



Rules & Regulations

Below are standard netball rules but due to Covid-19 there have been some modifications which should be read in conjunction with these. The modification details can be found via our COVID-19 page.

Pre-game protocol

A netball team consists of 7 players in different positions. No more than 7 players from a team may be on court at a time, and at least 5 players must be on court for play to commence with at least one of the players being C.

All positions have designated areas on court as below:

GS – allowed in their attacking goal third and shooting circle

GA – allowed in the centre third, attacking goal third and the shooting circle

WA – allowed in the centre third and attacking goal third, but not the shooting circle

C – allowed in all thirds but neither shooting circle

WD – allowed in the centre third and defensive goal third, but not the shooting circle

GD – allowed in the centre third, defensive goal third and the shooting circle

GK – allowed in their defensive goal third and shooting circle

Games are played in 4 equal quarters of 8 minutes with a 1 minute break between each quarter. Before play starts, the captains shall toss for the choice of first centre pass or choice of shooting end. Please notify the umpire of the outcome of the toss.

Before taking the court, umpires will check players for jewellery and length of nails. Players will be informed there and then if they do not meet the requirements to play.

Sanctions and advantage

There are 2 types of sanction in netball:

Free pass – When a rule is broken that does not directly affect another player e.g. footwork.

A free pass is set where the umpire indicates, and any player allowed in that area may take the pass. No players are out of play. If a free pass is set within a shooting circle to the attacking team a shot MAY NOT be taken.

Penalty pass – When a rule is broken that directly affects another player e.g. contact

A penalty pass is set where the umpire indicates, and any player allowed in that area may take the pass. The infringing player must stand next to the player taking the penalty and remain out of play



until the penalty has been taken, this includes any vocal instruction/support to their team members. If the penalty is set within a shooting circle to the attacking team, then a shot may be attempted.

The player taking either type of sanction must still obey all netball rules.

Advantage – An umpire will play advantage if they have noticed an infringement has taken place but feel calling for a sanction will disadvantage the attacking team. They will not blow their whistle but will call “advantage plus the infringement”. Play does not stop for an advantage and is only played in that moment against that infringement.

Start of play

The controlling umpire will blow their whistle for the start of play when the attacking C is in possession of the ball and with at least one foot wholly within the centre circle. At the point of the whistle being blown all players must be in their respective thirds. The defending C must be in the centre third and all others in their respective attacking/defensive thirds. Any players not in the correct area will be deemed to be offside.

It is up to the individual players to make sure they are correctly positioned before the whistle is blown. A C should step straight into the circle, not wait for players to be onside.

Sanction – Free pass where the incorrectly positioned player was

The centre pass must be caught within the centre third. A player can jump from a goal third, catch the ball and land within the centre third.

Sanction – Free pass where the ball crossed the transverse line

Out of Court

A ball is deemed to be out of court if it makes contact with the ground or any object/person in contact with the ground outside the court.

Sanction – Throw-in awarded to the team who did not touch the ball on court last

A throw-in is set where the umpire indicates. A players landing foot must be within 6 inches of the line, but not touching. The player must obey all other rules and release the ball before making contact with the court. All other players must be on court when the throw-in is taken, and the ball must enter the court.

Sanction – Throw-in to opposing team from same position



Scoring a goal

Only GA and GS can score a goal. They must have made no contact with the court outside the shooting circle whilst in possession of the ball, when intentionally making a shot at goal. The ball must pass through the ring from above, and must have passed through the ring before time ends for the goal to count.

Sanction – A free pass to the opposing team outside the circle

If the ball passes through the ring after being deflected by a defender, then the goal will stand. If the ball passes through the ring thrown by any player other than the GA/GS then the ball is still in play and no goal is scored.

Offside

A player is deemed offside if any part of their body makes contact with the ground in an area that they are not allowed to enter. A player may lean on the ball in an offside area.

Sanction – Free pass to the opposing team where the player went offside

Footwork

A player may not re-ground their landing foot whilst in possession of the ball. The landing foot is deemed to be the first foot to make contact with the ground. If a player already has one foot in contact with the ground when catching the ball this is their landing foot. If the player lands simultaneously with both feet, then whichever foot is not moved is their landing foot. A player may not drag or slide their landing foot, or hop on either foot.

Sanction – Free pass to the opposing team where the player caught the ball

Held Ball

Once gaining possession of a ball a player must release the ball within 3 seconds

Sanction – Free pass to the opposing team where the player caught the ball

Playing the ball

A player may gain possession of the ball by catching the ball either from another player or rebounding off the goalpost or rolling the ball to oneself.

A player in possession of the ball may NOT throw it deliberately at another player or roll it to another player. A player who falls whilst in possession of the ball must regain their footing before passing the ball. After releasing the ball, a player may not regain possession of the ball until it has



been touched by another player, or rebounds off the goal post. A player may not deliberately kick the ball, fall on the ball to gain possession or strike the ball with a fist.

A player not in possession of the ball may bat or bounce the ball with one hand once before either catching it or batting/bouncing it to another player.

A player cannot tip the ball in an uncontrolled manner more than once, before catching the ball, or batting it to another player.

Sanction – Free pass to the opposing team where the player caught the ball

Over a Third

The ball must be caught or touched by a player in each third of the court.

Sanction – Free pass to the opposing team by the transverse line in the third where the ball entered incorrectly

Obstruction – Of a player with the ball

An opposing player may not attempt to defend a player in possession of the ball if they are within 3 feet of the landing foot of the player with the ball.

Sanction – Penalty Pass where the infringer was stood

An opposing player who is the correct distance from the player in possession of the ball may attempt to defend the ball by jumping upwards, provided that if they land closer than 3 feet they do not interfere with the shooting or passing action.

If the player with the ball chooses to shorten the distance between themselves and the opposing player, the opposing player does not have to move.

A defending player may be within 3 feet of the player with the ball providing they do not interfere with the players shooting or passing action.

Obstruction – Of a player without the ball

A player who is within 3 feet of an opponent, whether attacking or defending, may not use movements that take the arms away from the body so as to limit the possible movements of an opponent.

Sanction – Penalty Pass where the infringer was stood



Contact

Netball is no longer considered a non-contact sport. It is now referred to as a contact-contest sport. When playing netball players may come into contact with other players. Provided this contact does not interfere with each other's play an umpire will deem this as contest and allow play to carry on.

Should the contact between players interfere in any way with another player, either accidentally or deliberately, then a contact infringement will be called.

Contact can occur from physical contact using any part of the body to limit an opponent's ability to move freely, knocking or hitting a player, making contact with the ball held by an opponent or whilst holding the ball, pushing it into opponent.

Contact can also occur if a player lands in a place already occupied by an opponent or moving into the path of an opponent who is committed to a particular landing spot. Players may also not position so closely to an opponent such that they are unable to move without contacting.

Sanction – Penalty Pass where the infringement took place

Leaving the court

A player may choose to leave the court to reposition themselves. Provided a defender does not also leave the court, contact or obstruct that player, they may attempt to stop them from re-entering the court.

Sanction – Penalty Pass on court where infringer was stood

A player who has left the court may not defend another player whether they are on or off the court.

Sanction – Penalty Pass on court next to where infringer was stood off court

A player who has left the court to retrieve the ball or take a throw-in must be allowed to re-enter the court where they left it or took the throw-in from.

Borrowing players

In the event that you don't have your full team for a game, you can borrow up to 3 players from another team, without having to forfeit the game. In the event that you have to borrow 4 or more players, you will automatically forfeit the game and the opposing team will automatically win 10-0. You can play a friendly instead with the opposing team if you are able to gather enough players to fill your team.



If a player on your team is running late your game will start at the scheduled time. You may borrow a player in their absence and your late arriving player will be able to join the next quarter starting. If you are unable to borrow a player, you will start your game with a player short.

Challenging an Umpire

Whilst our umpires will always do their best when umpiring a game, please remember they are human and they may miss the odd infringement. If you have any issues during a game, at the end of a quarter, please ask your captain to approach the umpire to discuss those issues.

Social Netball supports all of the umpires in its' leagues and will not tolerate any disrespect shown towards an umpire either on or off the court.

If a player continues to show any form of disrespect towards an umpire, on or off the court, a warning will be issued. Warnings remain 'live' for a period of 6 months. If you receive more than 2 warnings, within 6 months, you will be asked to leave the league, and will not be able to return.

Foul Play

Foul Play is anything a player does within the field of play that is contrary to the letter and spirit of the Rules of the Game. This includes dangerous play, unfair play, and dissent with the umpire. An umpire will decide what level of sanction is required from within the Game Management spectrum of sanctions, Cautions, Warnings or Suspensions.

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Leagues

Our leagues run throughout the year depending on how many teams are in your league. After a season is finished, we go into a new season straight away. If your league has multiple divisions, then there will be promotions and relegations (top & bottom two teams) before the new season starts.