



Grading & Re-Grading Guidelines

1. Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clubs with clear information on SANFL Juniors' grading procedures and to assist with team selection across all age groups. Our aim is to create fair, equitable, and enjoyable competitions for all participants.

2. Objectives

- To provide fair and balanced competitions.
- To place teams in grades where they are competitively matched.
- To support player enjoyment, retention, and development.

3. General Principles

- Competitions will generally consist of 6–10 teams.
- Competitions will aim to have an even number of teams to minimise byes (noting that late entries or withdrawals may affect this).
- SANFL Juniors will consider club requests; however, previous season results, team lists, and current season data will be the primary basis for grading.
- These requirements may be overridden where necessary to maintain fair and equitable competition.

4. Re-Grading

- Timing: A formal review will occur after Round 5.
- Principle: Unless there are extenuating circumstances, SANFL Juniors aims to minimise re-grading once the season begins.
- Club Requests: Clubs may request a re-grade via the official SANFL Juniors form by the set deadline.

If a team is re-graded:

- Premiership points will remain.
- Premiership percentages will reset in the new grade.

- Matches from the first five rounds will count towards a player's finals eligibility.
- Best & Fairest votes will remain with the team in which they were earned.

Note: Re-grading decisions will not be made after Round 6, except in extraordinary circumstances (e.g. late team withdrawal).

5. Club Team Selection Guidelines

U7 – U10

- Teams should be formed around friendship and school groups.
- Clubs may rotate/mix players to prepare families for older age groups, where ability-based selection becomes more common.

U11

- Clubs are encouraged to begin “soft grading.”
- Teams may largely stay together from U10, but some higher/lower skilled players may be moved.
- While scores are not published, results must still be submitted into the competition system to assist grading accuracy.

U12 – U18 (Premiership Age Groups)

- SANFL Juniors will formally grade competitions.
- Clubs are encouraged to group players by ability while maintaining a balance of social connection and enjoyment.

6. Pre-Season Grading (U12+ Mixed/Boys/Girls)

SANFL Juniors will determine initial grading based on:

- Previous season ladder positions, win–loss ratio, percentages, finals results.
- Club feedback on expected team changes.

Promotion & Relegation (where applicable):

- The grand final winner and minor premier will be promoted.
- If the same team holds both positions, the runner-up will also be promoted.
- The bottom two teams will be relegated.
- SANFL Juniors reserves the right to use discretion in grading decisions to ensure competitive balance across all divisions.

Process:

- Initial gradings will be shared with clubs for feedback before finalisation.
- Final gradings will be confirmed once team numbers are locked in.
- Competitions will be reviewed again after Round 5, with potential re-grades based on results and data.

7. Re-Grading Considerations

When considering any changes, SANFL Juniors may review:

- Club requests.
- Results from the first five rounds.
- Balance across all divisions in the age group.
- Byes created (particularly in lower age groups).
- Player welfare, retention, and enjoyment.
- Any other factors deemed relevant to ensuring a fair and equitable competition.

8. Disputes & Appeals

- Clubs may submit written appeals regarding grading decisions.
- Appeals will be reviewed by the SANFL Juniors Competition Management team, with final decisions made at their absolute discretion.

9. Review of Guidelines

- These guidelines will be reviewed annually, with input from clubs, to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose and reflect best practice in community football.