

JUNIOR COMPETITION RULES

2026–2027 TRIAL SEASON

Grading, representative-player placement and competition-balance framework

The BABA Committee has reviewed the operation of its graded junior competition over recent seasons and considered feedback received from members. The review identified insufficient distinction between grades, uneven distribution of experienced and representative players, teams being nominated below their appropriate level, the risk of dominant teams, limited protection for developing players and uncertainty about grading decisions.

Member feedback demonstrated strong support for a fair and balanced competition that provides enjoyment, meaningful development and appropriate competition for players of different abilities. These rules will therefore operate as a trial during the 2026/27 season.

The framework has also been informed by research into junior competition structures used by Bunbury, Warwick, Willetton, Cockburn, Margaret River, Eaton and Joondalup basketball associations.

Key 2026/27 requirement	Application
Previous points system	Removed for the 2026/27 trial season
2026 WABL and State players	Must play in A Grade
2025/26 Blazers players	A Grade or approved B1 placement
A Grade cap	Maximum five combined representative players, except for the U12 provision
B1 Grade cap	Maximum two approved 2025/26 Blazers players
Grading	Rounds 1–3, with ladders restarting from Round 4
U10 structure	Year 2 and Year 3 teams formed separately unless BABA approves an exemption

1. Objectives

These rules are intended to:

- establish genuine and recognisable A, B and C Grades;
- prevent the deliberate concentration of representative players in one team;
- provide appropriately challenging competition for advanced players;
- protect intermediate, developing and new players from significant mismatches;
- improve the distribution of talent throughout the competition;
- give BABA sufficient authority to place and adjust teams in the best interests of the competition;
- support BABA's future representative and possible WABL pathway aspirations; and
- ensure team-selection and grading decisions are transparent, consistent and defensible.

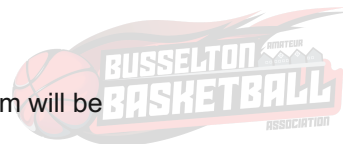
2. Removal of the Previous Points System

The previous representative-player points system will not apply during the 2026/27 season.

It will be replaced by:

- grade-specific limits on representative players;
- assessment of the complete team;
- a formal three-round grading period;
- monitoring of results and player impact; and
- final placement at BABA's discretion.

Compliance with the representative-player limits does not automatically guarantee that a team will be accepted into its nominated grade.



3. Player Classifications

Current WABL or State Player

A player selected for and participating in a WABL team or State team during the 2026 representative season.

A player who qualifies under more than one representative category will be counted only once when determining a team's representative-player total.

Blazers Player

A player selected for and participating in a BABA Blazers championship or development team during the 2025/26 season who is not classified as a current 2026 WABL or State player.

BABA will assess the ability and likely game impact of any Blazers player proposed for B1 Grade.

Non-Representative Player

A player who does not fall within either representative classification. This may include experienced domestic players, new players and players seeking future representative opportunities.

Playing above age: A representative player playing above their usual age group will still count as one representative player in the receiving team.

4. Grade Purposes

A Grade – Performance and Development

A Grade is the highest level of BABA's domestic junior competition. It is intended for players who:

- currently participate, or have recently participated, at a higher representative level;
- demonstrate high physical, technical or tactical ability;
- have a significant impact on domestic games;
- are seeking a strong development environment;
- wish to pursue future Blazers, WABL or State selection; or
- are capable of competing confidently at the highest domestic level.

A Grade is not limited to representative players. Clubs are encouraged to include committed domestic players who have the ability and desire to develop within a stronger competition.

B1 Grade – Upper Intermediate Competition

B1 Grade is intended for experienced and capable domestic players who can compete confidently but are not consistently dominant at A Grade level. It may also accommodate a limited number of approved Blazers players.

B1 must not be used to place current WABL or State players below their appropriate level.

Other B Grades – Intermediate Competition

Other B Grades are intended for established domestic players who have sound competition experience and developing game awareness. Players should be able to participate confidently without consistently dominating the division.

C Grade – Protected Participation and Development

C Grade is intended for players who:

- are new or relatively new to basketball;
- are developing fundamental skills and game understanding;
- require a participation-focused environment;
- are building confidence; or
- would be significantly disadvantaged in a higher grade.

C Grade must be protected from representative players, dominant players and teams deliberately nominated below their demonstrated ability.

5. Representative-Player Limits

Grade	Permitted representative players
A Grade	Maximum five combined Blazers, WABL or State players, except for the approved U12 provision
B1 Grade	Maximum two approved 2025/26 Blazers players
Other B Grades	No representative players without an approved exemption
C Grades	No representative players except in genuinely exceptional circumstances

The A Grade limit is a combined total, not five players from each representative category. For example, a team containing two WABL players, one State player and two Blazers players has reached the maximum of five.

6. Placement of Current WABL and State Players

All players who participated in WABL or State competition during 2026 must play in A Grade, irrespective of the division in which they played during the previous domestic season.

A current WABL or State player cannot be placed in B or C Grade merely because an A Grade team has reached the maximum of five representative players.

Where a club has more than five eligible representative players in an age group, the club must:

- distribute the players across additional A Grade teams;
- revise its proposed team composition;
- work with BABA on an approved placement arrangement; or
- apply for an exceptional exemption.

The cap is intended to distribute talent, not to force representative players into an inappropriate lower grade.

7. Placement of 2025/26 Blazers Players

A player who participated in Blazers during the 2025/26 season, but is not a current 2026 WABL or State player, may be placed in A Grade or B1 Grade with BABA approval.

When determining whether B1 is appropriate, BABA may consider:

- the player's current ability;
- their representative level and experience;
- their likely impact on games;
- their physical development;
- the strength of the proposed team; and
- the overall strength of the division.

A Blazers classification does not automatically require A Grade placement where BABA considers B1 to be the more appropriate developmental level.

8. Under 12 Representative Provision

U12 Blazers trial participants from the 2026/27 representative season are expected to play in A Grade. The standard A Grade representative-player cap does not apply to these U12 trial participants.

BABA may still assess and adjust U12 team composition or grade placement where required to protect competitive balance.

9. Prevention of Team Stacking

Clubs must make a reasonable effort to distribute representative and high-impact players across their A Grade teams.

Clubs must not deliberately:

- concentrate their strongest available players in one team;
- weaken another team to create a dominant first team;
- nominate a high-performing team below its appropriate grade;
- omit or incorrectly record representative experience;
- move players between teams to avoid representative-player limits; or
- use fill-in arrangements to exceed the permitted limits.

A club may nominate a stronger A team and a developing A team; however, the difference between the teams must not create an unreasonable competitive imbalance.

10. Whole-Team Assessment

The representative-player limit is one part of BABA's assessment. It does not create an automatic entitlement to acceptance.

A team containing fewer than the maximum number of representative players may still be considered too strong for its proposed grade. BABA may consider:

- the complete team and its experience as a whole;
- previous domestic and representative results;
- individual player ability and game impact;
- player size, athleticism and physical maturity;
- previous premierships or dominant results;
- changes to the team since the previous season;
- the strength of other nominated teams; and
- any other factor relevant to competitive balance.

BABA may reject, amend or conditionally accept any team nomination.

11. Team Nomination Requirements

Each team nomination must include:

- the requested grade;
- the full proposed playing team;
- each player's date of birth or school year;
- each player's previous domestic team and grade;
- all Blazers, WABL, State or equivalent representative experience;
- details of players transferring from another association;
- details of any player who may materially change the team's strength; and
- any request for an exemption.

Clubs are responsible for ensuring nomination information is complete and accurate. Failure to disclose relevant information may result in regrading, refusal of player registration, loss of premiership points, forfeiture of games or another sanction determined by BABA.

12. Three-Round Grading Period

Rounds 1–3 will form the official grading period. During this period, BABA may assess:

- winning margins and scoring patterns;
- defensive and offensive performance;
- individual player impact;
- the competitiveness of each game;
- whether a team has been nominated in an appropriate grade; and
- whether player distribution remains consistent with the objectives of the competition.

Results will be considered alongside observation and performance information. A single win, loss or large margin will not necessarily determine a team's final grade.

Where practical, BABA representatives, club delegates and appointed graders will observe teams during the grading period.

13. Changes During Grading

During or at the conclusion of grading, BABA may:

- move a team to a higher or lower grade;
- move an individual player to a more appropriate team or grade;
- require a club to redistribute players;
- split or restructure a team;
- combine or restructure divisions;
- refuse a proposed team change;
- impose conditions on a team's continued participation; or
- approve an exemption where it supports participation without creating an unreasonable imbalance.

BABA will consult with the relevant club wherever practicable; however, its final grading decision will be binding.

14. Reset Following Grading

At the completion of Round 3:

- team placements will be finalised;
- competition grades and fixtures will be confirmed;
- grading-round ladders will close; and
- premierships ladders will restart from Round 4.

Results from Rounds 1–3 will not count toward the regular-season ladder.

15. Fill-In Players

A fill-in player must be appropriately qualified for the grade in which they participate.

- a player must not fill in for a team in the same grade, a lower grade or a different club;
- a representative player must not fill in where it would cause a team to exceed its permitted limit;
- a fill-in must not materially strengthen a team beyond the intended standard of the division; and
- BABA may withdraw approval where a fill-in player creates an unfair advantage.

U10 exception: U10 players may fill in across the U10 division, subject to the applicable fill-in requirements.

16. Exceptional Circumstances

BABA may approve a written exemption where necessary to:

- keep a player participating;
- allow a viable team to be formed;
- address limited player numbers;
- accommodate geographical or family circumstances;
- support an age group with insufficient teams; or
- respond to another genuine and unusual circumstance.

Before approving an exemption, BABA must be satisfied that it will not create an unreasonable competitive advantage or undermine the purpose of the grade.

An exemption may be subject to conditions, reviewed during or after grading, reviewed later in the season, or withdrawn if it creates an unintended imbalance.

17. Under 10 Competition Structure

To provide a fair, encouraging and confidence-building introduction to basketball:

- Year 2 teams must consist of Year 2 players; and
- Year 3 teams must consist of Year 3 players.

Mixed Year 2 and Year 3 teams will not ordinarily be accepted. BABA may approve a mixed-age team where:

- a club cannot otherwise form a viable team;
- the arrangement is necessary to retain players;
- player safety and development have been considered; and
- the team can be placed appropriately without creating an unfair advantage.

Any approved mixed-age team will be placed according to the age, experience and ability of its stronger players.

18. Additional Competition and By-Law Updates

- **Grade names:** Grades will be known as A, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2 and so on, as required.
- **Jewellery:** Jewellery must be removed before a player enters the court. Where an item cannot be removed, it must be securely taped. No waiver is required; however, a player participating with taped jewellery does so at their own risk.
- **Uniform requirements:** Players must commence games with their singlets tucked in and shorts worn no higher than mid-thigh. A player who does not comply must remain on the bench until their uniform has been corrected.
- **PlayHQ statistics:** Player statistics will not be publicly viewable in PlayHQ for the U10 and U12 age groups.
- **Grading reset:** Grading-round ladders will close after Round 3 and premiership ladders will restart from Round 4.

19. Committee Authority

BABA retains final authority over:

- player classifications;
- team acceptance;
- grade placement;
- exemptions;
- team changes;
- player movement;
- division structure; and
- any matter affecting the fairness or integrity of the competition.

Decisions will be based on competitive balance, player safety, participation and development—not solely on a club's requested grade or compliance with a numerical cap.

Clubs may provide further information or request reconsideration; however, BABA's final determination will apply.

20. Trial and Review

These rules will operate as a trial for the 2026/27 season. BABA will review their effectiveness using:

- game results and margins;
- the number of teams moved during grading;
- club, player and member feedback;
- player-retention information;
- the competitiveness of finals;
- the distribution of representative players; and
- the overall distinction between A, B and C Grades.

The Committee may make adjustments during the season where necessary to address an unintended consequence or protect the integrity of the competition.

A complete review will be conducted at the conclusion of the season before the rules are adopted, amended or discontinued for 2027/28.

Appendix A – 2026/27 Season Age Groups

Date of birth overrides school year when determining the division in which a player is eligible to participate. Any exception must be requested in writing by the club and approved by BABA.

Division	Date of birth and eligibility	Ages	School year in 2026
U10	Born 01/07/18 to 30/06/19 Born 01/07/17 to 30/06/18 Fill-ins may be drawn from any other U10 team.	7 & 8 8 & 9	Year 2 Year 3
U12	Born 01/07/16 to 30/06/17 Born 01/07/15 to 30/06/16 Born 01/07/17 to 30/06/19 may play up.	9 & 10 10 & 11	Year 4 Year 5
U14	Born 01/07/14 to 30/06/15 Born 01/07/13 to 30/06/14 Born 01/07/15 to 30/06/17 may play up.	11 & 12 12 & 13	Year 6 Year 7
U16	Born 01/07/12 to 30/06/13 Born 01/07/11 to 30/06/12 Born 01/07/13 to 30/06/15 may play up.	13 & 14 14 & 15	Year 8 Year 9
U19	Born 01/07/10 to 30/06/11 Born 01/07/09 to 30/06/10 Born 01/07/08 to 30/06/09 Born 01/07/11 to 30/06/13 may play up.	15 & 16 16 & 17 17 & 18	Year 10 Year 11 Year 12
Seniors	Born 01/07/07 or earlier Born 01/07/08 to 30/06/12 may play up.	19 and older	N/A

Season age groups operate under By-law 8. Fill-in players remain subject to the applicable fill-in provisions.

Appendix B – 2026/27 Playing Rounds

Term 4 – 2026

Week	Round	Date	Notes
Week 1	Round 1	12 October 2026	
Week 2	Round 2	19 October 2026	
Week 3	Round 3	26 October 2026	
Week 4	Round 4	2 November 2026	
Week 5	Round 5	9 November 2026	
Week 6	Round 6	16 November 2026	
Week 7	Round 7	23 November 2026	
Week 8	Round 8	30 November 2026	U10 midseason break
Week 9	Round 9	7 December 2026	
Week 10	Monday games only	14 December 2026	Monday teams only

Monday 14 December: Games will be played for Monday teams only, replacing the Monday game night lost to the public holiday on 1 March 2027 during Round 14.

Christmas Break

Term 1 – 2027

Week	Round	Date	Notes
Week 1	Round 10	1 February 2027	
Week 2	Round 11	8 February 2027	
Week 3	Round 12	15 February 2027	
Week 4	Round 13	22 February 2027	
Week 5	Round 14	2 March 2027	No Saturday or Monday games over the long weekend
Week 6	Finals	8 March 2027	
Week 7	Finals	15 March 2027	

U10 competition: U10 teams play 12 Saturday rounds during the season and do not participate in finals.