

Age Groups, Preliminary and Competition Evaluations Factsheet

Junior Age Groups

Listed below are the age groups members will be in for the 2022/23 season. These age groups are determined as at midnight on 30 September 2022.

BIRTHDATE BETWEEN THESE DATES	AGE GROUP
1st October 2016 to 30th September 2017	U6 (Surf Play One)
1st October 2015 to 30th September 2016	U7 (Surf Play Two)
1st October 2014 to 30th September 2015	U8 (Surf Aware One)
1st October 2013 to 30th September 2014	U9 (Surf Aware Two)
1st October 2012 to 30th September 2013	U10 (Surf Safe One)
1st October 2011 to 30th September 2012	U11 (Surf Safe Two)
1st October 2010 to 30th September 2011	U12 (Surf Smart One)
1st October 2009 to 30th September 2010	U13 (Surf Smart Two)
1st October 2008 to 30th September 2009	U14 (SRC)

Note: Proof of age/birth certificate must be sighted for all new children joining a SLSC.

A child may join a SLSC as soon as he/she turns five years of age. No SLSC is to accept membership of a child until they have reached the age of five years to comply with insurance requirements. A child who reaches five years of age after 30th September may join nippers at that time for the remainder of the season; however, this child will be required to stay in the U6 nippers age group again the following season. It is the SLSC's responsibility to explain this to the parents of the child.

Junior Preliminary Evaluations

For the 2022/23 season an updated Preliminary Skills Evaluation has been introduced nationally. This has been redeveloped to reflect industry standard research in aquatic skills, and there is a greater focus on foundation skills in the water which assist in making rescue ready lifesavers.

Clubs are required to meet the new preliminary skills evaluation which is available in this document and in the [SLSA Members Area](#).

Many activities that will be completed by children as part of Junior Activities will be conducted in the water. To ensure that all children have a suitable swimming ability to allow them to participate in these activities, SLSA has developed a Junior Preliminary Evaluation for each age group. Every junior member is required to participate in this evaluation prior to any water-based activities being undertaken. Clubs can set standards that go over and above the requirements set by SLSA, but not below this standard.

Note: It is not an assessment which if not completed competently precludes the child from becoming a member or continuing with junior surf education or training activities. Any child that does not meet the required evaluation level will require a higher level of supervision when involved in water-based activities at the discretion of the club. Refer to SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01.

A member who is delegated to assess Junior Preliminary Evaluations must:

- Be proficient in SRC (at minimum) and have an understanding at the requirements of the evaluations for juniors
- Be familiar with the process of reasonable adjustment
- Adhere to the program of skills maintenance requested by the SLSC
- Complete any paperwork required accurately and return in a timely manner
- Delegate names must be minuted at a SLSC Management Team meeting annually.

Conducting the Evaluation

Evaluations should be conducted in a low-risk environment, as determined by a completion of a pre-activity risk assessment. All new junior members should be supported by a 1:1 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participant) when completing their evaluation. For all returning junior members, where knowledge of their ability is known by the SLSC, a 1:5 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants) may be used (Refer to SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01).

The pool evaluation conducted “in a safe constructed pool environment with a water safety ratio as per the SLSA Policy 1.01 – Water Safety – a 1:5 water safety ratio is to be implemented for all members under evaluation.” may now also be conducted in open water (ocean, rock pools and ocean baths) away from surf conditions for both new and returning nippers, effective immediately.

In instances where evaluations cannot be completed, a qualified and accredited swim coach can be endorsed to sign off the preliminary skills pool assessment. Swimming coaches are required to provide their Australian Swimming Teachers and Coaches Associate (ASTCA) number, their name and email address and the name of the children who have successfully completed the swim

Following the Evaluation

Any child that does not meet the required evaluation level will require a higher level of supervision when involved in water-based activities at the discretion of the club.

Any child that does complete the Preliminary Skills Evaluation competently can progress to water based junior activities noting a 1:5 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants). For still water / pool activities or low-risk conditions (ascertained after a formal risk assessment) the ratio may be expanded to 1:10 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants) as per SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01.

A maximum supervision ratio of 1:5 (WSP: participants) applies as per SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01 to ensure the evaluations are conducted in a safe aquatic environment. Refer to the SLSA Age Managers Learner Guide and SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01 for more information on Junior Preliminary Evaluations.

Junior Competition Evaluations

From the age of 7 (Under 8) juniors can begin to compete in intra-club, inter-club and branch competition, while from the age of 8 (Under 9) juniors can participate in state competition. To ensure that all junior members that wish to compete in any inter-club, branch, state and national events/championships have the required ability, strength and fitness to compete they must be able to complete the junior competition evaluation for their age group.

Note: The definition of ‘Open Water’ is sourced from NSW Maritime and refers to ‘navigable waters’ which includes beaches. It does not include inland and coastal rivers, lakes and enclosed bays, harbours or rock pools.

For more information on SLSA Surf Sport competition eligibility and requirements refer to.

- SLSA Policy 5.04 – Competition Eligibility Policy
- SLSA Surf Sports Manual

Branch and State Competition Requirements

Any competitor wishing to compete at Branch or State carnivals (water and/or beach events) must have successfully completed:

- Junior Preliminary Evaluation
- Junior Competition Evaluation
- Appropriate Surf Education award for their age group by 31 December 2022.

Junior Activities members (i.e. members comprising Under 14 and below), are not required to perform patrol hours to compete in junior activities competitions. However, if eligible members wish to compete in Under 15 competitions, they must fulfil their patrol hour obligations as set out in SLSA Policy 5.04 – Competition Eligibility. This Policy can be found in the [SLSA Members Area](#).

These three components must be entered into SurfGuard prior to close of entries. For assistance in uploading this information into SurfGuard please contact the SurfGuard helpdesk on 1300 724 006 or ithelp@slsa.asn.au.



SLSA Age Group Evaluations and Surf Education Awards

The following table outlines the national standard for preliminary and competition skills evaluations. Some branches may set distances above the standard below. Please ensure that you liaise with your respective branch for confirmation of the specific requirements.

STAGE ONE: UNDER 6, UNDER 7, UNDER 8			
Aquatic Play and Fundamental Aquatic Skills (FAS). Minimum depth of safe aquatic environment - 1 metre			
MINIMUM AQUATIC SKILL	U6	U7	U8
Floatation	Back or front float for minimum 5 seconds, recover to stand.		
Submersion	Submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (e.g dive ring)		
Propulsion	Push and glide from wall (distance 1-2 metres) recover to stand.	Push and glide from wall, kick (distance 2-3 metres) recover to stand.	Swim on front any stroke (distance 20 metres) followed by swim underwater (distance 2-3 metres).
CONTINUOUS SKILL SEQUENCE	Wade through water (distance 5 metres) float on back or front (5 seconds) recover to stand, submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands, recover to stand.		Swim on front through water any stroke 20 metres, followed by back or front float (5 seconds) followed by submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (do not recover to stand between each task).
STAGE TWO: UNDER 9, UNDER 10, UNDER 11			
Applied Aquatic Skills. Minimum depth of safe aquatic environment - 1.5 metres			
MINIMUM AQUATIC SKILL	U9	U10	U11
Floatation	Front to back float or back to front float - 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or sculling for minimum 1 minute.		Front to back float or back to front float - 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or sculling for minimum 2 minutes.
Submersion	Submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (e.g dive ring)		Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (e.g dive ring)
Propulsion	Survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or sculling for minimum 50 metres.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or sculling for minimum 50 metres.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 50 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or sculling for minimum 50 metres
CONTINUOUS SKILL SEQUENCE	Swim on front through water using combination of breaststroke, sidestroke, freestyle for 50 metres, followed by tread water and/or sculling for minimum 1 minute, followed by submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (do not recover to stand in between each task).		Swim on front through water using combination of breaststroke, sidestroke, freestyle for 50 metres, followed by tread water and/or sculling for minimum 2 minutes, followed by submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (do not recover to stand in between each task).

STAGE THREE: UNDER 12, UNDER 13, UNDER 14

Junior/trainee lifesaver - pathway to SRC. Minimum depth of safe aquatic environment - 1.8 metres

MINIMUM AQUATIC SKILL	U12	U13	U14 (SRC)
Floatation	Front to back float or back to front float - 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or sculling for minimum 3 minute.		
Submersion	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, retrieve object from of water with hands (e.g dive ring).		Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, do not recover to surface, retrieve object from of water with hands (e.g dive ring).
Propulsion	Swim on front through water any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.		Swim on front through water any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 100 metres.
CONTINUOUS SKILL SEQUENCE	Swim on front through water any stroke using combination of breaststroke, sidestroke, freestyle for 100 metres, followed by tread water and/or sculling for minimum 3 minutes followed by submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (do not recover to stand in between each task).		Swim on front through water any stroke using combination of breaststroke, sidestroke, freestyle for 200 metres, followed by tread water and/or sculling for minimum 3 minutes followed by forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, followed by submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (do not recover to stand in between each task).

AGE GROUP	COMPETITION EVALUATION
U6	Nil
U7	Nil
U8	Nil (no water competition, except for wade which takes place in waist-deep water)
U9	Minimum 150m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U10	Minimum 150m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U11	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U12	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U13	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U14	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)