

SA SCHOOLS SQUASH AGE GROUP POLICY

WHY SA SCHOOLS AGE GROUPS DO IN FACT FALL IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL AGE GROUPS

International squash age groups are U13, U15, U17 and U19 and require a player to move from U15 to U17 (say) on the day that player turns 16. So, during the course of a calendar year, every squash payer in the country would change age groups if we used international age groups. So a player could play the Bloem Open as an U15 in February but turn 16 at the beginning of March and then be forced to play U17 for the SA Schools Closed in late March. This would make national selection almost impossible since we are selecting teams to tour overseas in December which would mean players changing age groups weekly as the year progresses. As a result, none of our current selection events would in fact assist selection because they would be recording results across players from different international age categories.

You are aware that the South African sports year runs for a calendar year and that, as a result, a player playing U15 (say) in South Africa has in fact already turned 16 and so would not qualify for the U15 age category internationally at the end of the year.

South African age groups are actually very nearly perfectly aligned to international age groups. Players turn 16 during their U16 year and so qualify to play in the international U17 age category. Our players are therefore selected from the U16 Age Group and enter overseas in the U17 category. And they all qualify for that age group overseas. If a young player is still 15 (say) and turning 16 only in late December but selected for our U16 national team, we may still enter him/her in the U15 category until the day he/she turns 16.

All South African school sports operate on the same age group system. It would be very difficult to have a squash player playing U16, but still playing U15 rugby and cricket!!! Imagine the ever more popular inter-school derby weekends with that system in place.

If the international age groups were applied, it would impact negatively on the U19 IPT. The U19 IPT numbers would be reduced by at least half as most Grade 11s are still U17. The result would be a poor entry for the U19 IPT since it would include Grade 12s only. This is not in the interests of junior squash.

Our current system of age groups IS sensible and DOES work.