



**NETBALL**  
NEW ZEALAND  
POITARAWHITI AOTEAROA

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# Starting Out Umpiring Netball

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**We live this game.**

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# Introduction

## **Congratulations on Deciding to Umpire Netball**

You will find umpiring rewarding and a way in which you can contribute positively to the game. This guide looks at the basic Rules of Netball and is designed to help new umpires, including parents, players and coaches with the basics of Umpiring Netball.

It will give you a sound background of the rules, help you build confidence for when you umpire as well as helping you when you play.

Take time to read through the information and if you have any questions, contact your Netball Centre's or School's Umpiring Coordinator.

If you wish to learn more, follow these links:

### **WORLD NETBALL - RULES OF NETBALL**

[https://netball.sport/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/10214\\_WN\\_NETBALL-RULE-BOOK-MANUAL-2023-v13-RGB-HR.pdf](https://netball.sport/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/10214_WN_NETBALL-RULE-BOOK-MANUAL-2023-v13-RGB-HR.pdf)

You can also download the Rules of Netball App for free via Apple or Google Play stores.

### **NETBALL NEW ZEALAND COMMUNITY UMPIRING GUIDELINES**

<https://www.netballnz.co.nz/component/nnzlibrary/download/915ff2f5654aeddaefc77ea84133109.html>

# Where Do I Start?

*Here are some ideas to help become more confident with your umpiring*

- Arrive at the courts at least 30 minutes before the game is scheduled to start.
- Ensure that you have your own whistle [preferably a finger whistle] and a means of keeping track of the centre pass [most umpires use a hair tie on their hand for this].
- Ensure you know the Netball Centre's procedure for picking up the score card prior to the start of the game, and any Rules of the competition that need to be applied. These may include interval times [ $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$  time], injury/substitution rules, number of named players in a team and how the 30 and 10 second warnings are handled.
- Warm up/warm down. Players need to warm up well, so does an umpire. Don't forget to warm down too. Check out the UmpireSmart warm up: [https://netballsmart.co.nz/images/netball-smart/pdf/UmpireSmart\\_WarmUp\\_Community\\_A4.pdf](https://netballsmart.co.nz/images/netball-smart/pdf/UmpireSmart_WarmUp_Community_A4.pdf)
- Remember the dress presentation of an umpire often reflects on how they umpire the game. Ensure you are wearing a different colour to that of the two teams.
- Develop the four C's — Consistency, Control, Confidence and Communication.
  - » Be Consistent in your rulings throughout the court.
  - » Maintain Control from the first whistle - be fair, firm and alert.
  - » Convey Confidence to the players, develop a warm, friendly manner.
  - » Communicate positively - listen, be polite, make eye contact and be calm.
- Blow your whistle loudly so that players can hear it. Your voice should also be loud and clear. Always look at the players when making your ruling and indicate clearly where to take the sanction.

## **DUTIES BEFORE THE GAME COMMENCES**

Before the game starts you, the umpire, need to check for the following:

- Players' fingernails are cut short and smooth.
- Players are not wearing any adornments that may endanger themselves or others — other adornments e.g. Medic Alert bracelet may be worn but must be covered with tape and/or padding.
- If applicable, ensure players are wearing their correct uniform.
- Ensure that all players have on their correct designated playing bib.
- The team captains should have tossed and notified the umpires and the scorers of the result.
- Ensure there are two scorers – one from each team standing together in a position easily visible to the umpires. You may find it helpful to have one of the scorers ready to time any injury stoppages so that play is restarted as quickly as possible.
- If team uniforms/bibs are the same or similar in colour, ensure one team wears different colour bibs.

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# Reading The Game

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## The Three 'Big' Umpiring Techniques

**[Position, Vision and Timing – when put together these techniques allow you to be in the right place, to see what you need to, and to move down court with the ball.]**

**Position is about where you are standing in relation to play and how you are you standing. Vision is about what you are looking at, while Timing is about how you move and reposition to maintain good vision and position.**

### POSITION

- Always try to be in the best possible position to see what is happening.
- Try to be in line with the centre circle whenever the Centre steps in to take the centre pass.
- During play, try to be in line or slightly ahead of the player with the ball.
- While play is in your co-umpire's half, position yourself at their transverse line.
- Keep off the court except as needed for moving to and from the goal line [i.e. it's okay to cut the corner].
- When play is in the Goal Circle area, it is likely that your best position will be behind the Goal Line and on the same side of the Goal Post as the player with the ball. Beware of being too close to the Goal Post as you look up, you will miss what happens at ground level.
- Keep your shoulders facing the court both while moving and when you are stationary.

### VISION

- See the player with the ball, their opponent, as many other players as possible and look for where the next pass is going.
- Learn to look over the area of court you are umpiring so that you can see most players.

### TIMING

- Time your movement so you arrive at the next position as the ball arrives so you can see all players. You can run, jog, side-step, sprint or use other movements that are appropriate.

# Scoring

## Before the game

- Distinguish between the two teams and their uniforms.
- When the captains inform you which team has the first pass, write even [E] under the name of this team on the card and write odd [O] under the other team's name.

### THROUGHOUT THE GAME

Adding both teams' scores together will tell you who has the next Centre Pass.

BLACK O								WHITE E							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

If the score is 3-9 [ 3 + 9 = 12, an even total] the next Centre Pass will be taken by White.

BLACK O								WHITE E							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

If the score is 12 - 11 [12 + 11 = 23, an odd total, Black will have the next Centre Pass.

### DURING THE QUARTER/HALF

- White has the first Centre Pass. During the quarter/half, White will take the next pass whenever the total score of the two teams is even. Black will have the next pass whenever the total is odd.

### AT QUARTER/HALF TIME

- At quarter/half time, note if the ball is in play or if play ends immediately after a goal has been scored [the Centre Pass has not been taken]. Do this as soon as the quarter/half finishes so that you don't forget.
- Indicate on the score card the half time score.
- If quarter/half time was taken immediately after a goal was scored, continue with the same system as used in the first half, i.e. White on even total, Black on odd total.
- If the ball was in play at quarter/half time, change White to odd and Black to even for the second half. Continue to decide the pass on the new system.

### AFTER THE GAME

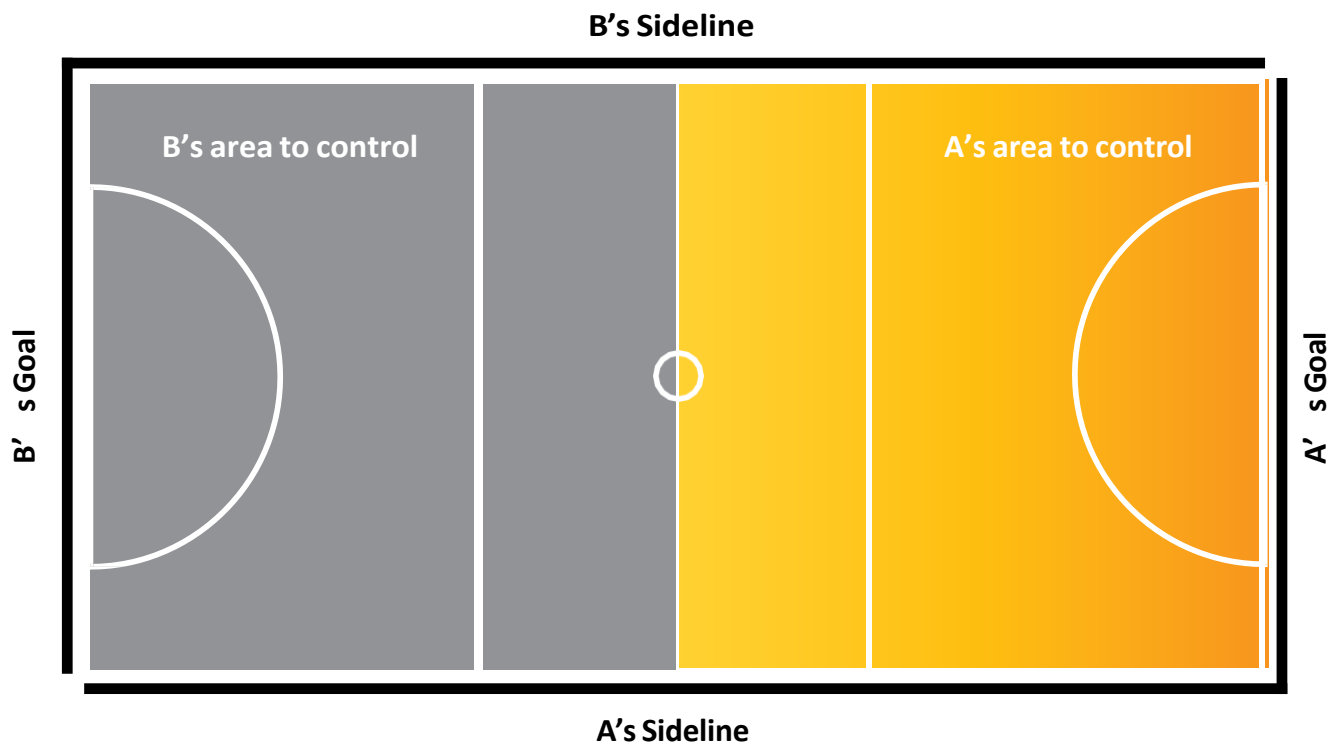
- Indicate the final score on the score card and follow the Centre's procedures for completing the scorecard and handing it in.
- It is the team or Centre's responsibility to provide scorers.
- It is advisable if there are scorers from each team that they stand together on the sideline at halfway.
- If you do have any difficulties with the score card and Centre Pass, make sure that you address it immediately. If you cannot work it out, call for a Centre Official to give you guidance.

# Dual Control

*As all games are controlled by two umpires you must be sure that you know the areas that you are responsible for.*

## THESE ARE AS FOLLOWS

- The court is divided in half at the centre circle from side-line to side-line.
- Always umpire to your right.
- You will control all throw-ins on the whole side-line of your side of the court and control the goal line to your right.
- You blow your whistle for the Centre Pass after a goal has been scored in your goal circle.
- Always indicate the direction of the Centre Pass.
- You may appeal to your co-umpire for a decision in your half.



# Protocols

*The two umpires must work together.*

## **AT THE START OF THE GAME**

- Stand side by side with your co-umpire on the sideline at halfway.
- One Umpire blows the 30 and 10 second warning whistles for the teams to take the court.
- The co-umpire walks to the far side at 10 seconds giving the ball to the Centre taking the first Centre Pass.

## **KNOW WHAT TO DO AT A STOPPAGE FOR INJURY, ILLNESS OR BLOOD**

*[check the Centre's competition rules as they may differ]*

- Umpire signals stoppage time.
- Umpires stay on their respective side-lines.
- For blood stoppages the umpire who is dealing with the blood ensures the court, clothing and ball is clean before restarting play.
- Restart with the whistle as soon as substitutions/team changes have been made or when the 30 seconds is up. Whichever comes first.

## **KNOW WHAT TO DO AT A TACTICAL CHANGE**

*[check the competition rules as they may differ]*

- Tactical changes can occur immediately after a goal has been scored.
- Umpire signals tactical change.
- Umpires stay on their respective side-lines.
- Restart with the whistle as soon as substitutions/team changes have been made.

## **KNOW WHAT TO DO AT AN INTERVAL**

- Umpire signals time.
- Umpires meet mid court.
- Umpires discuss next Centre Pass.
- Umpires confirm centre Pass with the scorers.
- Change the odds/evens over on the scorecard if necessary as per the scoring system identified earlier.



# Time to Start the Game

## IF A TEAM HAS 5 PLAYERS THEN THE GAME CAN START

A late player may go on court but only **after**:

- Being checked by the umpire
- A goal has been scored or/
- A break in play or/
- Immediately following an interval or/
- After a stoppage for injury or illness.

**Then** the late player must take the **vacant position** on the court.

### *What if: the player comes onto the court without notifying the umpires?*

The player is sent from the court until the correct time for entry [as per above]. Possession is awarded to the opposing team where the ball was when play was stopped.

## CENTRE PASS

- The centre in possession of the ball stands with at least one foot wholly in the centre circle.
- If the centre does not have one foot wholly in the circle when the whistle is blown, then a free pass is awarded to the opposing team in the centre circle.
- The opposing centre is in the centre third and free to move.
- All other players are in their respective goal thirds and are free to move but must not enter the centre third until the whistle has been blown.
- If a player enters the centre third before the whistle, then a free pass is awarded in the centre third to the opposing team [unless advantage can be played].

# Substitution and Team Changes

A team can make as many substitutions as they like in any one game. But they may only use up to the number of named players for the game. A player who has previously been substituted may return to the game at a later stage.

## Substitutions and team changes can be made in the following cases:

- A player has been injured or is ill. The injured or ill player must be involved in that team's sub/team change.
- During an interval.
- Immediately after a goal has been scored following a request from an on-court player for a tactical change. Note: check with your Centre if they are using this rule
- All injury/illness/blood stoppages are up to 30 seconds. The injured player must leave the court within the 30 seconds.
- Both teams may make substitutions and/or team changes within the 30 seconds.
- If a team leaves a position vacant at a stoppage, a player may come on in this vacant position at the next break in play.
- Only the Primary Care personnel can come on to the court at the stoppage for Injury/illness.
- Coaching is allowed from the sideline provided all players other than the injured player stay on court.

# Summary of Sanctions

## THE SANCTIONS AWARDED FOR BREAKING OF THE RULES ARE

- Free Pass
- Penalty Pass

## FREE PASS AWARDED FOR:

- Offside
- Held ball
- Breaking
- Over a third
- Short pass
- Footwork
- Incorrect playing of the ball
- Centre pass untouched in the Centre Third
- Centre positioned incorrectly at Centre Pass
- Using the goal post as a means of support

*NOTE: No player stands out of play. The Free Pass is awarded to a team where the infringement occurred.*

## PENALTY PASS AWARDED FOR

- Contact
- Obstruction
- Defending from out of court

### Penalty Pass

If Contact or Obstruction by the defenders occurs in the Goal Circle the player taking the penalty may pass or shoot from where the infringer was standing.

- The player who infringes must “stand beside but away from the player taking the Penalty Pass” and may not move or take part in play [including verbal comments] until the ball has been released.
- The player taking the Penalty Pass must ensure they set the penalty correctly.

### ADVANTAGE

Advantage may be applied if the umpire can see an infringement has occurred but does not want to blow the whistle as this will stop the game and the non-offending team will be disadvantaged by the stoppage. The umpires shall call and signal the advantage.

# Out of Court

## THE BALL IS OUT OF COURT WHEN

- It touches the ground outside the court.
- It touches any person or object in contact with the ground outside the court. [Note: a player may have their foot on a line and it is not out of court].

You should indicate which team takes the throw-in when the ball goes out of court over your side-line or goal line. Only blow the whistle if the players are not aware the ball was out of court or the wrong team is setting up to take the throw-in.

## WHEN A THROW-IN IS BEING TAKEN

- Ensure that the throw-in is taken from the correct position.
- Obey the footwork rule.
- The player's foot must not be on the line [the line is part of the court] and must be within 15cm [6in] of the line.
- The player taking the throw-in must pass the ball within 3 seconds.
- The player must throw to the correct playing third.
- The player taking the throw-in does not need to wait for all players to be on the court.

### Action

A throw-in to the opposing team where the player was taking the throw-in.

# Simultaneous or Mutual Infringements

## SIMULTANEOUS INFRINGEMENTS

- Two opposing players gain possession of the ball simultaneously.
- Two opposing players send the ball out of court simultaneously.
- Two opposing players are offside simultaneously and one or both touch or catch the ball.
- Two opposing players enter the centre third before the whistle at the centre pass and one or both touch or catch the ball.
- Two opposing players contact each other simultaneously.

If a simultaneous or mutual infringement occurs the umpire awards possession to the team that was last in possession of the ball, where the ball was when play stopped. Any player from that team may take the ball for the restart of play. It does not have to be the player who actually had the ball last. If it is in a team's goal circle, the GS or GA may shoot for goal.

## MUTUAL INFRINGEMENTS

- Any occurrence when an umpire is unable to determine which team infringed or where the ball was when play was stopped, or where play is irregularly affected and fault cannot be attributed to either team.

### Action

Possession is awarded to the team who had possession of the ball immediately prior to the infringements

# Playing the Ball

## **A PLAYER MAY**

- Gain or regain control of the ball if it rebounds from the Goal Post which includes the net.
- Lean on the ball to prevent going offside.
- Bat the ball to another player.
- Roll the ball to oneself.

## **A PLAYER MAY NOT**

- Roll the ball to another player.
- Fall on the ball to gain possession.
- Gain possession of or throw the ball while sitting, lying, or kneeling on the ground.
- After catching the ball drop it and pick it up again.
- Kick the ball.

### Sanction

Free pass where the player played the ball incorrectly (kick, roll, fall on the ball etc.)

## HELD BALL

From the time of catching the ball, a player must release it within 3 seconds.

### Sanction

Free pass where the player held the ball for 3 seconds.

## SHORT PASS

There must be room on the court for an opposing player to be able to deflect or intercept the ball as it moves from the hands of the passer to those of the receiver (this distance is not measured on the ground).

### Sanction

Free pass where the player caught the ball.

## OVER A THIRD

The ball must be caught or touched in each third of the court by:

- Any player who is standing in the correct third.

### Sanction

Free pass, taken just over the second transverse line that the ball crossed without being touched. If the ball is thrown from the Centre Third and goes over the third and out of court over the Goal Line, a throw-in is taken.

## FOOTWORK

Footwork occurs when a player with the ball:

- Re-grounds the first grounded foot.
- Hops on either foot.
- Drags the landing foot.

Remember, if a player lands on both feet simultaneously, either foot may be moved, then the other foot becomes the landing foot.

### Sanction

Free pass where the player stepped, hopped, dragged their foot.

## OFFSIDE

A player is offside if:

Players with or without the ball move into an area other than their own playing area. Note - players may stand on the lines bounding their area. This is not offside.

### Sanction

Free pass where the player went offside.

## SIMULTANEOUS OFFSIDE

When two opposing players go offside at the same time.

- If neither player makes any contact with the ball you will let play continue.
- If one of the players is in possession of or has touched the ball you will award possession to the team who had possession of the ball immediately prior to the players going offside.

## OBSTRUCTION

### Obstruction of a player with the ball.

**Obstruction is measured by:** The distance on the ground between two players.

- The player defending must be no closer than 0.9 metres from the attacking player's landing foot (or the nearer foot if two feet landed at the same time).
- If the player's landing foot is lifted, the distance is measured from the spot on the ground from which the foot was lifted.

A defending player may defend from in front, to the side or from behind a player with the ball-providing of course that they are the correct distance and standing on court.

### Sanction

Penalty pass where the player obstructed. If the infringement is in the goal circle the non-offending player may shoot for goal. If the infringing player was obstructing while defending from out of court, the penalty is taken on court near where the infringer was defending. If this is in the goal circle, the non-offending player may shoot for goal.

## CONTACT

### This occurs when a player:

- Puts a hand or hands on the ball held by the opposition.
- Knocks the ball from an opponent's hands.
- Pushes the ball into an opponent.
- Pushes, trips, knocks, or holds an opponent.
- Uses any part of the body to interfere with an opponent.
- Moves into the path of an opponent who is committed to a particular landing space.

### Sanction

Penalty pass where the player contacted. If the infringement is in the goal circle the non-offending player may shoot for a goal.

# Hand Signals

Imagery provided by World Netball Rules of Netball 2024 Edition

See the World Netball Rules of Netball 2024 edition [page 70 onwards] for more signals and details.

START/RESTART OF PLAY	HOLD TIME	DIRECTION OF PASS
		
<p>Arm held high, angled towards goal end of team with pass.</p>	<p>Facing timekeeper one hand vertical and other horizontal to form a 'T'.</p>	<p>For centre pass, sanction, action. Arm outstretched to side pointing to goal end of team with pass.</p>
THROW-IN-GOAL LINE	POSSESSION	GOAL SCORED
		
<p>For attacking team at its goal end Arm angled down, pointing to base of goalpost.</p>	<p>Hands, palms inward a short distance apart in a catching motion.</p>	<p>Arm held vertically.</p>
GOAL NOT SCORED	CENTRE POSITIONED INCORRECTLY	FOOTWORK
		
<p>Arms below waist move from side to side across each other</p>	<p>Hand traces horizontal circle.</p>	<p>Hands, palms down, move up and down in opposite directions.</p>



**HELD BALL**



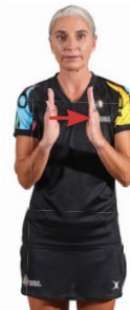
Arm held vertically with 3 fingers displayed.

**INCORRECT POSITION OF INCORRECT USE OF COURT AREAS**



Hand traces medium upward arc in direction of ball.

**SHORT PASS**



Hands, palms inward a short distance apart, one hand moves towards the other held stationary.

**INCORRECT PLAYING OF THE BALL**



One hand, palm down, move vertically up and down in a bouncing action.

**CONTACT**



Hand, palm facing down, taps opposite forearm.

**OBSTRUCTION OF PLAYER WITH THE BALL**



Hands, palms inwards held short distance apart.

**INTERFERENCE WITH SHOT OR INTIMIDATION**



Hand traces small arc in front of face

**TACTICAL CHANGE**



Circular motion of both forearms around each other above waist.

**REPOSSESSION**



Hands, palms inward a short distance apart, twist from side to side in a parallel motion.

**OBSTRUCTION OF PLAYER WITHOUT THE BALL.**

**ADVANTAGE**



**Arms angled out from body below waist.**

**Arm sweeps across body towards goal end of team with.**



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