

2026 Team Grading Process Guidelines

1. Overview

The MWFA Registration & Grading Committee are responsible for all Competition Age Groups Team Grading each season. Prior to any Grading meeting commencing, all committee members will be briefed on the grading Guidelines. Committee members are required to participate as association representatives, not as representatives of their individual clubs.

2. Club Responsibilities During Grading

The most time-consuming aspect of the grading process is identifying teams that are nominated into divisions lower than their true playing standard. This significantly delays the grading process for all clubs. To support an efficient and fair grading process, clubs are asked to be reasonable and transparent when nominating teams.

3. Team Nomination Expectations

Clubs are requested to consider the following when submitting teams for grading:

- a. Teams that performed strongly last season should be nominated into a higher division.
- b. Mid-table finishes do not justify nominating a team into a lower division.
- c. Any notes added to team nominations must be fact-based and objective. Emotional language should be avoided. Dot points are preferred.

4. Information Available to the Grading Committee

The Grading Committee has access to comprehensive historical and registration data, including:

- a. Previous season finishing positions
- b. Age group and division history
- c. Number of returning players
- d. Background of new players joining a team
- e. Previous season ladders, including points for, points against, and goal difference

5. Player Registration Restrictions

All teams nominated for grading must comply with MWFA Player Registration Restrictions.

Clubs have been vocal about the importance of these restrictions, and the Grading Committee will strictly enforce them.

- a. Exemptions may be considered in specific circumstances, e.g. two teams from different clubs combining due to insufficient player numbers.
- b. Minimum Registration Numbers - teams that do not meet the minimum registration requirements will be removed from the grading process:
 - U12: minimum 10 players
 - U13 and above: minimum 11 players
 - Squads: minimum 20 players

6. Withholding Players from Grading

Clubs must not withhold players from team submissions during grading.

MWFA has observed instances in previous seasons where additional players were added after final grading outcomes were released, resulting in unbalanced competitions and unfair advantages.

Example:

A team graded into Division 2 later adds players who competed in Division 1 the previous season. In these cases:

- a. The additional players may not be approved for registration, and/or
- b. The Grading Committee may move the team into a higher division.

Lack of transparency significantly delays final grading decisions, and the release of competition draws. Open and honest submissions ensure a smoother process for all clubs.

7. Ongoing Monitoring

Player movement between teams will continue to be monitored after the season commences to ensure ongoing compliance with MWFA rules.

8. Multiple Teams in the Same Division

Some clubs may have multiple teams graded into the same division. While this may limit borrowing opportunities, teams are graded based on what division best suits each individual team, not club preference.

9. Initial vs Final Grading

Clubs are reminded that Initial Grading is not Final Grading. Once initial grading outcomes are published:

- a. Results remain subject to the appeal process.
- b. Teams may move divisions based on other teams' appeals being approved.

Adhering to item No. 6, Withholding Players from Grading, will help ensure unnecessary changes to the team's Final Grading.

10. Communication to Coaches and Managers

Clubs must ensure that all coaches and managers are fully aware of the following rules before promising players a place in a team:

- a. Player Registration Restrictions
- b. Player Grading & Quotas
- c. Player Borrowing Rules

11. Conclusion

The MWFA Administration, Board, and Committees are responsible for enforcing these rules. Unfortunately, when parents, players, coaches, or managers are unaware of how these rules operate, decisions can result in dissatisfaction directed toward MWFA staff and volunteers.

Your cooperation is essential to maintaining a fair, balanced, and efficient grading process for all participants.

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1	5 March 2026	MWFA Competition Manager	Initial version issued
2	15 April 2026	MWFA Administrator	Layout changes (no content impact)