

POLICY

Players With A Disability

2026



This Policy was adopted by the IDNA Board on 25 March 2026

ILLAWARRA DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION

INCLUSION OF PLAYERS WITH A DISABILITY INTO NETBALL TEAMS

1 INTRODUCTION

This document provides information and requirements for the assessment and incorporation of a player with a disability into a netball team where the age of the player with a disability is older than the upper age limit for a team.

Information of the generally recognised types of disability are also provided.

This document also recognises that a player categorised as having a permanent disability by a nationally recognised body cannot be rejected by the Board as a player with a disability, only the grade in which they can play.

Finally, this document recognises that a player with a disability does not have to be categorised as having a disability to play netball.

2 DEFINITIONS

In addition to relevant definitions contained in Netball Illawarra's Constitution and Regulations, the following definitions shall also apply:

Competition – means any one of the 8yrs, 9yrs, 10yrs, 11yrs, 12yrs, Intermediates, Cadets, Seniors

Grade – This is a general classification to represent the relative skill levels and abilities of teams and players in an age group or competition when compared to other teams in that same age group or competition, designated by a letter (A, B, C etc) or by a letter and numeric (A1, A2, A3 etc)

Player With a Disability – A player who, because of permanent physical or mental limitations, has been deemed, by the Board, to be eligible to play in a competition where the age limitations for that competition do not apply to that player.

3 THE REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS WITH A DISABILITY INTO A TEAM

3.1. A Player with a Disability

1. A player with a disability being presented to Board for consideration as "A Player With a Disability" does not automatically have to be accepted as such and placed in a team with a maximum age below the player's age.
2. If a player has played a game that is suitable for their age, then they cannot be then submitted to the Board for consideration as "A Player With a Disability" to play in a lower aged team that season.

3. A player with a permanent disability who has not been identified to play in a competition with an age limit below their age shall only be permitted to participate in a competition where their age complies with the age range for that competition.
4. For a player with a permanent disability whose family is seeking permission for the player to participate in a competition with younger players, their club must make an application to the Board to have the player deemed as “A Player with a Disability” and as such, be eligible to play in a competition that is deemed to be appropriate for their age and disability.
5. Documentation associated with the disability as well as consultation between the Board and the parent/carer of the player, is necessary before any consideration of the application is made.

3.2. Grading Players with A Disability

3.2.1. General

There are 2 things to understand with regards to players with a disability.

The first is that not all families with a player with a disability, or players with a disability, want to be considered for placement into a younger age group because of a disability.

The second thing is that not all perceived disabilities are, in fact, classified as a disability.

Reference to a player with a disability is only about those families that want to have their child considered to be eligible to compete in a younger age group because of a disability.

3.2.2. Classification Categories

An athlete with a disability is defined as an individual who participates in sports and is affected by a physical, sensory, intellectual, or other health related impairment.

For the purposes of Netball in the Illawarra, the definition does not include athletes who have undergone any form of transplant.

Without limiting who may be requesting consideration for permission to play in a younger age group, there are 10 categories of Paralympic classifications for athletes with disabilities where an actual classification by an appropriate body can be given, in which case the only question is not can they but what competition.

It should be noted that classification of a child under the different Paralympic Categories does not normally take place until the age of 8.

A child does not have to have been classified into one of the 10 categories to be considered by the board as a Player With A Disability.

These 10 categories include the following:

1. **Limb Deficiency** – Covers the loss or absence of body parts such as bones and joints due to congenital reasons, or illness and trauma.
2. **Leg Length Difference** – Similar to limb deficiency, this category determines classification based on the leg length shortening from congenital reasons or trauma.

3. **Short Stature** – This classification is based on decreased height while standing due to abnormalities in bone dimensions of the trunk, upper body, and lower body.
4. **Impaired Muscle Power** – These impairments are related to the level of muscle recruitment an athlete has the ability to use. For example, an athlete that has limited use of the muscles of one side of their body, one extremity, or the upper or lower part of their body.
5. **Impaired Passive Range of Movement** – This category is based on the loss of movement in an athlete's joints, whether that be one joint or multiple joints. The level of classification depends on the degree of impairment for loss of movement.
6. **Hypertonia** – Often associated with, but not limited to cerebral palsy, this category determines level of muscle tension and the muscle's ability to stretch in an athlete with disability.
7. **Vision Impairment** – This category is the level of impairment of the athlete's vision due to trauma or congenital limitations to the eye, visual cortex, or optic pathways.
8. **Ataxia** – This classification deals with the level of decreased coordination between muscle movements typically associated, but not limited to cerebral palsy.
9. **Athetosis** – The level of classification of this category can be mild to severe and is determined by the degree of muscle tone leading to uncontrolled and uneven movements portraying an inability to have a symmetrical posture.
10. **Intellectual Impairment** – A disability characterized by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

3.2.3. Eligibility to Compete in A Competition as A Player with A Disability

- (a) If a child, or adult, has an impairment, and that family seeks permission for that child to participate in an age group that is considered more appropriate for their impairment, then suitable medical assessment/advice/classification information relating to the impairment is to be submitted by the club to the Board to consider the request to deem the player as eligible to participate in a competition that is more suitable for that child or adult.
- (b) Any Information provided shall be considered and dealt with as Private and Confidential by the Board.
- (c) A child or athlete that has been granted permission to compete as a Player With a Disability there will be no requirement for that player to be re-assessed, except where the player seeks a further assessment of the competition in which they are to be entered.

3.2.4. Grading A Player with a Disability

- (a) Where a family of a player has a disability, and that family would prefer their child to participate with a team that is intended for players with an age below that of the player, information relating to the disability is to be submitted by the club to the Board to consider the request.
- (b) The generally accepted maximum age difference between a player with a disability and the maximum age of players without a disability is two years. Exceptions to this would obviously be possible and would be determined on each individual submission.
- (c) Where a player with a disability has been granted permission to play in a younger age group, a new submission is only required if they wish to play in an even younger age group the following year.