

# WHAT'S NEW IN THE RULES OF NETBALL

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Weren't the Rules of Netball updated in 2016? Why are they changing again so soon?**

A new edition of the Rules of Netball was approved by the member countries of the International Netball Federation in August 2015. These updated rules were introduced for international matches, and across all affiliated competitions and events in Australia, from 1 January 2016.

Amendments to the 2016 edition of the Rules of Netball were approved by the member countries of the International Netball Federation in July 2017.

These amendments were based on feedback from member countries, and are intended to provide clarification around aspects of the Rules that were uncertain in practice. They are not new rules, but small changes. They include:

- New definitions of breaking, pivot and "set" (for a free pass and penalty pass)
- The sanction to be awarded if a free pass or penalty pass is taken in an incorrect position
- When a player who is in the correct position may take the penalty pass
- Umpires to hold time to give a caution and new caution signal added
- Change of "official warning" to "warning" throughout Rules of Netball
- Specify that suspension period is 2 minutes playing time
- State when a player may move into court surround
- Minor tidy up to remove duplication and provide clarity

The amended Rules of Netball will be introduced for international matches from **1 January 2018**. Netball Australia has also decided to implement the amended Rules of Netball across all associated competitions and events from 1 January 2018.

### **My club/association is running a competition that commenced in 2017, but continues into early 2018. Do I need to change mid-season?**

NO. Netball Australia advises common sense with the introduction of the amended rules. If your club/association has commenced a competition under the current rules in 2017, and the competition is not due to conclude until 2018, it is advisable to play under the current rules until the end of the season. The next season should then start under the amended rules.

### **The Rule Book states that the Rules have been written for international play. What does this mean for my club/ association?**

The Rule Book provides an option in relation to variations to some of the rules for locally based competitions. These variations are outlined in Section 15 of the Rules of Netball. The extent of these variations will depend on the level of competition.

### **What are the types of variations that can be made?**

The following are some examples of variations that might be used:

- Teams (Rule 15.1)
- Equipment (Rule 15.2)
- Time (Rule 15.3)
- Match and technical officials (Rule 15.4)
- Matches for young players (Rule 15.5)

### **Who makes the decision on these variations?**

Decisions regarding variations may be made by the controlling body for the competition. Any variations should maintain the integrity of the Game on the court and may not change the way it is played.

### **I don't agree with some of the new changes that have been introduced to the way the game is played on the court. Can I pick and choose which rules our club/association will play under?**

NO. The Game must be played in line with the updated Rules of Netball. The only changes that may be made are in relation to the variations outlined in Section 15.

## **Why has Netball Australia made these changes?**

Netball Australia has not made the changes. The new rules and the amendments to them were voted upon and approved by the International Netball Federation Congress, during the Netball World Cup held in Sydney, Australia in 2015, and the Netball World Youth Cup held in Gaborone, Botswana in 2017. As a member country of the INF, Netball Australia and its affiliated competitions/events are obliged to adopt the new rules and the amendments to them.

## **Why has the word penalties been replaced with sanctions?**

The International Netball Federation determined that the term 'sanction' is to be used instead of 'penalty' to avoid confusion with similar terms. The term 'penalty pass' includes the option for the GS or GA to pass or shoot when it is awarded in the goal circle.

## **If time is called for a player who is bleeding, injured or ill, does that player have to come off the court?**

YES. The bleeding, injured or ill player must leave the court within 30 seconds and receive treatment off the court. The primary care person is only permitted to take the court to assess the player's medical condition and to assist the player from the court.

## **If time is called for a player who is bleeding, injured or ill, can that player be treated on court within the 30 seconds?**

NO. Treatment is no longer permitted to take place on court. The bleeding, injured or ill player must leave the court within 30 seconds and receive treatment off the court.

## **For blood, is it the bleeding player who must leave the court or is it the player who had blood on them that must leave the court, or both?**

Under Rule 9.3.1, the umpires hold time for blood when noticed or when requested by an on-court player. Under the guidance from the International Netball Federation, Netball Australia has been advised that any player with blood must leave the court for this to be cleaned. As such, both the player who is bleeding and any player with blood on them would need to leave the court. The player(s) must leave the court within 30 seconds and receive treatment off the court. Time will not normally be given to clean up players on the court. However, in the event that several players are affected, the umpires may decide to take whatever action they deem to be appropriate.

## **If a player has to leave the court for injury/illness or blood, can a substitution be made for that player?**

YES. During the stoppage, both teams may make substitutions and/or team changes, provided these are completed within the time allowed. There is no limit to the number of substitutions, provided the players used are those named for the match.

## **What if our team decides not to replace the injured/ill or bleeding player, or has no substitutes? Can the injured/ill or bleeding player return to the court after receiving treatment?**

YES. If the injured player's position is left vacant, that player, or a substitute, may subsequently, after advising the umpire, take the court immediately after one of the following:

- A goal has been scored - in this case the player or the substitute must play in the position left vacant.
- A stoppage for injury/illness or blood
- At an interval.

## **Can a player move into the court surround to receive treatment for a minor illness/injury or blood without calling time, and then continue playing?**

NO. A player having no contact with the ball may only move outside the court for the purpose of repositioning back onto the court [Rule 8.3.2(ii)]. If this occurs the umpire will award a Free Pass on court (near where the player left the court).

## **How does the umpire know if a player who has moved into the court surround has done so solely for the purpose of repositioning back on court?**

The infringement occurs when the umpire judges that the player has not left the court to take up a better playing position (in most cases this may not be immediately as the action of the player will need to be observed).

## **My club/association runs centrally timed games. What does this mean in relation to the management of injury/illness/blood?**

In essence the application of the rule should be the same. If a player is injured/ill or bleeding, any on-court player should appeal to the umpire to hold time. After clarifying 'what for', the umpire will hold time and the player has up to 30 seconds to leave the court and be treated off-court. The players' position may either be left vacant, or a substitution brought on to play in that position.

At a junior level, common sense should always apply in the application of all rules, especially in relation to injury/illness/blood. If a young player is visibly upset/injured and requires a bit more time to be helped off the court, the umpire should work with the team and coach to ensure that the player is helped off the court to seek treatment off-court.

## **I have been told that a player no longer has to stand out of play if they are penalised for Contact or Obstruction. Is this correct?**

NO. It is important to know that the changes to the rule regarding the taking of the penalty pass DO NOT remove the requirement for a player who is penalised for Contact or Obstruction to stand out of play. As per the conditions of the penalty pass, the infringer must stand out of play by:

- moving quickly to the position indicated;
- standing beside but away from the player taking the penalty pass so as not to impede that player, and
- remaining in this position and not moving or taking any part in play (including verbal comments) until the ball has been released.

The infringer must still move quickly to the 'out of play' position, even though the player taking the penalty may choose to play on before they are positioned correctly,

## **What happens if the penalised player doesn't move quickly to the position indicated by the umpire?**

If the penalised player does not attempt to move quickly to the out of play position, particularly in the situation where the non-infringing player has chosen to wait, it may be necessary for the umpire to take action against the infringer for delaying play [Rule 13.2.1(i)]. In this situation, the umpire will hold time, caution the player concerned, and award a penalty pass which will be advanced up to half a third.

## **What happens if the non-infringing player has chosen to play the ball before the sanction is set? Can the infringing player then attempt an intercept or defend another player down court?**

NO. If the infringer has not yet moved out of play and the player taking the penalty decides to play on immediately, the infringer may not take part in play in any way until the ball has been released, including making an attempt to intercept the penalty pass. If the infringer interferes with play in this way, the penalty pass will be retaken [Rule 7.3.1(iv)(b)].

## **Rule 7.1.3(iv)(a) states that the penalty pass will be retaken if the infringer interferes with it. Does this mean the same players have to retake the penalty pass?**

YES: If a penalty pass is required to be retaken because the infringer has taken part in play before the ball has been released or made an attempt to intercept the penalty pass, all original players must be involved in re-taking the penalty pass from the original position.

## **What do I call as the umpire?**

Penalise the infringing player for 'interference' and 'retake the penalty pass'.

## **If an infringing player interferes in the taking of the penalty pass, how do I determine whether to have the players retake the penalty pass or penalise for intentional infringing?**

In determining the course of action, the umpire needs to determine whether the interference was deliberate or not. If the interference is not deemed deliberate, the penalty pass is to be retaken [Rule 7.1.3 (iv) (b)]. If the interference is deemed to be intentional infringing, then the umpire will hold time, caution the player concerned, and award a penalty pass [Rule 13.2.1 (ii)]. Depending on the circumstances, the player concerned may also be penalised for delaying play [Rule 13.2.1(i)].

## **If the infringing player has taken part in play or made an attempt to intercept the penalty pass before the ball has been released, but in blowing the whistle for the infringement it would disadvantage the non-infringing team, can the umpire call 'advantage interference'?**

YES. As per rule 7.2 the umpire should refrain from blowing the whistle for an infringement when by so doing the non-infringing team would be disadvantaged. However, if the umpire deems that the interference is intentional, or constitutes delaying play, they must blow the whistle to penalise the infringement, hold time, and take the appropriate actions under the Game Management section [Rule 13].

## **What happens if the player taking the sanction does so without taking up the position indicated by the umpire?**

When penalising an infringement, the umpire is responsible for clearly indicating where the sanction is to be taken – both verbally and through the use of appropriate hand signals. A free pass is awarded to the non-infringing team if a player takes a free pass or a penalty pass from the incorrect position. If a player does this deliberately or repeatedly, they will be penalised for delaying play under Rule 13.2.1(i). In this situation, the umpire will hold time, caution the player concerned, and award a penalty pass, which will be advanced up to half a third.

## **I've noticed that the Rules of Netball refer to stepping as 'footwork'. Do I call stepping or footwork?**

The Footwork rule encompasses many components. The umpire uses the appropriate terminology to describe the infringement. For example, 'stepping', 'drag', 'hop'.

## **A player who has possession of the ball throws it deliberately at an opposing player, what is the sanction?**

Free pass

## **I've noticed the change to the goal-shooting rule in that you now can't deflect a ball on its downward motion. Does that mean the lift is now disallowed?**

NO. The key change to this rule is that a defending player may now not deflect the ball on its downward path towards the goal ring, including touching the ball up through the net. Once a ball is on its downward flight towards the ring, a player may not attempt to deflect (which would include intercepting, catching, batting etc) the ball until such time that it is clear that the goal is either successful (e.g. goal is scored) or unsuccessful – in which case a player is legally allowed to rebound the unsuccessful shot at goal. It is still legal to deflect the ball on its upward path to the goal ring. This change doesn't stop teams utilising the 'lift', however the timing must be when the ball is on the upward path.

## **What does the umpire call when a defender has deflected the ball on its downward flight towards the ring?**

If the shot is unsuccessful, the umpire would blow their whistle and call 'interference with shot' and award a Penalty pass where the infringer was standing.

## **In the taking of a penalty pass or free pass does a player need to wait for all other players to be on court?**

NO. As per Rule 8.3.2 (ii), a player having no contact with the ball may move outside the court, provided the player remains within the court surround, and provided that this is done solely for the purpose of repositioning back onto the Court.

## **In the taking of a throw in, does the player taking the throw in need to ensure that all other players are on the court before releasing the ball?**

YES. As per rule 8.4.1 (i) (b), the player taking the throw in needs to ensure all other players are on the court before releasing the ball. If they don't, the umpire will award a Throw In to the opposing team from the original throw in spot.

## **I am unclear around the definition of the pivot, and the meaning of the changes in the amended Rules.**

The pivot is defined as a movement where the player with the ball swivels either on the heel or on the ball of the landing foot while this maintains contact with the original landing position. A player may therefore choose to either pivot on the ball of their foot (a more traditional type of pivot seen down the court) or on the heel of their foot (often seen by Goal Shooters or Goal Attacks in the goal circle). A player may not pivot on their heel and then the ball of their foot, or vice versa. In addition, a player may not "slide" the foot while pivoting to gain ground from the original landing position.

## **Is it correct that, under the new Short Pass rule, at any point the ball is in flight, e.g. from the release to the catch, if there is insufficient space for an opposing player on court to be able to intercept the ball, then it is considered short?**

Yes. The previous rule was based on where the hands of the thrower and the receiver were at the moment (instant) when the ball was released. The intent of the new rule is to ensure there is sufficient space during the transition of the ball (at any time during the pass) between the two sets of hands for an opponent to be able to intercept it during the transfer.

## **What does this mean for a player who passes the ball against the goal post and then catches it again?**

The change to the short pass rule does not stop a player from passing the ball against the post and catching it however there must be room for another player to attempt to intercept at any time during the transition of the ball.

**I understand that the centre player needs to have only one foot wholly within the centre circle to take the centre pass. Can this foot touch the line bounding the centre circle?**

YES. Rule 3.1.1(vi) provides that all lines are part of the court area they outline. This means that the line bounding the centre circle is part of the centre circle. If the player's foot is inside the centre circle and touching the line (without being over the line), the player will be deemed to be wholly within the centre circle.

**Must the foot that is wholly within the centre circle remain there until the ball is released?**

NO. Rule 8.2.2(i) provides that when the whistle is blown to start play, the centre in possession of the ball may step outside the centre circle, but must obey the footwork rule [Rule 9.6]. The player would be therefore be able to lift the foot wholly inside the circle (the grounded foot) into the air, but could not re-ground it [refer Rule 9.6.1(i)].

**How does an umpire manage a player or players who haven't made it back into their respective goal thirds prior to the whistle being blown for the centre pass?**

There is no change from the previous rule. The umpire should not blow the whistle for the centre pass until all players have been able to return to their appropriate thirds. If their actions are considered to be intentional, e.g. they are deliberately delaying play, the umpire may penalise them under Rule 13.2.1 (i).

**What are the actions that an umpire can take under the new Game Management section of the Rules?**

Rule 13.1(i) states that to manage a match, the umpires may use any of the following measures in addition to the normal sanction:

- Caution a player: a player is advised that the behaviour specified must change;
- Issue a warning to a player: a player is warned that suspension will follow if the behaviour specified continues;
- Suspend a player: a player who is suspended takes no part in play for 2 minutes;
- Order a player off: a player who is ordered off takes no further part in the match.

In addition, an umpire may advance a sanction up to half a third when penalising a player for delaying play [Rule 13.2.1(i)].

The different rules within Section 13 [Game Management] indicate when it is necessary for a caution or warning to be given prior to suspension, and when an umpire may proceed directly to a suspension. In particular, Rule 13.1.2 provides:

*"The umpire will suspend a player following an official warning for foul play if the player continues to infringe the Rules. In the case of dangerous play or misconduct, a player may be suspended without an official warning if the umpire considers this action is justified."*

**Does the umpire have to hold time when taking action under the Game Management section?**

YES. Rule 6.1.6(i) requires the umpire to hold time to caution a player, to give a warning, to suspend a player or to order a player off, also using any hand signal that applies.

**Umpires used to be able to 'advance the penalty' as a disciplinary measure for lots of different infringements. Can they still do this?**

NO. A sanction may only be advanced when a player is penalised in connection with delaying play [Rule 13.2.1(i)]. Other instances of foul play, dangerous play and misconduct must be dealt with using the measures set out in Rule 13.

**I've heard that both umpires must confer and agree for a player to be suspended or ordered off. Is this right?**

NO. The umpires do not have to agree before a decision to warn, suspend or order off is taken by one of them. While the umpires may confer before these actions are taken, they are not obliged to confer first.

However, Rule 13(ii) provides that a decision to warn, suspend or order off is considered to have been made jointly and is therefore binding on the co-umpire. This means that the player, having been warned by one umpire, does not have to be warned again by the other umpire before being suspended, if they continue to engage in the same action. It is necessary for the umpires to inform each other of any game management action taken against a player or team. This is usually done during an interval. Generally though, the co-umpire would already be aware of the action taken by virtue of their involvement in the game.

If the umpires did decide to confer during a game before taking game management action, the procedure would be to hold time, and then for the umpire initiating the action to walk to the other side of the court to speak to the co-umpire. This action would only be taken in unusual and extreme circumstances (i.e., where there are serious issues with a particular player or a team, and where the ordinary penalties are not sufficient).

## **What resources are available to support the implementation of these updated rules and the amendments to them?**

Netball Australia has developed a number of resources to support the implementation of the updated rules and amendments. These include:

- What's updated in the Rules of Netball (2018 amendments) video package (available on the Netball Australia YouTube channel)
- What's New in the Rules of Netball Video package (available on the Netball Australia YouTube channel)
  - Part 1 - Introduction, Match Procedures and Starting Play
  - Part 2 - Sanctions and Conditions for the Penalty Pass
  - Part 3 - During a Match
  - Part 4 - Match Personnel and Game Management
  - Part 5 - Umpire's Hand Signals
  - Part 6 - Conclusion
- Amendments to Rules of Netball (2016 editions)
- Match Protocols for Umpires (2018)
- Rules of Netball for purchase.
- Rules of Netball for download.

## **What if I have further questions?**

If after having viewed the videos and reading the supporting documentation you have further questions, you can email [rules@netball.com.au](mailto:rules@netball.com.au) to seek further clarification.