity cannot be charged at the time of registration;
  - The fee charged must be on a 'cost recovery' basis and no higher; and
  - Some of these activities need to be sanctioned by Football NSW so that participants receive the benefit of FNSW's insurance program. We would urge participants to check with their club that such activities have been sanctioned by FNSW prior to participating.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The capped PRF must also include the following:

- Other costs of registration, including the FNSW Capitation Fee (which includes insurance) and the FA NRF; and
- All club-related costs such as staff costs, pitch rental, referees fees, utilities and similar. That is, clubs cannot charge any additional "Club Administration Fee", "Facilities Levy", "Referees Levy", "Coaching Levy" etc.

Essentially, clubs cannot charge for any other goods or services that FNSW would reasonably expect a player would receive as part of their registration with a football club operating a high-quality youth program.

Clubs are reminded that the capped PRF is a maximum, it is not also a minimum. FNSW encourages clubs to develop business models that allow them to charge their players a PRF below the capped PRF.

The 2022 NPL Youth Competition aims to deliver an enhanced football development opportunity to the state's talented youth coaches and players, providing them the platform and foundation to be the best they can be as individuals within the team environment. FNSW believes that this foundation is best delivered by clubs within the NPL system.

FNSW will continue to provide "coaching the coaches" support and to monitor program delivery, ensuring the core principles are maintained, and our playing style statement is brought to life. Coaches and players that demonstrate high potential will also be supported through FNSW programs and pathways.