



YEARS 7 AND 8 • PARENT GUIDE

GRADING EXPLAINED

How teams are formed in Years 7 and 8. A guide for families on how grading works, what it can and cannot do, and the questions we hear most often.

PREGRADING

Thu 15 October
4:00 to 6:15pm

WHERE

**Matthews Netball
Centre, Wembley**

FORMAL GRADING

Early 2027
Three sessions

DIVISIONS

**Set by Perth
Netball Association**

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The two halves of grading

Grading is handled by two different groups. Knowing where one ends and the other begins explains why some things are in our hands and some are not.

1 The club

- Our panel of experienced graders assesses every player across the sessions.
- We sort players into teams and number them from strongest down, so Team 1 is our strongest Year 7 and 8 team.
- We nominate the teams to PNA with a recommended division for each, complete and on time.

2 Perth Netball Association

- PNA's Year 7/8 grading committee places each team in a division.
- The committee is PNA's Competition Coordinator plus four members from different clubs.
- Its decisions are final and not open to appeal by clubs, including us.

What grading is for

Grading places players in teams of similar ability, so games are competitive and training is pitched at the right level. It is not a judgement on your player and it is not a trial. Every player who registers is placed in a team, as long as we have the numbers to form one.

Why Year 7 and 8 feels different

In the younger age groups, teams are built around friendships, balance and court time. From Year 7, teams are placed in PNA divisions based on their overall strength, so players are graded and placed primarily according to ability. We still care a great deal about friendships, and page 5 explains how we handle them.

THE SHORT VERSION

We assess players and build teams based on ability. Dynamites graders then recommend a division for each team, with PNA making the final decision on team placements.



How grading runs

Grading runs across several sessions, so every player is seen in lots of games, with different teammates and in different positions.

1 **Pregrading, Thursday 15 October**

A first look at everyone who will be in Year 7 or 8 in 2027, current Dynamites and new players alike. It is not a commitment to the season. It tells us how many teams we are likely to field and what coaching we need.

2 **Grouped with similar players**

Players start formal grading alongside others of similar experience, based on last season's results and coach feedback, so games are even from the first whistle.

3 **Three formal sessions, early 2027**

Short games played in blocks. Players are also given opportunities to play with stronger players, depending on what the graders want to see on the day.

4 **Bringing it together**

The grading panel looks at what graders saw across every session, alongside last season and coach feedback, and sorts players into teams.

BUILT TO BE FAIR

- Graders record leg numbers, not names.
- None of our graders have a daughter on court.
- Every player gets games in her preferred positions.
- Nobody is judged on a single session. Graders see every player several times before anything is decided.

NEW TO DYNAMITES?

Please tell us as much as you can about your player: the clubs and teams she has played for, the division or level, her usual positions and why she is changing clubs. It helps us understand where she is coming from and place her well from the first session. Email the Year 7-8 Coordinator before grading, details on the back page.



How teams are built

What graders see on court is the starting point. Building a team that works takes more than that.

Once grading is finished, the grading panel and Year 7-8 Coordinator build the teams, and they are reviewed before families are told. For each team we look at:

- similar playing ability across the team
- a workable mix of shooters, midcourts and defenders
- a shooter who can score in every team
- grading notes and previous coach feedback
- friendships, where grading allows (see page 5)

What coaches are looking for

Graders watch the whole game, not just who scores. They are looking for:

- **Footwork and ball skills.** A clean catch, a balanced landing without stepping and accurate passes.
- **Movement.** Leading hard at the right time and offering again when covered.
- **Defence.** Marking her player first, staying goal-side and going for intercepts.
- **Decisions under pressure.** Moving the ball quickly and choosing the safe option at speed.
- **Attitude and coachability.** Calling for the ball after a turnover, recovering after a mistake, listening and giving her best in any position.
- **Sportsmanship and teamwork.** Supporting teammates, playing well with new people and adjusting to the umpires' calls.
- **Lifting.** Whether she lifts when given the chance to play with stronger players.

Finding the right position

Some players come into Year 7 without a strong preference for a position, or without having been coached in a position that suits their natural strengths. Part of the Year 7 coach's job is to help them move into a position that builds on those strengths, so where a player grades is not always where she settles.



Can my player be with her friends?

We aim to keep friend groups together where possible. Friends are one of the biggest reasons players keep playing through high school, and we take that seriously.

How it works

In Year 7 and 8, grading sets the team first. Where friends grade close to each other, we do our best to place them in the same team. Let us know who your player would like to play with when you complete her 2027 season registration in PlayHQ, and keep it to **one or two names** so we have a real chance of making it work.

We do not ask about friends in the pregrading registration, so please wait for the season registration to tell us.

Why friends sometimes end up in different teams

If two friends grade a long way apart, putting them together means one of them plays at a level that does not suit her. The stronger player is not stretched, or her friend spends the season out of her depth. Neither is a good outcome for either of them.

Numbers play a part too. Each team needs a mix of positions and has room for about ten players, so not every combination fits.

STILL TEAMMATES AT THE CLUB

Our Year 7 and 8 teams train on the same evening at Robertson Park, often on neighbouring courts, and club days and windup bring the whole age group together. A different team does not mean a different club.

A NOTE FOR PARENTS

Teams cannot be changed once they are registered with PNA, which is why we take care over every placement before teams are announced.



Will next year's team be as strong?

It is a fair question. The honest answer is that it depends on who registers, and we will not know until grading is done.

The group changes every year

Years 7 and 8 is a two year age group. Each season our Year 8s move up to the Year 9 to 12 competition and a new group of Year 7s arrives, so the playing group is never the same two years running. Year 7s who are new to the club bring experience with them too, from school netball, other clubs and representative teams, and that adds new strength to the group each year.

A strong player is still challenged

PNA places every team in a division that matches its strength and aims to keep each division as even as possible. A strong group plays in a higher division. A smaller or less experienced group plays lower, against teams at the same level. Either way the aim is close, competitive netball, not a season of forty goal wins or losses.

If the early rounds show a team has landed in the wrong division, we can ask PNA to regrade after round five, with PNA making the final call.

Why pregrading matters

Pregrading on Thursday 15 October is our first opportunity to assess the 2027 player group. The more players who attend, the better we can plan teams, allocate coaches and give families a clearer picture of the season ahead. If your player has friends who are interested in playing netball, we would love them to come along too.

WHAT WE CAN PROMISE

We will grade honestly, put our strongest players together in Team 1 and give PNA complete, accurate nominations so it has what it needs to place each team well.



After teams are announced

Once teams are confirmed and nominated to PNA, they are set for the start of the season.

Regrading during the season

For high school teams, PNA may regrade divisions after Round 5. If we believe a team is better suited to a different division, we can submit a request, but PNA makes the final decision.

Teams that are regraded start in their new division with five competition points and an adjusted goals average, so they are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by their original placement.

If something does not look right

Talk to the Year 7-8 Coordinator once teams have been announced. We are happy to explain how we got there. Once teams are registered with PNA they cannot be changed, so we are not able to move players between teams.

PLEASE COME TO EVERY SESSION

A player who misses one formal session is graded on the other two, with no penalty. A player who misses two or more is placed on last season's results and coach feedback alone, and that placement stands. Injured players are placed the same way and reviewed after round five.

WHAT WE ASK OF YOU DURING GRADING

- Bring your player to every session, on time and ready to play.
- Watch quietly from the sideline. Coaching from the boundary is not allowed during grading.
- Help your player prepare. Our Player Guide, Game Ready, explains what to expect and has simple practice ideas for the weeks before.
- Trust the process. Decisions are made by more than one person, across more than one session.



QUESTIONS?

TALK TO US ANY TIME

We would rather answer the same question fifty times than have a family quietly confused on the sideline.

KEY DATES

- **Friday 9 October 2026** Pregrading registrations close
- **Thursday 15 October 2026** Pregrading, Years 7 and 8, 4:00 to 6:15pm, Matthews Netball Centre, 199 Salvado Rd, Wembley
- **December 2026** Winter 2027 registrations open in PlayHQ
- **Early 2027** Three formal grading sessions, **dates to be confirmed**
- **April 2027** Round 1

Register for pregrading: playhq.com/netball-australia/register/5887c5

GET IN TOUCH

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