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An important update for 2026 is that all tournaments will adopt international age group categories. From the start of the year, divisions will be structured as follows: Under 11 (u11), Under 13 (u13), Under 15 (u15), Under 17 (u17), and Under 19 (u19).

Following consultation with the junior squash community of coaches, administrators, and some parents, it was decided to treat primary schools and high schools players differently.

For high school players – u15, u17, and u19:

- Players must be under the applicable age on the last day of the tournament. For example, if a player turns 15 on the Saturday of a tournament that ends on the Sunday, the player may only enter in the u17 or higher age group.
- If a player wants to play in the u17 category of the National championships in 2026, he/she must be 16 or younger on the last day of the tournament (22 August 2026).
- This has always been the case for the Growthpoint regional and national championships, and it will be applicable to all junior tournaments in future.
- Provinces may choose to implement an age group policy that requires players to play the whole year in the age group that they intend to play in the IPT, even though they may qualify to play in a younger age group earlier in the year.
- Schools that play in age group schools leagues should use the last date of the league as the cut-off date to determine which players are eligible for the age group league team.

For primary school players:

For the IPT and SACD junior team tournament (old Country Schools Festival) which are team events:

- Players who turn 11 in a year, may play u11 until after the end of the Angela Difford u11 Festival (IPT).
- Primary school players who turn 13 in a year, may play in the u13 SACD junior team tournament and the u13 IPT.

For National individual tournaments, players are required to play in their actual age groups.

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SA Junior Top 16 Closed tournament age group dispensation

A special arrangement will apply to the SA Junior Top 16 Closed tournament where the top 16 boys and girls in each age group will play, based on the results of the 2 SA Junior Open tournaments.

Players will play in Top 16 tournament in the age group that they played in the Open tournaments, even if their birthday is before the end of the Top 16 tournament.

This is a practical arrangement to avoid complications of players moving up an age group from one tournament to the next. A player must still be under the age on the last day of the relevant SA Junior Open tournament.

Regards

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