

Modified Rules of Netball Implementation Guide

For associations, clubs, officials and coaches

v1,2026



Modified Rules Implementation Guide

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Modified Rules Implementation Guide

Purpose

This guide is provided for associations, clubs, officials and coaches to assist you to understand and implement Netball Queensland's approved modified rules of netball to ensure that players with a disability can enjoy the game of netball in a safe, fair and meaningful (competitive) manner.

Background

The vision within Netball Queensland's Strategic Plan (2026-2028) is that 'people are inspired to play, engage and grow with netball in Queensland'. Within this vision a key statement is 'valuing and respecting differences, making sure everyone has equal opportunities, and encouraging full participation'.

With the development of NQ's Netability program as well as the aim of ensuring the participation of people with a disability in mainstream teams and other formats such as unified teams, modified rules for netball were developed by a working group of NQ staff and external stakeholders including people with lived experience of disability.

Scope

These modified rules of netball are to be implemented for:

- All players within Netability (Netball Queensland's inclusive netball program)
- Players with a disability* in mainstream community netball teams and competitions as required to ensure a safe, fair and meaningful contest
- Players with a disability in other competition formats such as unified teams⁺ to ensure a safe, fair and meaningful contest
- Netball Queensland competitions that are outside the scope of these modified rules are:
 - State Titles
 - HART Premier Netball League

* Persons with a disability are those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006)

+ Unified teams are made up of players with and without a disability, usually with a minimum number of players with a disability per team



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Guiding Principles

The following principles were developed by the working group to guide the development and implementation of the modified rules of netball:

Principle	Description
Safety	modifications need to ensure the safety of all as much as possible
Fair and meaningful contest	the modifications in place are to ensure a fair and meaningful contest for the player with a disability
Meaningful & purposeful participation	modifications are to support meaningful and purposeful participation: i.e. not tokenistic and respecting the dignity of the person with a disability
Empowerment, choice, and control	the person with a disability and/or their nominated supports (e.g. parent, decision maker) are best placed to know what modifications are required to ensure full participation and a safe, fair, and meaningful contest. The person with a disability is trusted to make reasonable requests, and the aim is to not put significant additional requirements on them during this process e.g. requirements to get additional, specific reports from health professionals
Human rights and non-discrimination	human rights and non-discrimination principles are to be applied as they relate to the sporting context
Reasonable adjustments	the concept of reasonable adjustment in the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) guides the modifications. In the netball context a reasonable adjustment would be one that is necessary and reasonable (i.e. able to be implemented without undue hardship for the person with a disability) to ensure the person with a disability can participate in a safe, fair, and meaningful way in the contest
All disabilities are considered	modifications may be applied as needed to all disability diagnoses, including 'hidden' disabilities
Practical application and sustainability	modifications need to be easily understood and implemented by all stakeholders, from grass roots level up; they need to be sustainable over time and across contexts
Relevant contexts	consideration given to each context: e.g. bespoke changes may be needed based on: the particular disability support need; netball position requirements; mainstream versus all-abilities competitions; and association/club contexts such as rural/remote versus metropolitan
Empower clubs, associations, and officials	education and awareness around inclusion and the application of modified rules needs to be in place so that clubs, associations, and officials are able to oversee the modified rules with confidence
Integrity and diversity	modified rules are in place to ensure the integrity of the contest whilst respecting the diversity of individual players



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Modified Rules - Mainstream Teams and Competitions

The following modifications are available as applicable to an individual with a disability to ensure a safe, fair, and meaningful contest in mainstream, community netball competitions. Please note:

- if not specified as a modified rule below, all other rules as per the Rules of Netball (2024) shall apply
- not all modifications will be applicable in every situation

Current Rule	Modified Rule
<p>Held Ball [Rule 11, p44]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player may have up to 6 seconds after gaining controlled possession to pass or shoot
<p>Replayed ball [Rule 11, p45]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player may bat or bounce the ball up to two times to gain possession
<p>Footwork [Rule 13, pp48-49]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players may make additional foot movements (e.g. hopping, dragging, sliding, stepping) to decelerate and gain balance provided there is no material gaining of ground
<p>Offside [Rule 14, p50]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player who moves into an incorrect playing area and self-corrects should not be penalised for offside unless they take possession of the ball whilst offside. If a player repeatedly moves into an offside position, the umpire should correct them
<p>Contact [Rule 17, pp55-57]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The umpire considers aspects of disability such as physical capacity (issues with balance, coordination, ability to grade the force and timing of movement etc.), and cognitive and sensory capacity (issues with decision making and planning skills, spatial awareness, vision or hearing etc.), in addition to consideration of players' netball experience and capacity in relation to whether unfair interference has occurred • If a player contacts and a penalty pass is called consideration may be given to allowing the infringing player to continue to play (i.e. the player may not have to stand out of play)
<p>Obstruction [Rule 16, pp53-54]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opposing player may attempt to deflect or intercept the ball or defend the player with a disability in possession of the ball, provided there is a distance of not less than 4 feet (1.2 m) measured on the ground from nearest part of the landing foot of the player (with the modified rule) to nearest part of the opposing player's nearer foot in contact with the ground. For players in wheelchairs an opposing player must provide a distance of not less than 6 feet (1.83 m) • A defending player (with modified rule in place) who obstructs is not made to stand out of play when the free pass is taken. The umpire will prompt how far to stand and ask the player to move to that distance to defend



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Modified Rules - Mainstream Teams and Competitions

Current Rule	Modified Rule
Coaching [Rule 3, p18]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to the match coaches of a player with a disability may request permission to coach (provide brief, reasonable feedback regarding rules) to that player during the game from a position other than the bench (e.g. court surround). If approved, the coach must not interfere with the umpire's duties or movements or interfere with any players on court from either team
Game Management [Rule 18, pp58-63]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players with a disability may require proactive advice and feedback (e.g. around infringements) from umpires earlier and more frequently• Players with a disability may require more detail (including demonstrations) by the umpire to understand the feedback given• Greater tolerance for repeated infringement of a rule/s may be required due to the player's disability
Medical devices [Rule 3, p21]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical and health devices may be worn provided they are securely attached and covered with tape and/or padding as needed to prevent injury to the player and others as well as to prevent damage to the device• In the disability context devices may include, but are not limited to: <i>prescription glasses; hearing aids; cochlear devices; splints; orthoses; prosthetics; protective headgear; glucose pumps; devices for the management of continence (e.g. ileostomy bag); devices required for medical and health monitoring</i>• Players should consult with their medical and health professionals prior to playing as needed for advice around safety and the securing of devices



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Modified Rules - Mainstream Teams and Competitions

Current Rule	Modified Rule
<p>Uniform requirements [Rule 3, pp19&21]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As per Netball Queensland’s Inclusive Uniform Policy: All teams can play in an approved uniform consisting of the following articles of clothing provided the team plays in the same colour and/or design and that no part of the uniform covers the positional bib: a dress, singlet, bodysuit, tee shirt (long or short sleeved), skirt/skort, shorts, long pants (either Lycra or track suit style), any other adaptive clothing or approved item• As much as possible, teams should wear the same-colour clothes, however type of material and style (per Policy examples) can be adapted for physical or sensory needs, provided the adaptations do not pose any safety risk to the player or others• Closed in footwear is required. Where possible, netball specific shoes or joggers that provide good grip and stability are preferred, however other closed in footwear (e.g. orthopaedic footwear) is permitted if sensory or physical/structural issues are present. Shoes with spikes or tags on the soles are not permitted• A watch should not be worn unless required for medical monitoring purposes. If needed for this purpose a soft covering should be worn over it to prevent injury to the player and others on court• Jewellery should not be worn unless unable to be removed for religious, cultural or medical reasons. If so, it is the player’s choice to play with it, and the player accepts the risks involved. Jewellery which cannot be removed for these reasons should be covered with padding / tape as necessary to prevent injury• Where possible long hair should be tied up for safety, however if this presents a sensory issue, hair may be worn down. Consideration should be given to securing the hair in another way, if possible, e.g. with a soft headband, soft bucket hat etc.• Players with modified rules in place are to wear a blue wrist sweatband so that their modified rules can be implemented by umpires during the game



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Modified Rules - Netability and Unified Teams and Competitions

The following modified rules are to be implemented for all players in Netability competitions and all players with a disability in any unified team competitions.

- Netability: is Netball Queensland’s inclusive netball program for people with a disability
- Unified Team Competitions: are competitions that include unified teams which are made up of players with and without a disability, usually with a minimum number of players with a disability per team

Please note: if not specified as a modified rule below, all other rules as per the Rules of Netball (2024) shall apply.

Current Rule	Modified Rule
<p>Match length [Rule 2, p16]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match length: to be pre-determined by the competition organisers. Where possible the match length and breaks should be equivalent to the match lengths and breaks in a standard game of netball. Options such as substituting players more frequently should be utilised to allow for any issues with team / individual capacity rather than shortening games
<p>Team numbers on court [Rule 3, p18]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unified teams are made up of 7 players with and without a disability. A minimum number of players with a disability, usually 4, are required on court per team, however team composition can be at the discretion of the competition organisers
<p>Held Ball [Rule 11, p44]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player may have up to 6 seconds after gaining controlled possession to pass or shoot
<p>Replayed ball [Rule 11, p45]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player may bat or bounce the ball up to two times to gain possession
<p>Footwork [Rule 13, pp48-49]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players may make additional foot movements (e.g. hopping, dragging, sliding, stepping) to decelerate and gain balance provided there is no material gaining of ground
<p>Offside [Rule 14, P50]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player who moves into an incorrect playing area and self-corrects should not be penalised for offside unless they take possession of the ball whilst offside. If a player repeatedly moves into an offside position, the umpire should correct them
<p>Contact [Rule 17, pp55-57]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The umpire considers of aspects of disability such as physical capacity (issues with balance, coordination, ability to grade the force and timing of movement etc.), and cognitive and sensory capacity (issues with decision making and planning skills, spatial awareness, vision or hearing etc.), in addition to consideration of players’ netball experience and capacity in relation to whether unfair interference has occurred • If a player contacts and a penalty pass is called the infringing player does not have to stand out of play



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Modified Rules - Netability and Unified Teams and Competitions

Current Rule	Modified Rule
Obstruction [Rule 16, pp53-54]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An opposing player may attempt to deflect or intercept the ball or defend a player in possession of the ball, provided there is a distance of not less than 4 feet (1.2 m) measured on the ground from nearest part of the landing foot of the player with the ball to nearest part of the opposing player's nearer foot in contact with the ground. For players in wheelchairs an opposing player must provide a distance of not less than 6 feet (1.83 m)• A defending player who obstructs is not made to stand out of play when the free pass is taken. The umpire will prompt how far to stand and ask the player to move to that distance to defend• 1 on 1 defence applies when a player is shooting for goal. That is, when a goal attack or goal shooter is attempting a goal, they may only be defended by one opposition player
Centre pass [Rule 8, p35]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centre pass is to be taken by the team that conceded the most recent goal
Breaking on centre pass [Rule 8, p36]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-take the centre pass only if the breaking player caused an advantage to their team or disadvantage to the opposing team• Umpire to prompt a player if they repeatedly break at centre pass
Throwing in [Rule 6, p31]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When throwing in a player's foot can be on the line or up to 20 centimetres behind the line. The umpire should prompt them to correct this as much as possible before throwing in
Advantage [Rule 7, p34]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advantage should not be applied, with the exception of an advantage goal
Substitutions [Rule 10, pp40-43]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coaches can make unlimited substitutions• The substitute must wait for the other player to leave the court; however, they are not required to tag the other player• Substitutions must not interfere with play
Coaching [Rule 3, p18]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The coach may move within the court surround to provide feedback (e.g. reasonable reminders of rules) to player with a disability as required, but must not interfere with the umpires' movements or calls and must not interfere with the movements of players on court from either team



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Modified Rules - Netability and Unified Teams and Competitions

Current Rule	Modified Rule
<p>Game Management [Rule 18, pp58-63]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players with a disability may require proactive advice and feedback (e.g. around infringements) from umpires earlier and more frequently • Players with a disability may require more detail (including demonstrations) by the umpire to understand the feedback given • Greater tolerance for repeated infringement of a rule/s may be required due to the player’s disability
<p>Medical devices [Rule 3, p21]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical and health devices may be worn provided they are securely attached and covered with tape and/or padding as needed to prevent injury to the player and others as well as to prevent damage to the device • In the disability context devices may include, but are not limited to: <i>prescription glasses; hearing aids; cochlear devices; splints; orthoses; prosthetics; protective headgear; glucose pumps; devices for the management of continence (e.g. ileostomy bag); devices required for medical and health monitoring</i> • Players should consult with their medical/health professionals prior to playing as needed for advice around safety and the securing of devices
<p>Uniform requirements [Rule 3, pp19&21]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per Netball Queensland’s Inclusive Uniform Policy: All teams can play in an approved uniform consisting of the following articles of clothing provided the team plays in the same colour and/or design and that no part of the uniform options cover the positional bib: a dress, singlet, bodysuit, tee shirt (long or short sleeved), skirt/skort, shorts, long pants (either Lycra or track suit style), any other adaptive clothing or approved item • As much as possible, teams should wear the same-colour clothes, however type of material and style (per Policy examples) can be adapted for physical or sensory needs, provided the adaptations do not pose any safety risk to the player or others • Closed in footwear is required. Where possible, netball specific shoes or joggers that provide good grip and stability are preferred, however other closed in footwear is permitted if sensory or physical/structural issues are present (e.g. orthopaedic footwear). Shoes with spikes or tags on the soles are not permitted • A watch should not be worn unless it is required for medical monitoring purposes. If needed for this purpose a soft covering should be worn over it to prevent injury to the player and others on court • Jewellery should not be worn unless unable to be removed for religious, cultural or medical reasons. If so, it is the player’s choice to play with it, and the player accepts the risks involved. Jewellery which cannot be removed for these reasons should be covered with padding / tape as necessary to prevent injury • Where possible long hair should be tied up for safety, however if this presents a sensory issue, hair may be worn down Consideration should be given to securing the hair in another way, if possible, e.g. with a soft headband, soft bucket hat etc.



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Implementation

The modified rules outlined on pages 8 to 10 are for implementation in all Netability competitions, and apply to all players in these competitions, as having a diagnosed disability is a pre-requisite to be in a Netability team. The modified rules outlined on pages 8 to 10 are also for implementation for any players with a disability in unified teams.

Within mainstream competitions, access to modified rules requires the individual player to advise that they have a diagnosed disability that impacts on their safe, fair and meaningful participation in netball. Evidence of disability diagnosis will not be required. In exceptional circumstances, Netball Queensland may request supporting documentation regarding requested modifications.

For mainstream teams within scope, if a player's disability is likely to impact on their capacity to participate in a game of netball in a safe, fair and meaningful way compared to peers, they can request to have relevant modified rules in place from those outlined on pages 5 to 7. Players requiring modified rules need to request these through their club/association prior to the start of the netball season. If a player registers after the season start, they must have their requested modified rules approved at least 3 days prior to the day of their first game.

Players with a disability are empowered to choose the modified rule/s they require by asking themselves: "What adjustments do I need due to my disability to have a safe, fair and meaningful contest." Players identify the modified rules needed from those provided and request approval for these from their association/club.

Modified rules should be chosen based on the functional impact/s of the person's disability on their capacity to play netball in a safe, fair and meaningful way and should not be in place to give the player with a disability an advantage in the contest. However, if a modified rule gives a slight advantage, but to not have it would place the player at a disadvantage, then the modified rule should be provided.

Should a player require a modified rule not in the list provided, the player should make this request to their club or association for approval as soon as possible. If the club or association is unsure about whether the modified rule requested should be approved, they can seek advice from Netball Queensland [contact NQ's: Workforce Development Manager]. The decision of the club, association or Netball Queensland to approve or not approve the additional request should be made based on the guiding principles outlined on page 4.

Please note: not all requests for modified rules may be able to be implemented in every situation. Some requests may not be considered a reasonable adjustment or may not meet the other principles outlined in this paper (e.g. the request may pose a safety risk).

With the support of their coach or team manager, players who have modified rules approved need to identify themselves to the game officials and opposition coach during the umpire checks (using the approved modified rules form). Players with modified rules in place need to wear the nominated coloured identifier (e.g. light blue wrist sweatband) so that umpires and other officials are able to implement the modified rules they require easily during the game. **11**



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Implementation Process continued...

The modifications in this guide apply to the rules of netball only. If a player requires other supports (e.g. physical access modifications) they should discuss these directly with the club / association. Resources are available in Netball Queensland's disability toolkit around aspects such as making environments more accessible and inclusive coaching.

Implementation Flow Chart

For mainstream community competition players



1 Player registers on Netball Connect - fills in disability details if able.



2 Player identifies the modified rules that apply to their situation.



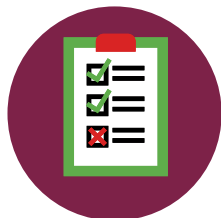
3 Before the start of the season where possible, player advises club/association of the modified rules they require.



4 Club / association reviews request. Further information may be required. Agreed modified rules established.



5 Player (with their coach) provides umpires & opposition coach the 'approved modified rules' form prior to game. Player wears blue wrist band so modified rules can be implemented during game.



6 Player advises their club / association as soon as possible of any changes needed to modified rules.



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Confidentiality

Clubs, Associations, Coaches and Officials are to adhere to Netball Queensland's Member Protection Policy in relation to the gathering and handling of personal information, including information that a player may disclose in relation to their disability and support needs. When informing match officials and the opposing team's coach of modifications for a player, details of the player's disability are not to be disclosed.

Changing Needs

As player needs may change over time, players can request changes to the modified rules they require (i.e. a modified rule may no longer be required, or if an additional rule is required) at any time by notifying their club or association.

Disputes

Wherever possible the modified rules requested by a player with a disability should be implemented. If a club or association assesses that a requested modified rule is not a reasonable adjustment to provide the player with a safe, fair and meaningful contest, or that it is not in line with a principle outlined in this paper (e.g. the modified rule would pose a safety risk), the club / association must provide the player with the reason why the modified rule could not be implemented. If the player disagrees with the reason provided and believes they have grounds for further review, they should follow the club / association's complaints and disputes procedure.

Review of Modified Rules

These modified rules will be reviewed, at minimum, on an annual basis as well as reviews of any specific cases as required. The review will include feedback from players and their support person/s, clubs, associations, coaches and match officials who have implemented the modified rules.



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Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Player with a disability (and/or their supports) – for mainstream community competitions in scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advise the club / association of any modified rules required prior to the netball season, or at least three days prior to their first game if registering after the start of the season• In exceptional circumstances supporting documentation around modifications may need to be provided if requested by Netball Queensland• With the support of their coach advise match umpire/s and opposition coach of modified rules to be implemented during umpire checks (using the approved modified rules form)• During matches, wear the coloured wrist sweatband to assist umpires to implement the approved modified rules during games• Advise club / association as soon as possible of any changes needed to modified rules
Club/association nominated person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive request for modified rules from player• Use the principles in this implementation guide to determine if modifications can be put in place• Seek advice from NQ as needed• Communicate with player (and any nominated support people) if further information or clarification is requested by NQ• Advise player (and support people) of outcome• Advise player’s coach of the modifications to be implemented by providing the completed ‘approved modified rules form’
Player’s coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to each game (during umpire checks) support any player with a disability to advise match umpire/s and opposition coach of modified rules to be implemented for player (by providing the approved modified rules form)• Ensure player is wearing the coloured wrist sweatband to assist umpires with implementing the approved modified rules during the match
Match Umpire/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure approved modified rules are implemented during the game
Netball Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide education around NQ’s modified rules and their implementation• Oversee implementation of the modified rules and review processes• Provide advice to clubs and associations as required to assist with decision making around modified rules



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Resources

Netball Queensland **modified rules webinar**: February 2026. →
Scan QR code, presentation starts a few minutes into the recording



For further information in relation to supporting people with a disability in sport and understanding inclusion please access the following resources:

Netball Queensland's Disability Inclusion Toolkit

<https://qld.netball.com.au/member-toolbox>

This toolkit has general resources with information sheets on topics such as communication, accessible environments, positive behaviour support, adaptive equipment and an inclusive coaching guide.

It also has links to the 'all about me' form for players with a disability to complete to provide information to their club on how best to provide individual support.

The toolkit also has downloadable resource cards for some of the most common disabilities: ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Vision Impairments and Physical Impairments. These resources provide an overview of each disability, some key tips for how to support an individual with that disability and links to find out more.

This toolkit will have further resources coming during 2026.

Sport4All Online Training:

<https://sport4all.com.au/learning-portal/>

Sport4All is national program by Get Skilled Access, funded by the Australian Government in partnership with the Australian Sports Commission. Sport4All partners with local governments, schools, and sporting organisations to build more inclusive, accessible, and welcoming communities. As part of their services Sport4All offers free online training modules in relation to understanding disability and supporting inclusion.

Disability Sports Australia: <https://sports.org.au/>

Play by the Rules and the **Australian Sports Commission** developed the 7 Pillars of Inclusion framework to give sports clubs and associations a starting point to address inclusion and diversity.

<https://www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/7-pillars-inclusion>