



# *JUNIOR NETBALL POLICY*

*UPDATED 2015*

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# INTRODUCTION

Netball is the most popular women's sport in Australia with an estimated 1.2 million participants nationwide. Although traditionally identified as a sport for women, boys and men are becoming increasingly involved.

Netball is based on general movement and ball skills, and its structured format, which places restrictions on the areas of the court into which a player may go, means that it is truly a team game. With minor modifications to the rules with regard to mobility, equipment and decision-making, netball can offer the rewards of social connectedness, cooperation, fitness and fun to almost anyone who wants to take part.

The Netball Australia Junior Netball Policy has been developed to provide a framework for netball clubs and affiliated associations, schools, community sport service organisations and other groups responsible for the development, organisation and conduct of junior netball (participants aged 5–17 years).

Junior sport participation has many benefits, such as contributing to health and wellness by providing increased activity levels and reducing stress, and helping to build a positive self-image. It also offers a range of social benefits such as:

- developing life skills (for example, communication, concentration, commitment)
- learning responsibility and discipline
- learning how to work with others in team environments
- learning to cope with success and failure
- developing a sense of community, loyalty and cohesion
- helping gifted players become aware that they are role models for others.

This policy has been adopted by the Board of Netball Australia in accordance with the Netball Australia constitution and applies to all Netball Australia members, including affiliated associations and affiliated clubs.

The Junior Netball Policy has been designed to assist netball providers to:

- create safe and supportive environments for enjoyable participation to encourage lifelong involvement
- provide an environment for the development of skills, and cardiovascular and musculoskeletal health
- foster social benefits and encourage good sporting behaviour
- provide equal opportunities for all players to participate in netball programs and competitions
- encourage and actively cater for talented young sportspeople
- develop a consistent and coordinated approach to all netball programs in both the school and the community.

Adopting the guidelines in the Netball Australia Junior Netball Policy will ensure all young Australians have the opportunity to develop and enrich their lives through netball.

# ATTRACTING PLAYERS TO NETBALL AND KEEPING THEM INVOLVED

Netball has always been part of Australian tradition, however due to social, economic and cultural change in Australian society this position is being challenged. Netball recognises these issues and is working with key community stakeholders to offer quality participation experiences for all.

Netball must be designed around the needs of players to make it a positive experience for them. Players want to:

- keep good friends and make new ones
- experience fun, excitement and enjoyment
- experience challenge, achievement and personal responsibility
- be personally satisfied
- use and improve their skills
- be healthy.

To encourage ongoing participation for players, netball providers need to offer activities in a varied and interesting way. Modifying netball to foster skill development and emphasise the social and fun aspects will help maintain interest and satisfaction for developing young participants.

The promotion and encouragement of volunteer roles (for example, coaching, officiating and administration) will also assist in retaining players within netball.

## HOW SHOULD WE PRESENT NETBALL?

It is important that netball is delivered in a way that players enjoy.

Netball recognises that the needs and abilities of children are different to those of adults and has developed a modified introductory product, NetSetGO, to provide players with a fun and safe entry into netball.

NetSetGO is Netball Australia's only authorised junior entry-level program, developed to provide children aged from 5–10 years with the best possible introduction to the sport of netball. The program incorporates skill activities, dance/music, minor games and modified matches in a fun and safe environment, ensuring enjoyment and continued participation within the sport.

Modified rules may also be applied to older age groups on a needs basis so that activities are better suited to players' capacities. This provides a more appropriate level of challenge and the opportunity to develop skills in a rewarding and enjoyable environment.

## MOTIVATORS FOR PARTICIPATION

Early netball experiences impact greatly on continued participation. It is important to understand what motivates players to stay involved in netball in order to develop and conduct programs which best cater for them.

Netball providers need to:

- do all they can to make the netball experience for players a safe and positive one
- listen to players' views and encourage constructive feedback to improve junior netball.

Netball makes decisions based on principles of equity, so that individuals are not affected negatively by ability, body shape, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, geographical location and socioeconomic status.

## ABILITY

Players develop both physically and psychologically at different rates and it is important that netball providers recognise and accommodate different stages of learning and development. All players must be given the opportunity to reach their potential, regardless of their current level of ability.

## BODY SHAPE

Netball encourages participation by players of all body shapes and sizes. Netball providers must take care not to judge a player's ability and interest based on their body shape. They must ensure players experience all court positions regardless of their current height or shape. This will maximise skill diversity and enjoyment, and encourage lifelong participation.

## DISABILITY

Netball is committed to making the sport more accessible for people with disability — not only for players, but also coaches, umpires, other officials and administrators.

A disability may be generally defined as a condition which may restrict a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions to undertake or perform a task in the same way as a person who does not have a disability.

Netball providers are encouraged to create opportunities for all players, including those with disability. This means providing a range of opportunities that:

- require no adaptation and are fully inclusive of players with disabilities
- require some adaptation to include players with disabilities
- are only for players with disabilities.

It is unlawful to exclude a person from a sporting activity on the basis of their disability. This includes participation as a coach, official or administrator, as well as selection and participation as a player.

There are exceptions to this, however, if:

- a person is not reasonably capable of performing actions reasonably required in relation to the sporting activity
- people who participate in the sporting activity are selected by a method which is reasonable on the basis of relevant skills and abilities
- a sporting activity is conducted only for persons who have a particular disability and the person does not have that disability.

It is also unlawful to exclude a person from a sporting

activity on the basis of their association with a person with disability or to harass a relative or associate of a person with disability.

## CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

Australia has one of the most culturally diverse populations in the world, with approximately 27 per cent of the population born overseas. Australia's communities people are multilingual, multicultural and religiously diverse.

Factors that limit players from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds participating in sport include:

- lack of awareness and understanding
- cost of participating
- study commitments
- transport
- uniform requirements
- communication and language barriers
- non-inclusive club environments
- culturally inappropriate food
- racism and/or violence
- parent behaviour
- lack of confidence
- safety
- physical contact
- lack of modified versions
- access to facilities.

Netball providers should:

- seek to understand the barriers that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may experience and other relevant cultural issues
- promote netball as an international sport with strong netball cultures and role models in many countries around the world

- form partnerships and links with key multicultural organisations in their local area
- understand that players from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are initially more likely to participate in sport in familiar and supportive environments such as schools and multicultural organisations
- adopt a flexible and culturally appropriate dress code that encourages participation
- enable players from diverse backgrounds to compete at the highest levels.
- seek to engage the families and communities of culturally and linguistically diverse players.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Netball welcomes the opportunity for boys and girls to participate together, in either single-sex or mixed-gender competitions.

All netball programs or competitions for participants 12 years and under must be open to players of any sex or gender identity.

State and federal sex discrimination laws allow for single-sex competition if strength, stamina and physique are important, and if providing single-sex competition will facilitate participation (that is, more girls will play if provided with a girls-only opportunity). The federal Sex Discrimination Act says that this begins at age 12, however netball providers should make themselves aware of any state legislation that may apply.

Netball providers should endeavour to accommodate boys over the age 12 by offering mixed or boys-only competitions to encourage them to continue to participate in netball.

Netball opportunities should be provided to all players



regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. We acknowledge and respect an individual's right to identify and describe their gender identity as they choose.

Gender identity and expression is a complex issue. For further information refer to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Guideline: Transgender people in sport resource.

<http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/our-resources-and-publications/eoa-practice-guidelines/item/1125-guideline-transgender-people-and-sport-complying-with-the-equal-opportunity-act-2010>

Netball opportunities should be provided to all players regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Unfair treatment based on someone's sexuality or assumptions about their sexuality is discrimination and has no place in any netball environment.

## GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Players from rural and remote regions may be disadvantaged because of:

- limited opportunities and facilities in the community
- distances to travel for training, coaching and competitions
- additional costs and time to participate
- limited number of players available to play
- fewer competition options
- restricted access to a high performance coaching environment.

Netball understands issues facing people from rural and remote communities and works with netball providers from these areas to provide access to quality netball experiences.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first people of Australia. With more than 500 different clan groups across Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, language and lore is practised in a variety of traditional and contemporary ways and settings. As of the 2001 census Indigenous Australians make up 2.5 per cent of Australia's population.

There are many factors that limit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players participating in netball, including:

- lack of awareness and appreciation among the general community of the diversity and complexity of Indigenous culture, such as:
  - limited understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values
  - cultural protocols
  - kinship and extended family structures and relationships
  - the importance of family obligations
  - respect of elders, culture, land and environment
- limited access to netball in general, including equipment, facilities, support structures and information

- smaller Indigenous populations in some rural communities, making it more difficult to establish support for Indigenous people to participate in organised netball, or travel to larger centres.

Social isolation can be an issue whether in rural, regional or urban areas. This isolation of Indigenous people from netball may occur due to:

- the lack of support networks within the club, whether through other Indigenous players, or Indigenous involvement in non-competitive roles
- stereotypical views of Indigenous people
- a lack of information or knowledge of netball
- direct and indirect racial discrimination or exclusion
- limited opportunities to interact with the broader community
- many Indigenous people, especially youth, feeling isolated and lacking confidence in some settings, such as in an association/club situation
- fear of 'shame', a deep psychological feeling of being uncomfortable or not belonging.

Netball is working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to make the sport more accessible and welcoming. To achieve this, netball providers should:

- seek to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, including cultural sensitivities and beliefs
- encourage young Indigenous people to participate in sport
- develop relationships with local Indigenous communities, especially elders
- provide help with coaching and resources to build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander netball community
- provide young Indigenous people with the opportunity and support to compete at the highest levels.

## SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Netball realises that there are many people who experience social and economic disadvantage, and that the cost of playing sport is often high and inflexible in terms of payment options and associated costs such as uniform.

Provision should be made to allow and encourage players from a wide cross-section of society to participate, which will benefit both the individual participant and netball.

Above all, players must be treated with respect regardless of their capabilities, and experience a safe and responsible environment led by caring netball providers. Ultimately this will provide an enriching netball experience for players, resulting in continued retention of interest and supported talent development.

# PHYSICAL GROWTH AND MATURATION

Netball recognises the diversity that comes with physical growth and maturation, and understands that players grow and mature at different rates. Netball offers a range of opportunities and programs to cater for the needs of developing players. Participation in netball can be more rewarding and safer for players if netball providers:

- adapt activities to a player's changing needs, especially during periods of rapid growth
- assess performance according to a player's stage of development, and not by what others of the same age can do
- leave decisions about specialisation as late as possible.

To assist in growth and development, players should be encouraged to participate in a wide range of sporting activities.

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

The development of a child is driven by three distinct processes: growth, maturation and adaptation. These have important implications for training and competition.

*Growth* is the increase in overall body size with changes in muscle, bone and fat and this affects motor skills. Growth is complicated because:

- different parts of the body grow at different rates
- periods of growth occur at different times.

*Maturation* is the genetically programmed series of changes leading to maturity. These changes occur in the same sequence in everybody, but there are great individual differences in:

- the onset of puberty
- how long puberty takes (it can be 18 months to five years)
- how much growth occurs in the adolescent growth spurt.

*Adaptation* occurs as a result of external, rather than genetic, factors.

The growth spurt in height happens first and is followed by the growth spurt in weight and strength respectively.

Pubertal growth begins in girls at around the age of 10 and in boys at around the age of 12.

Players may be at risk of dropping out of netball unless appropriate strategies are implemented and they are given the chance to fulfil their goals. This applies particularly to some girls who develop early, and those who mature later and may be small for their age.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR NETBALL

Netball recognises the uneven spread in growth and maturation in players. Recognition of individual needs within chronological age groupings, including emotional or psychological maturity, needs to be considered when determining the developmental status of a player.

Netball activities should be organised so players have positive experiences regardless of their developmental status, and the focus should be on personal improvement as opposed to comparison with others of the same age.

## PROGRAMS, TRAINING AND COMPETITION

For safety, players must have qualified coaches who plan programs, training and competition schedules according to individual needs. These should be:

- designed around the holistic needs of players, with consideration of their level of social, emotional and psychological maturation
- planned taking into account all physical activities undertaken by a player
- adjusted on an ongoing basis so loading is progressive and matched to a player's developmental stage.

Training is beneficial for the best possible growth and development of players. In addition, game-based experiences are an important part of netball because they provide the challenge in advancing skills, health and social benefits.

Challenging competition is only one element of the development process and all junior netball participants should be encouraged to achieve, do their best and develop their full sporting potential.

The emphasis in junior netball competition should be on the quality of the experience and its appropriateness to the age and ability of the participants.



## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Netball is a late specialisation sport requiring a more generalised approach to early training, with the emphasis on the development of general, fundamental motor skills and technical/tactical skills. Participants should begin to specialise when they are developmentally ready and not when they reach a certain age.

Aspiring elite athletes should have access to programs that develop the three core athlete development components:

- Technical and tactical skill development
- Physical preparation — emphasis on core competencies
- Athlete wellbeing.

Athletes enter the High Performance Pathway when they are identified and selected from the Participation Pathway. The athletes are developed through programs which provide intensive, high quality training, support services and competition opportunities. The National Athlete Pathway Framework will identify and develop the next generation of athletes and provide a world-class system that prepares athletes to win milestone events. Netball aims to create an environment that supports coaches, athletes and teams to perform at their best for national and international competition.

It is important for administrators, teachers, coaches and parents to understand the various stages of skill and social development that players are experiencing, particularly during pre-adolescence. Recognising these general stages of development will assist clubs and schools in preparing developmentally appropriate programs for players participating in netball.

The table on the following page, highlights the specific stages of athlete development within netball programs, and provides guidelines and strategies on how to manage them effectively.



**TABLE 1: STAGES OF CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT**

School-based developmental stage	Approximate age range	Skill descriptors	Social descriptors	Implications for netball	Recreational players of netball
Early years	5–7 years	<p>Mastery of basic movement skills (for example, throwing, catching and running)</p> <p>Ability to build sequences of two or more skills</p> <p>Effort is more important than outcome</p> <p>Able to respond to simple rules and games with limited decision-making skills</p>	<p>Still egocentric</p> <p>Work well individually, in pairs and in small groups</p> <p>Respond well to positive general feedback</p> <p>Able to follow simple instructions and visual cues</p>	<p>Conduct NetSetGO – Net Tier Programs</p> <p>Relatively short training sessions (20–30 minutes)</p> <p>Build skills with simple sequences and lots of practice</p> <p>Simple relays, and short games for young children (for example, Rats and Rabbits)</p> <p>One or two quality cues per NetSetGO session</p> <p>Lots of prompts for creative play in and outside of the structured program</p>	<p>At this age the emphasis should be on 'play' and all activities should be focused on recreational participation (creative play)</p>
Middle primary	8–10 years	<p>Able to apply skills in more structured but modified games (for example, NetSetGO netball)</p> <p>Generally, girls are better at balance-based activities (for example, hop, skip, dance) and boys enjoy explosive power-based activities</p> <p>Improvement in basic techniques</p>	<p>Work well in pairs, small groups and teams</p> <p>Respond well to constructive and positive feedback</p> <p>Develop a strong sense of belonging</p> <p>Cannot think through consequences of actions</p> <p>Place emphasis on fun, equality and inclusion</p> <p>Able to better understand purpose of rules</p>	<p>Introduce sport-specific skills such as throwing and catching with appropriately modified rules and equipment (NetSetGO modified matches)</p> <p>Incorporate problem solving, appropriate behaviour and cooperative play techniques</p> <p>Can develop a sense of team work</p> <p>Short instructions mixed with lots of practice, skill correction and generalist skill development</p> <p>Several prompts to practise at home and with friends</p>	<p>Sequences leading to minor games of NetSetGO modified matches</p> <p>Emphasis on building competence and confidence in basic skills and movement challenges</p> <p>Target equality of opportunities for participants</p> <p>Consult parents about perceived needs of 'family friendly' times for a season's commitment</p> <p>Incorporate social opportunities in addition to netball</p>

School-based developmental stage	Approximate age range	Skill descriptors	Social descriptors	Implications for netball	Recreational players of netball
Early adolescence	11–14 years	<p>Refine skills, and understanding of game strategies. Modified rules and safety remain important</p> <p>Able to select a sport to specialise in without being a 'specialist' within it</p>	<p>Attracted to fun, belonging, competition and social opportunities</p> <p>View sport as an opportunity for advanced freedom and independence</p> <p>Skill differences because of pubertal differences become evident</p> <p>Able to understand basic concepts behind how sport is played</p> <p>Cannot depersonalise criticism</p> <p>May lack patience and commitment to practice</p> <p>Compare themselves with peers, and peer acceptance is important</p> <p>Family support is still pivotal</p>	<p>Increased intensity and complexity of challenges</p> <p>Fun and appropriate fitness activities should be used</p> <p>Coaching points remain important</p> <p>Flexible opportunities are required for older beginners or players with special needs</p> <p>Continue to provide opportunities for players to play a variety of positions</p> <p>Training sessions of approximately 60 minutes, using a variety of training methods and activities</p> <p>Awareness of social needs, nutrition, hydration and injury prevention</p> <p>Emphasis on development of skills and sharing play</p>	<p>Emphasise the sense of belonging and empowerment</p> <p>Offer short and creative training opportunities</p> <p>Continue basic skill progression</p> <p>Incorporate social opportunities in addition to netball</p>

School-based developmental stage	Approximate age range	Skill descriptors	Social descriptors	Implications for netball	Recreational players of netball
Middle adolescence	15–16 years	<p>Consolidation, refinement and specialisation of skills</p> <p>End of puberty may demonstrate increased muscle mass for strength and explosive power in males</p> <p>Able to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of own play</p>	<p>Have improved ability to understand consequences of actions</p> <p>May participate for social status</p> <p>May carry unrealistic and media highlighted expectations of sporting successes</p> <p>Develop self-discipline</p>	<p>Positive and specific feedback is important for skill refinement</p> <p>Cater for individual differences that may result from physical, cognitive and social maturation</p> <p>Help set realistic individual sporting goals</p> <p>Offer lots of ways to belong to a team and be accepted</p> <p>Consider individual specialised training programs for talented players</p> <p>Introduce some advanced skill development techniques</p>	<p>Recognise that some players may not be interested in training</p> <p>Provide flexibility in competition types and uniform choices</p> <p>Incorporate social opportunities in addition to netball</p> <p>Recruit recreational players to assist with other club events and committees</p> <p>Provide recreational versions of the game of netball</p>
Late adolescence	17+ years	<p>Continue skill specialisation and refinement</p> <p>Able to meet increasing demands in performance</p> <p>Continued increases in speed, strength and size</p> <p>Slower rates of improvement in strength and endurance than during puberty</p> <p>Sophisticated awareness of how their body moves in skill execution</p>	<p>More realistic goals about sporting abilities in broad context of their lives</p> <p>Good abstract thinking skills</p> <p>Generally able to with pressure from parents, coaches and others</p> <p>Greater security about body image</p>	<p>Broad range of purposes (for example, coaching for elite representation or fun, fitness and highly social experiences)</p> <p>Strategic pathways in support and coaching for talented youth</p>	<p>Recognise that some players may not be interested in training</p> <p>Provide flexibility in uniform choices</p> <p>Incorporate social opportunities in addition to netball</p> <p>Recruit recreational players to assist with other club events and committees</p> <p>Provide recreational versions of the game of netball</p>

# NETBALL PATHWAYS

Pathways are designed for players to move progressively through netball and to provide opportunities to:

- develop in line with their level of maturation
- move easily from one stage of involvement to another
- have positive experiences while developing their skills and interests
- inspire them to stay involved long term.

## STAGES IN NETBALL PROGRESSION

The Netball Australia Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) plan guides good practice in the development of technical and tactical sport-specific competencies. The plan provides guidelines for implementing training and competition programs, as care should be taken that the developmental player does not under-train and over-compete. For further information refer to Diagram 1.

The LTAD plan is divided into the following stages:

### Foundation: Developing players — NetSetGO 5–10 years (F1 and F2)

During the Foundation stage, children should develop fundamental movement skills in a fun and challenging multi-sport environment.

In this stage, children need to participate in a variety of well-structured activities that develop basic skills. However, activities and programs need to maintain a focus on fun, and formal competition should only be minimally introduced.

Children should be exposed to a variety of sports and physical activities, developing their interests and motivation while avoiding the danger of burnout through premature specialisation.

Learning fundamental movement skills throughout this stage is key to the overall development of physical literacy.

### Development: Learning to Train — Developing players, approximate chronological age 11–13 years (F3)

During the Development stage, children should be converting their fundamental movement skills into fundamental sport skills. Children in this stage are ready to begin training according to more formalised methods. However, the emphasis should still be on general sports skills suitable to a number of activities.

As well, more time should be spent in training and practising skills than in competing.

It may be tempting to specialise at this age through excessive single-sport training or early position specialisation in team sports. This should be avoided in most sports. Inappropriate or premature specialisation can be detrimental to later stages of player development if the child is playing a late specialisation sport. Premature specialisation promotes one-sided development and increases the likelihood of injury and burnout.

### Intermediate: Training to Train — approximate chronological age 14+ years (T1 and T2)

During the Intermediate stage players need to build an aerobic base and consolidate their sport-specific skills. Increased training hours are needed at this stage to develop each player's long-term potential.

At this stage, players are ready to consolidate their basic sport-specific skills and tactics. It is also a major fitness development stage.

The intermediate stage still needs to focus more time on training skills and physical capacities than competing in formal settings. To maximise players' long-term potential, winning should remain a secondary emphasis. This approach is critical to the long-term development of top performers and lifelong participants.



### Advanced: Training to Compete (T3 and T4)

In the Advanced stage, athletes choose one sport in which they will train to excel by strengthening their sport-specific and position-specific skills and all of their physical capacities. These athletes are aiming to compete in national and international events.

Formal competition becomes more prominent in annual periodised training, competition and recovery plans, and includes major national and international events.

Advanced stage athletes are not the average community sport program participant. They are committed athletes with recognised talent who have chosen an elite pathway that few others pursue.

### Elite: Train to Win (E1, E2 and M)

The Elite stage is the final stage of the LTAD high-performance stream. Medals and podium performances are the primary focus. Athletes with identified talent pursue high-intensity training to win international events.

The previous LTAD stages have developed and optimised the skills, tactics and ancillary capacities of each athlete. Athletes have now realised their full genetic potential and must train to maximise and maintain their competitive performance at the highest level.



### Active for Life: Retention/Retaining

The Active for Life stage of LTAD is the final destination of all participants. In this stage, players and participants enjoy lifelong participation in a variety of competitive and recreational opportunities in sport and physical activity.

This stage can be entered at any age, however in most instances players enter the Active for Life stage of LTAD either:

- after they have developed physical literacy by the end of the Development stage and have chosen to pursue sport and physical activity according to the goals of the Active for Life stage
- after they have exited the LTAD high performance training and competition stream.

## PLANNING THE PROGRESSION

To encourage long-term involvement, it is important that players are able to participate in netball at the right level for their interests and abilities.

Programs differ for stages of participation in the:

- nature and duration of activities
- style of instruction
- education in the rules and etiquette of netball
- emphasis on competitive elements.

Foundation, Development, Intermediate and Active for Life stages are relevant to junior players and underpin both lifelong participation and progression into the high performance pathway.

## FOUNDATION (DEVELOPING PLAYERS)

Players need to develop basic experiences and movement skills and be introduced to simple rules and fair play. Therefore, it is important that players are able to 'play' in an informal setting during their early development.

NetSetGO is the only introductory program for netball. It has been developed to provide children aged from 5 to 10 years with the best possible start to the sport of netball. The program initially concentrates on the acquisition of fundamental motor skills. These skills provide a wide base of movement abilities from which more advanced skills can be developed.

Children who do not develop fundamental motor skills are more likely to experience frustration and difficulty in learning advanced skills, which reduces their enjoyment. NetSetGO is a vital part of the player development pathway as it establishes solid foundation skills and a sense of achievement and success that encourages children to continue to participate in netball.

NetSetGO Net Tier (for 5–7 year olds) is a play-based movement skills program. Emphasis is on the acquisition of basic movement skills in a fun environment of games and activities. Children join the program as individuals not as teams, and the emphasis is on participation, developing skills and having fun.

The NetSetGO Net Tier includes dance content that has been specifically designed to help kids develop, in a fun way, the fundamental skills needed for netball. Dance activities are a great way to develop a range of fundamental motor skills that are used in netball, including twisting, turning, bending, leaping, dodging, skipping and sliding.

NetSetGO Set Tier (for 8–10 year olds) is an introduction to the sport of netball and incorporates modified matches and equipment. The program allows children to learn and develop their skills in a series of fun activities and minor games, which they can then apply in a game situation.

It is a skill and competition-based program that all children should participate in prior to entering junior competitions, and can be conducted in two ways:

- activity/skills program and NetSetGO competition
- NetSetGO competition only

Further information regarding NetSetGO can be found at [www.netsetgo.com.au](http://www.netsetgo.com.au).

## **DEVELOPMENT (LEARNING TO TRAIN)**

The Dare to Develop a Diamond Program 11–13 Years is designed to focus on players in the early stages of development. The players concentrate on a range of fundamental sports skills, including throwing, catching, jumping, running and basic game formats that encourage fun, skill development and decision making. The primary aim is to develop and correct individual player technique, develop the players' ability to withstand the effects of speed and fatigue, and to consistently execute the skills of netball under pressure.

Competitions at club, school and state levels should focus on enjoyment while meeting the needs of players. These competitions should provide an environment that allows players to perform to the best of their ability.

Further information regarding Dare to Develop a Diamond Program 11–13 Years can be found at [www.netball.com.au](http://www.netball.com.au)

## **INTERMEDIATE (TRAINING TO TRAIN)**

During the Intermediate stage many players will decide to specialise in netball, and training becomes a significant part of their lives. At this stage some players will move from the participation stream into the high performance pathway and will be referred to as athletes.

The Dare to Develop a Diamond Program 14–16 Years is specifically targeted for the next stage of athlete development. The athletes will concentrate on sport-specific skill development, including perceptual skills, reading the game, tactical introduction and decision making. Training should develop athletes who have the physical performance capacity to efficiently and effectively manage a cumulative training and competition load, and provide a base that supports the development of technical, tactical and performance competencies.

Further information regarding Dare to Develop a Diamond Program 14–16 Years can be found at [www.netball.com.au](http://www.netball.com.au)

## **ACTIVE FOR LIFE (RETENTION/RETAINING)**

Not all players will progress sequentially along the high performance pathway. It is therefore important that a range of recreational netball options are made available to retain participants in netball and encourage lifelong participation. The main aim is to have fun through playing netball and spending time with friends.

### **Volunteer roles**

Some young people may not wish to participate in netball as a player however there are still many roles available to keep them involved in the game and the netball community.

Netball providers should look to involve young people in volunteer roles such as:

- Coach
- Umpire
- Bench Official (scorer/timer)
- Team Manager
- Administrator

For further information go to the Get Involved section of the Netball Australia website :

<http://netball.com.au/get-involved/>

# DIAGRAM 1: NETBALL AUSTRALIA ATHLETE PATHWAY FRAMEWORK

FTEM		LTAD	NETBALL AUSTRALIA ATHLETE PATHWAY	DAILY TRAINING ENVIRONMENT (DTE)	SERVED BY	COMPETITION	COACH
<b>M</b> MASTERY	Sustained Success		Career Australian Netball Diamond Athletes	3-5 court work sessions per week (this includes training and matches) 3-4 physical preparation sessions per week 1 full day of recovery per week	NA NCoE SIS/SAS MO	World Netball Cup Commonwealth Games International Test Series	Head Coach - High Performance Assistant Coach - High Performance
	Success	Elite Train to Win	Australian Netball Diamonds Squad/Team				
	Representation		ANZ Championship Programs				
<b>T</b> TALENT	Breakthrough/Reward	Advanced Train to Compete	National 21/U Squad/Team Netball Centre of Excellence	3-4 court work sessions per week (this includes training and matches) 2-3 physical preparation sessions per week 1 full day of recovery per week	NA MO	World Youth Championships International Series	Head Coach - High Performance Assistant Coach - High Performance
	Practice/Achieve		Australian Netball League Develop a Diamond Underage Program (National)				
	Verification	Intermediate Train to Train	Develop a Diamond Underage Program (State/Territory)				
<b>T</b> TALENT	Demonstration of Potential		Develop a Diamond Academy Program	2-3 court work sessions per week 2-3 sport/physical activity per week 1 full day of recovery per week	NA MO	17/U National Netball Championships 19/U National Netball Championships 21/U National Netball Championships State League	Head Coach - Advanced Assistant Coach - Development
		Development Learn to Train	Dare to Develop a Diamond 14-16 Dare to Develop a Diamond 11-13				
		Foundation	ANZ NetSetGO 'Set' Tier (8-10yrs) School Ambassador Programs				
<b>F</b> FOUNDATION	Sport Specific Commitment and/or Competition		ANZ NetSetGO 'Net' Tier (5-7yrs) School Ambassador Programs	'Set' Tier (ANZ NetSetGO modified rules)  'Net' Tier (ANZ NetSetGO modified rules)	NA MO	State Titles Association Championships Association Tournaments Association/Club Competitions	Coach - Intermediate (14-16) Coach - Development (11-13)
	Extension and Refinement of Movement	Foundation					
	Learning and Acquisition of Basic Movement						

FTEM - Foundation, Talent, Elite and Mastery | LTAD - Long Term Athlete Development

**TABLE 2: PROGRESSION FOR JUNIOR NETBALL**

	Foundation F1 and F2		Development (Learn to Train) F3	Intermediate (Train to Train) T1	Recreational participation
Program	- Familiarisation (NetSetGO 5–7 years)	- Beginner (NetSetGO 8–10 years)			- Any level
Age span	- 5–7	- 8–10	- 11–13	- 14+ (mid-adolescence)	- 11–17+
Focus	- Fun, learning, general athletic development and acquisition of basic motor skills	- Fun, developing ball and movement skills - Introduction to the sport of netball	- Fun, improving a wide range of ball and movement skills	- Enjoyment and improving performance	- Enjoyment, social and personal satisfaction
Considerations	- Modified equipment and need for a broad range of developmentally appropriate experiences	- Modifications to equipment, rules and game structure (NetSetGO)	- Game-specific and behavioural skills	- Fitness, technical and tactical training, goal setting, managing aspirations	- Social aspects and events - Encourage involvement in other roles (for example, coach, official)
Recommended session duration	- Up to 30–45 minutes	- Up to 40–60 minutes	- Up to 60–90 minutes	- Up to 90–120 minutes	- Up to 60 minutes
Recommended session frequency	- 1 per week	- Up to 1–2 times per week (including game)	- Up to 1–2 times per week (including game)	- Up to 5 times per week (including fitness training sessions and games) - Minimum of 2 rest days per week	- Up to 1–2 times per week (including game)
Session contents	- 'Play', minor games and opportunities to participate focusing on individual and small group movement challenges	- Skill development through understanding minor and modified games	- Skill development through understanding minor and modified games	- Training and competition with the aims of skill development, game sense and performance	- Training and competition with options at various levels
Approach to conditioning	- Broad range of movement experiences — without structured conditioning	- Broad range of movement experiences — without structured conditioning	- Careful introduction and progression	- Individual-based training programs with graded progressions	- Train to enjoy physical activity and social aspects of belonging to a team
Competition	- Modified rules - Program focusing on skill development - No competition	- Competition with emphasis on all-round development and offering opportunities to experience different positions - No representative teams - Emphasise fair play - Competition rotation (no scoring or ladders)	- Competition with emphasis on all-round development and offering opportunities to experience different positions - Representative teams and regional competitions in later years - Scoring and ladders	- Introduction of inter-state competitions - Emphasis on individual and all-round development - Experience competition also through officiating and coaching younger groups	- Focus on social competitions - Level of competitive intensity appropriate to individual motivation
Recognition	- Recognise effort and participation	- Recognise effort, improvement, application and participation	- Introduce opportunities for further development	- Recognise effort and improvement in team and individual performance	- Recognise effort, participation and contribution to the sport

Note: The session frequency should include all sessions the individual participant is involved in, not just within one organisation (that is, school netball, club/association netball, other sports, etc.).

# FORMING LINKS

Players receive their most effective and satisfying sports experiences when there is goodwill and cooperation between organisations at all levels, including:

- netball providers (national, state and local)
- sport organisations (national, state and local)
- schools and school sports associations
- government (local, state and federal)
- commercial and non-profit providers (for example, YMCA, disability sport agencies)
- sponsors
- community/youth/church groups
- service providers for specific communities eg: migrant resource centres, resettlement centres, disability sport providers.

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Strong links among community organisations provide positive experiences for players and foster long-term participation.

These links among schools, community organisations and netball clubs/associations will ensure a systematic and coordinated delivery of junior netball. Close links will also provide for a smooth transition between school and community netball competitions.

Ongoing communication among organisations (especially schools and sport organisations) can avoid inconsistencies in netball delivery or, when appropriate, develop a compromise (for example, team selection, program and competition models, uniform requirements) to meet the needs of all parties.

All groups should consider how they could combine or share resources to benefit players. Access can be increased and costs reduced with joint provision and dual use of facilities, sporting equipment, instructional resources, and coaching and other human resources.

## SCHOOL/CLUB RELATIONSHIP

Schools are in the unique position of being able to introduce young people to a diversity of sports from which they can choose one or more activities that suit their interests. Teachers have a special responsibility to foster positive attitudes towards physical activity and sport and to help young people develop sporting skills. They are a powerful influence on the continued involvement of juniors in sport.

Netball providers provide another important environment for the development of young people through sport, and school/club links are an essential aspect of netball participation.

There are many benefits when schools and clubs work together, including:

- More young people joining the club
- Access to school facilities and equipment for club activities

- Raised profile within the community
- Widening access to the community
- Increase the potential to recruit new volunteers
- Co-operation, support and resources from other partners
- A pool of young players, leaders, coaches and umpires

## SHARING RESOURCES

All groups should consider how they can combine or share resources to benefit young people.

Access can be increased and costs reduced with joint provision and dual use of:

- facilities
- sporting equipment
- instructional resources
- coaching and other human resources.

This is particularly important in regional and remote areas to make the best use of scarce resources. Other sports can also gain mutual benefit by liaising and sharing ideas and resources with each other.

# PEOPLE MAKING IT HAPPEN

The most important resource in junior netball is the people who provide the infrastructure for the delivery of activities, and set the social atmosphere around sport. They include:

- players
- parents and carers
- coaches
- umpires/officials
- administrators
- teachers/other volunteers.

To enjoy their sport, players should be able to:

- experience skilled and sensitive leadership through their coaches, officials and administrators
- have input into how sport is provided for them
- participate in an inclusive, positive and caring environment where they are not exposed to physical or verbal abuse from other players, their parents/carers or sport providers.



## VOLUNTEERS

Netball appreciates the critical role volunteers play within the netball community. Attracting and retaining dedicated volunteers is vital to the continued success of netball in Australia's many programs, competitions and events.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of local, state, national and international competitions, programs and events staged in Australia, and Netball is committed to providing them with a challenging and rewarding experience.

## UMPIRES

Netball recognises the significant contribution that proficient and intelligent umpiring makes to the sport of netball. Umpires play a vital role in providing a safe, enjoyable and fair netball environment for young people to participate.

When umpiring junior netball, umpires should:

- ensure the court and its surrounds conform to the rules and is safe for play
- use simple language
- be consistent, courteous and helpful to all participants
- apply modified rules to match the skill level and needs of participants and promote fun and enjoyment
- ensure that the spirit of the game is not lost by the strict application of rules
- manage dangerous play and inappropriate behaviour
- be encouraged to access relevant accreditation courses and training programs.

## BENCH OFFICIALS

Bench Officials have an important role to play – they are responsible for ensuring the correct score is recorded, the correct time is played and other match details are recorded accurately.

The Official Bench consists of two (2) Scorers and two (2) Timekeepers although at community level timekeeping may be managed centrally.

## TEAM MANAGER

Team Managers have an extremely important role ensuring the successful management of the team and welfare of the players in their care.

The role of the Team Manager includes:

- Liaising with all team members, parents, coaches and officials to ensure the players are appropriately dressed and informed of training, competition and functions.
- Managing any problems that may arise amongst team members, parents, the coach and supporters.
- Acting as liaison officer between the association/club and the team.
- Ensuring all equipment is safe, the first aid kit is ready for use and the players have their own drink bottle.
- Ensuring the scoresheet and any other rules/regulations of the competition are carried out.
- Ensuring all welfare and safety requirements for the team are met including supervision of players under 18 years.

## CODES OF BEHAVIOUR

Netball Australia, Member Organisations and affiliates seek to provide a safe, fair and inclusive environment for everyone involved in netball.

To achieve this, Netball Australia, Member Organisations and affiliates require certain standards of behaviour of players/athletes, coaches, officials, administrators, parents/guardians of child participants, and spectators.

Netball's codes of behaviour are underpinned by the following core values:

- To act within the rules and spirit of netball
- To display respect and courtesy towards everyone involved in netball and prevent discrimination and harassment
- To prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people involved in netball
- To encourage and support opportunities for participation in all aspects of netball.

To protect the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone participating in netball activities, Netball Australia has developed the General Code of Behaviour that applies during any activity held or sanctioned by Netball Australia, Member Organisations or affiliates:

- Treat all persons with respect and courtesy and have proper regard for their dignity, rights and obligations.
- Be ethical, fair, considerate and honest in all dealings with others.
- Make a commitment to providing quality service.
- Operate within the rules and spirit of the sport including national and state guidelines, constitution and policies which govern Netball Australia, Member Organisations and affiliates.

- Do not use your involvement with netball to promote your own beliefs, behaviours or practices where these are inconsistent with those of Netball Australia, Member Organisations or affiliates.
- Demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility especially when dealing with persons under 18 years of age, as your words and actions are an example.
- Always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations.
- Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with persons under 18 years of age, wherever possible.
- Comply with all relevant Australian laws (federal and state), particularly anti-discrimination and child protection laws.
- Refrain from any behaviour that may bring Netball Australia, Member Organisations or affiliates into disrepute.
- Provide a safe environment for the conduct of the activity.
- Show concern and caution towards others who may be sick or injured.
- Be a positive role model.
- Be responsible and accountable for your conduct.
- Abide by the relevant Netball Australia role-specific codes of behaviour and understand the repercussions if you breach, or are aware of any breaches of, this Code of Behaviour.

In addition to the General Code of Behaviour, Netball Australia has developed role-specific codes of behaviour which are located at [www.netball.asn.au](http://www.netball.asn.au).

Netball Australia strongly supports the adoption of these codes by associations, clubs and schools, including distribution of the codes of behaviour to all relevant parties at the commencement of every netball season.



# QUALITY COACHING

Quality coaching is an essential element in creating a positive experience for players in netball. Coaches have a responsibility to assist in building the confidence, self-esteem and ability of players through their own positive role modeling and equitable treatment of all participants. These skills are then applicable in many aspects of their life.

When coaches plan and provide sessions based on a good understanding of how players learn and how skills are best developed, players have the best chance of:

- enjoying their sport
- becoming competent in skills and strategies
- building a good knowledge of the rules, etiquette and traditions of the sport
- being enthusiastic about lifetime involvement in sport.

Above all, it is important that players learn that sport is fun and safe.

Coaches have a major influence on the holistic development of players in netball by educating them in the physical/technical skills and strategies within the rules of netball, sporting behaviours and lifestyle/social skills.

## AIMS FOR QUALITY COACHING

Important characteristics of a quality coach are:

- understanding learning styles, behavioural characteristics and developmental issues or needs of players
- developing appropriate programs/activities for players
- fostering a sense of personal achievement by recognising individual and team performance
- developing a range of appropriate communication and feedback techniques.

Coaches should instil in players a sound understanding of the skills, tactics, strategies, rules, etiquette and behaviour standards of netball.

## UNDERSTANDING LEARNING

Learning is a lifelong and active process for both coaches and players. It is developmental and changes as players grow and mature with:

- physical changes
- social, emotional and psychological development
- experiences as they progress from familiarisation to beginner to intermediate to advanced levels of skill.

People typically learn more than one thing at a time. In the process of building netball skills, players are also learning what is expected of participants/players, how to work with friends and team-mates, and skill and game competencies.

## PLANNING

Comprehensive planning is needed by coaches in developing seasonal programs, including goals and strategies for the sequential development of basic skills, team strategies and level of challenge. When planning, coaches need to consider

- maximising participation and enjoyment
- being inclusive of all players regardless of cultural backgrounds, religion or special needs (for example, a disability or medical condition)
- learning goals for performance (movement skills, values and attitudes)
- the actual learning tasks and objectives for the session
- management of time and space, particularly with respect to participant safety
- evaluation and review.

## DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE COACHING SKILLS

Coaches learn to coach in two main ways — through formal learning such as coach education programs, and informal learning through experience.

Coaches should have appropriate knowledge and skills gained through attending courses or workshops and should be accredited, and regularly update their coaching accreditation.

Netball Australia reviews the Coaching Accreditation Framework on a regular basis to ensure that courses become more accessible and are relevant to coaches of junior netball programs.

Refer to the Netball Australia website at [www.netball.asn.au](http://www.netball.asn.au) for further information regarding coaching accreditation courses.

## PLAYER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

### Training and competition

Training and competition are generally beneficial for the development of players in sport. However, excessive involvement can compromise their health and wellbeing, and can adversely affect their performance in netball and other sports.

Over-training and over-competing can result in serious outcomes such as injury, illness, negative psychological effects and burnout (refer to Table 2 regarding training loads and frequency).

The coach has an important role in preventing negative outcomes such as injury and illness through careful planning, implementation and evaluation of programs.

Prevention requires a training schedule that controls the amount of stress placed on the player by:

- scheduling pre-season training to increase fitness levels
- gradually increasing training loads
- planning adequate recovery
- providing variety in type and content of training sessions
- carefully monitoring the effect of training
- reducing workloads when warning signs emerge.

Players must be monitored carefully because they may not recognise warning signs and symptoms such as fatigue, muscle soreness, headaches and mood changes. Moreover, players may not effectively communicate such a problem.

In general, younger and less-experienced players should have less intense, less frequent and shorter training/practice and competition, and more rest time within and between sessions.

Thorough warm-up and cool-down exercises should accompany all netball activities. All efforts should be made to eliminate unsafe skill practices so that players do not sustain injuries as a result of these techniques. Players should play in a variety of positions and not over-train in particular skills.

### Body temperature regulation

Compared with adults, young players have a larger skin surface to body mass ratio, and their sweat glands are immature, making them more susceptible to heat loss and gain. In conditions of extreme temperature and humidity, netball sessions should be shortened or cancelled. Uniforms should be suitable for the climate.

Players who are most at risk of heat-related decreases in performance are those who lack cardiovascular fitness, are high in body fat, are poorly acclimatised and are in poor health.

### Fluid balance

Fluid balance is important at any time, but needs more attention in some weather conditions. Players do not instinctively drink enough to replace fluid lost during activity. They should be reminded to drink before, during and after training and competition.

Water is essential to fluid replacement. Methods of weight reduction by dehydration are extremely dangerous and should not be used under any circumstances.

In adverse weather conditions specific fluid practices, according to Sports Medicine Australia's most current guidelines, should be followed.

Refer to the Sports Medicine Australia website at [www.sma.org.au](http://www.sma.org.au) for further information.

### Nutrition

Maintaining adequate nutrition in junior players is important to their overall health, growth, development, and consequently to their sporting performance. The well-nourished player will be able to play better and for longer, stay mentally alert, and recover quicker from training and competition.

The active child who is not getting enough total energy may become tired and lethargic, and even struggle to maintain their enjoyment in sport. Young players who eat too little risk mild under-nutrition and may suffer from poor growth and delayed maturation.

### Coaches and parents should:

- Ensure an adequate intake of all the essential nutrients, encourage active children to eat a wide variety of nutritious foods. Fat reduced, high carbohydrate snacks are the best choice for active children.
- Ensure active children maintain a healthy body weight

by balancing their energy intake with expenditure. Encourage them to eat to their appetite which will vary from day to day.

- Take nutritious snacks to sporting events. Self-catering is wiser than relying on local canteens.
- Children can overheat and dehydrate quickly. Offer plenty of fluids before, during and after sport.
- If parents or coaches are concerned about their child's nutrition, seek professional advice from a sports dietitian and/or sports doctor.

Refer to the Sports Dietitians Australia website [www.sportsdietitians.com.au](http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au) for further information.

### Infectious diseases

The risk of contracting hepatitis, skin infections, upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) and other infections increases when players:

- live and train in close contact with others, thus increasing cross-infection
- train in environments where germs breed (for example, change rooms)
- share contaminated items (for example, drink bottles)
- are exposed to new environments when travelling to compete
- damage the skin, allowing transfer of germs
- come in contact with other people's blood.

Appropriate preventative measures can be taken to avoid the spread of infectious diseases, such as:

- not sharing drink bottles
- removing or cleaning blood-stained clothing/equipment
- keeping infected players away from training and competition areas
- maintaining personal hygiene standards.

Sports Medicine Australia has developed a policy related to infectious diseases in sport, which is available at [www.sma.org.au](http://www.sma.org.au).

### Medical considerations

Some players have chronic medical conditions which affect their participation in netball. Particular care needs to be taken in the case of long-term conditions such as:

- asthma and other respiratory conditions
- diabetes
- epilepsy
- heart or lung disease
- hepatitis
- human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Netball providers must be aware of the specific needs of each player and know how to prevent and deal with problems, particularly in case of an emergency.

Parents/carers should complete a pre-participation screening questionnaire dealing with any special needs and implications for sports participation. Netball providers must then ensure that relevant personal within the organisation are aware of the information in the questionnaire and

that the information is used appropriately, such as in an emergency. A failure by the netball provider to use the information may result in greater liability.

An alternative to collecting the pre-participation screening information is to obtain a declaration from the parent/carer that the child is medically and physically fit and able to participate in netball activities and that the parent/carer will immediately notify the netball provider in writing of any change to their child's medical condition, fitness or ability to participate. This option is preferable, as it places the onus on the parent/carer to ensure that their child is medically and physically fit and able to participate. However, if the netball provider has actual knowledge of a change in a child's fitness and ability to participate, this may result in some liability arising if no action is taken by the netball provider.

Medical opinion should be sought when the fitness or performance of any player is questionable, and when recovery from illness or injury is in doubt.



# QUALITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF NETBALL

## GOVERNANCE

Governance is the system by which organisations are directed and managed. It influences how the objectives of the organisation are set and achieved, spells out the rules and procedures for making organisational decisions, and determines the means of optimising and monitoring performance, including how risk is monitored and assessed.

Netball organisations conducting junior sport should have in place good governance structures so as to create, maintain and improve the structure and environment in which netball is delivered.

### Constitution

Rules of incorporation or a constitution provide associations and clubs with a document outlining their objectives, structure and responsibilities. It is an essential document, ensuring the smooth administration of an association or club and is a legal necessity to protect the interests of members.

If an incorporated association does not have its own constitution, the model rules will apply. Associations and clubs have a duty of care to ensure the rules of incorporation comply with the relevant Act within their State/Territory and reflect current practice.



### Competition by-laws

Competition by-laws are the rules governing the internal administrative processes and procedures of an association or club and are developed to manage the day-to-day operations of the association or club.

The by-laws are made under the constitution. Accordingly, the by-laws are subordinate to the constitution and must not be inconsistent with the constitution. An association or club should have a clause in the constitution that provides the power to the board or committee to make by-laws.

By-laws may cover the following matters:

- competition eligibility
- registration and fees
- competition rules
- uniform requirements
- awards
- selection of representative teams.

It is important that by-laws support and encourage participation and are not created to manage one-off exceptional circumstances. They should allow for flexibility and be inclusive rather than exclusive.

Many issues and grievances in relation to the day-to-day operations of a netball competition can be avoided by having transparent and appropriate competition by-laws. That is, the by-laws should clearly outline the requirements of all clubs, teams and individuals, as members of the association or club, along with the penalties for any breaches of these by-laws.

### Member Protection Policy

Netball is committed to treating all people with respect, dignity and fairness. These values, along with the basic right of all netball members to participate in an environment that is enjoyable, safe and healthy, has resulted in netball developing specific objectives to create a safer and more tolerant sporting environment.

The Netball Australia Member Protection Policy aims to ensure netball's core values, good reputation and positive behaviours and attitudes are maintained. It assists netball to ensure that every person involved in netball is treated with respect and dignity, and is safe and protected from abuse. This policy also ensures that everyone involved in netball is aware of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities.

This policy is supported by the National Codes of Behaviour, Employment Screening and Working with Children Check Guidelines, National Complaint Handling Regulation, and various reporting, educational and support documents. These resources provide the procedures that support netball's commitment to eliminating discrimination, harassment, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour from the sport. The Member Protection Policy and related attachments can be located at [www.netball.asn.au](http://www.netball.asn.au).

## RISK MANAGEMENT

### Work health and safety

Everyone has a right to be safe at work, including paid and volunteer workers who contribute in many different ways to Australia's diverse sporting organisations and clubs.

New work health and safety (WHS) laws may mean the responsibilities and duties of sporting clubs have changed. Since the Commonwealth's Work Health and Safety Act 2012 came into effect on 1 January 2012, states and territories have harmonised their WHS laws with the Act. This means that people conducting a business or undertaking (organisations and clubs) and workers (including volunteers) are protected by the same WHS laws across Australia. It provides greater consistency, certainty and clarity about the laws, making it easier to understand WHS duties.

Under the WHS laws, some sporting organisations and clubs may need to take new actions to comply with the WHS Act and their state and territory WHS codes of conduct and regulations.

The Australian Sports Commission's Sporting Clubs Guide to a Safe Workplace provides information and advice to help sporting organisations and clubs comply with new WHS laws and incorporate safety management into their daily operations. It includes fact sheets to help sporting organisations and clubs understand and action their WHS duties.

Information here should be used in conjunction with state or territory-approved WHS codes and practices, and is not intended to be read in place of the WHS laws.

The Sporting Clubs Guide to a Safe Workplace resource is available to be downloaded at [www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/clubs/resource\\_library/whs\\_reform](http://www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/clubs/resource_library/whs_reform)

### Facilities

Netball providers have a responsibility to ensure the environment in which netball takes place is as safe as possible. Netball courts should be inspected prior to each training session or match to ensure that:

- the court surface is free of litter, water and court debris (gravel, stones, etc.)
- court lines are clearly marked and are non-slip
- goalposts are firmly secured
- goalpost padding covers the length of the goal post, is of sufficient thickness (60mm) and is secured safely
- there is a run-off space of 3.05 metres around each court that is clear of obstructions (chairs, signs, bags, spectators, etc.)
- light posts are well clear of the court and appropriately padded
- lighting is provided during low-light conditions (twilight/night/overcast).

### Weather conditions

Netball providers have a duty of care to cancel or postpone competition or training if there is a foreseeable risk to participants due to extreme weather conditions.

Considerations when assessing wet weather or conditions should include:

- Identify if it is too wet to continue playing safely. This will depend on the age and skill of the players and the quality of the court surface.
- Allow players and umpires to wear additional clothing to keep warm (long sleeved top/leggings). Players should also be allowed to change into dry clothes as soon as possible.
- Provide shelter to protect players and officials from wind and rain during the break.
- Do not train or play outdoors during a thunder storm as there is potential for being struck by lightning.

Considerations when assessing hot weather or conditions should include:

- Competition or training involving young people should be cancelled if the ambient temperature reaches 34 degrees Celsius or above.
- Playing quarters may need to be shortened due to high temperatures/humidity.
- Extended breaks may be implemented to allow players to rehydrate.
- Provide shaded areas for players and officials to use during breaks.
- Participants should be encouraged to wear sunscreen and hats to protect them from the sun.

### Emergencies

All netball providers have a responsibility to ensure a safe environment is available to those in their care. This includes having a clearly documented plan that outlines the actions and processes that need to be fulfilled in an emergency situation.

A comprehensive emergency plan should be in place to cover incidents such as fire, violence, environmental threats and medical emergencies.

A typical emergency plan may include reference to items such as:

- The processes and the actions required of key personnel in the event of an emergency.
  - Each person should be familiar with their role and the actions required of them in an emergency. These roles should be understood by all involved. This may include coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, etc.
- The location of the nearest phone and a list of telephone numbers for ambulance, local hospital or local health professional.
  - To avoid numerous people calling for emergency services, everyone involved in an incident should be aware of who is responsible for emergency services.
  - The designated caller should also know the location of the nearest phone. All appropriate telephone numbers should be listed next to the telephone.
  - If a mobile phone is used, make sure the caller makes the call from a quiet location with suitable mobile coverage.

- The address details of the venue at which the event is being held, and in particular, any special directions that need to be conveyed to emergency response personnel.
  - In circumstances where a medical professional or ambulance needs to be called, they should be given any special directions for easy access to the venue and injured player.
  - Venues should also ensure that designated access is available to emergency vehicles and the access is kept clear.
- The person designated to take the lead responsibility in the plan.
  - Each person involved should know who will coordinate activities during an incident. This person plays a vital role in ensuring all aspects of the plan are fulfilled before, during and after an incident.
- The location of any first aid and emergency equipment if required.
  - Like the telephone, this should be in an accessible location.
  - First aid supplies should always be well-stocked, so consideration should be given to allocating responsibility for first aid supply maintenance.
- Contact details for parents, legal guardians or next of kin.
  - Someone should have the responsibility of informing parents, legal guardians or next of kin following the incident.
  - The type of details to be conveyed should also be clearly specified and medical details should only be conveyed by, or with approval from, medical personnel.
- Incident report forms and processes.
  - All incidents should be well documented using an incident response form. This should be securely stored for future reference.

It is important that all personnel are aware of their role and required actions in the emergency plan. Emergency plans should be documented and communicated to all club members and participants. These plans should be updated regularly, and ideally should be rehearsed often for reinforcement of actions.

Although these incidents may not occur often, a sound, communicated and well-understood emergency plan may mean the difference between life and death in an emergency situation.

# GLOSSARY

<b>Adolescence</b>	The transition period between puberty and adult stages of development, generally from the age of 12
<b>Athlete</b>	A participant that has been selected in a program/competition outlined in the National Athlete Pathway Framework
<b>Carer</b>	Any person given the responsibility for supervision of a junior (for example, guardian or relative)
<b>Child/Children/Player</b>	Participant aged 5 to 12 years
<b>Club</b>	Community netball organisations
<b>Coach</b>	A leader, teacher or instructor in junior netball
<b>Community sport</b>	All netball provided for players by netball clubs and other community organisations outside the school system
<b>Competition</b>	A structured contest measuring performance against an opponent, oneself or the environment
<b>Disability</b>	Activity limitations or participation restrictions that are related to an impairment of body structure or function
<b>Duty of care</b>	Responsibility to act in a required manner of care, which will arise when one person reasonably ought to have another in mind at the time of engaging in the conduct complained of
<b>Junior netball</b>	The organisation and management of netball programs and competitions for players aged 5 to 17 years
<b>Member Protection</b>	A term used widely in the sports industry to mean practices and procedures that protect an organisation's members
<b>Netball experience</b>	The holistic concept of learning netball skills and behaviours through training, practice and competition in a fun and safe environment
<b>Netball providers</b>	All those involved in delivering junior netball (for example, volunteers, parents, coaches, teachers, officials, administrators, schools, clubs and government and private providers)
<b>Pathways</b>	Planned steps for players to progress from beginner to experienced participant as a player, official, administrator, coach and/or team support person
<b>Recreational participation</b>	When sport is played for fun, and to maintain skills (for example, mixed/social competitions)
<b>Schools</b>	Educational institutions: primary, special and secondary
<b>Training</b>	The systematic process of improving netball performance through instruction and practice. This term is not necessarily elite focused; it can also refer to a structured practice session

