

Modified Rules of Netball Implementation

*Player Guide- Netability and Unified teams
and competitions*



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Modified Rules Implementation Guide - Players

Purpose

This guide is provided for netball players (and their support people) to assist you to understand Netball Queensland's modified rules of netball. The modified rules have been developed to ensure that players with a disability can enjoy the game of netball in a safe, fair and meaningful (competitive) manner.

Background

Netball Queensland's vision is that 'people are inspired to play, engage and grow with netball in Queensland'. Netball Qld values and respects differences and wants to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to participate fully in netball.

To support the participation of people with a disability Netball Qld has developed modified rules of netball with the input of NQ staff and external stakeholders including people with lived experience of disability.

Scope - who do the modified rules apply to?

The modified rules of netball in this guide apply to Netability (Netball Queensland's inclusive netball program) teams and competitions and players with a disability in Unified+ teams and competitions.

There are also modified rules of netball that apply to:

- Players with a disability* in mainstream community netball teams and competitions as required to ensure a safe, fair and meaningful contest
- Netball Queensland mainstream competitions that are outside the scope of the modified rules are:
 - State Titles
 - HART Premier Netball League

For these modified rules please refer to the *Modified Rules Implementation Guide - Players in Mainstream Teams and Competitions*

* 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 - 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
Match length [Rule 2, p16]	<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
Team numbers on court [Rule 3, p18]	<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
Held Ball [Rule 11, p44]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player may have up to 6 seconds after gaining controlled possession to pass or shoot
Replayed ball [Rule 11, p45]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A player may bat or bounce the ball up to two times to gain possession
Footwork [Rule 13, pp48-49]	<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
Offside [Rule 14, P50]	<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
Contact [Rule 17, pp55-57]	<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
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



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Current Rule	Modified Rule
<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.

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.



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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>