



Junior Netball Policy

We live this game.



NETBALL
NEW ZEALAND



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WHY A JUNIOR NETBALL POLICY?

DEVELOPING A LIFELONG LOVE OF THE GAME

Netball New Zealand's [NNZ] Junior Netball Policy encompasses the organisation and management of junior Netball for 5 to 12 year olds [Year 1 to 8 players].

The purpose of the Junior Netball Policy is to provide a framework for all those involved in the game to ensure opportunities are provided to all children and young people to develop and enrich their lives through the sport of Netball in a consistent, safe and nurturing environment.

The Junior Netball Policy has been produced after considering the findings of the junior Netball review, academic and local research, and feedback from players, parents, medical/educational experts and coaches.

The Junior Netball Policy has been designed in a way that allows schools, clubs, Netball Centres and Zones a means of quickly referencing guidelines and frequently asked questions, to assist them in their delivery of the junior Netball programme and development of junior players.

The Junior Netball Policy is player-centric and endeavours to:

- Make Netball fun and enjoyable.
- Provide consistency of delivery.
- Enhance skill development appropriate to the child.
- Provide challenges and opportunities to experience the joy of achieving.
- Provide equal opportunities for all junior players, regardless of disability, ability, race, religion, and culture.
- Provide clear pathways for development that will allow participants to fulfil their individual potential.
- Encourage physical activity which promotes health and well-being.
- Ensure safe and supportive environments.

Netball New Zealand aims for Netball to continue to be the sport of first choice for young New Zealanders.

KEY MESSAGES

*The philosophy underpinning Junior Netball is aimed at ensuring young participants **having fun, learning skills and developing a lifelong love of the game.***

As a community, during these formative years, we need to provide quality experiences, support and opportunities for our young people to develop their 'physical literacy' and meet their physical, social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual needs.

Physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. It includes the development of fundamental movement skills that permit a child to move confidently, and with control, in a wide range of sporting activities

Each person has their own unique physical literacy, resulting from a combination of their motivation, confidence, physical competence and their knowledge of and understanding about physical activity which determines if they value and choose to participate in physical activity throughout their lives.

Physical activity is a critical component of a healthy lifestyle. Keeping our young Netballers active through enjoyable, age-appropriate programmes helps promote physical, psychological and social wellbeing.

Netball as a team sport has many benefits for junior participants that contribute to their holistic development.

Developing strong, resilient players that love to learn are qualities that will continue to benefit them as adults.

Having fun is one of the key motivators for sport participation. When you ask children why they play, one of the top reasons is that they want to have fun. Winning does feature on some children's lists of reasons, but generally further down. Children love to compete, but it is the excitement of the competition, not the result, that is the key factor. Performance of coaches, players and teams shouldn't be measured only by results, but preferably on the player's continued development and involvement in Netball. Avoid letting the need to win override giving all junior participants a fair go. It is imperative that we create a fun environment within the team and the competition structure, and continue to promote holistic development of all Netball players. Experiencing winning is an important part of playing sport but not winning at all costs.

The emphasis of the programme is on developing a young player's love of the game – giving them the confidence, experiences and the fundamental development and basic Netball skills to keep them motivated and enjoying Netball. The players get to pass, catch and shoot from their very first session, while learning to work in a team, understanding different positions and challenging themselves. Children are not mini adults and the modified Netball games take into consideration the player's developing physical, cognitive and social abilities.

Modifying elements of the game while ensuring the essence of Netball remains, means that the game grows with the players, providing progressive developmental stages.

Key benefits are:

- >> **MORE TOUCHES** on the ball which means more opportunities for development.
- >> Focus on developing the fundamental movement skills.
- >> Less players on court, therefore less complicated decision making and **MORE OPPORTUNITIES** to make decisions.
- >> Modified equipment and court size – scaled down from the adult version to **GROW WITH THE CHILDREN.**
- >> **MORE SHOTS** at goal are attempted and successful.
- >> Opportunity to **EXPERIENCE SUCCESS**/achievements.
- >> Developing confidence and enhancing enjoyment... **MORE FUN!**

The junior Netball programme has been developed with ongoing participation the aim, by increasing enjoyment and maintaining involvement through fun and achievement, and providing opportunities for junior players to enjoy Netball and fulfil their goals.

Quality experiences in junior Netball can inspire a lifelong involvement in the game.

PEOPLE MAKING NETBALL HAPPEN

The love of Netball is developed within schools, clubs and Netball Centres. Junior Netball is run by many volunteers and dedicated administrators, meaning that our young players will encounter a diverse range of people who will influence their involvement in Netball.

The contribution and quality of the leadership from:

- parents/guardians
- teachers
- coaches
- managers
- umpires
- administrators
- fellow Netball players
- and other volunteers

plays an important role in the quality of experience for our young players.

The successful delivery of junior Netball is attributed to the co-ordinated and consistent approach between all parties delivering the game, including schools, clubs, Netball Centres, Zones and commercial groups. Netball Centre boards and staff need to be advocates for enabling individuals to experience personal achievements through the junior Netball programme.

Junior Netball provides opportunities for volunteers to become involved at a variety of levels as coaches, umpires, or administrators.

Netball New Zealand acknowledges and appreciates the role of volunteers who support the delivery of the junior Netball programme.

As parents/guardians are the primary influencers in children's participation in sport, the delivery of parent information sessions is vital to ensure parents understand the philosophy of the programme and use of modified games to meet the needs of our young developing players.

Roles and Responsibilities

PLAYERS/PARENTS

- Follow the advice in the *Player and Spectator Codes of Behaviour*.
- Commit to attend all trainings and competitions.
- Ensure the Minimum Half Game policy is applied.
- Communicate with coaches and managers your child's other commitments and training requirements to establish loading and avoid burn out.
- Practice and adhere to the NetballSmart Dynamic Warm-up and principles.

CLUBS/SCHOOLS

If Schools/Clubs choose to offer Netball as an option, responsibilities include:

- Actively promote the Junior Netball programme and ensure that all coaches, managers, parents, supporters and teachers involved with junior Netball have the opportunity to discuss and understand the philosophy of futureFERN Netball programmes, including providing them with game information brochures on how their level of the game is played.
- Organising teams so as to provide an opportunity for any student wanting to be involved in Netball.
- Provide appropriate facilities and resources for the safe and effective delivery of junior Netball practices, including modified equipment and time on safe court surfaces to practice and play.
- Actively promote and implement the Minimum Half Game policy.
- Establish and maintain a high level of communication with the local Netball Centre to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to the delivery of Netball programmes, and effective sharing of resources.
- Support coaches, managers and umpires involved with School teams and encourage coaches and umpires to attend coach development programmes run through their local Netball Centre.
- Promote and attend NetballSmart workshops embedding the NetballSmart Dynamic Warm-up and principles.

NETBALL CENTRES

- Actively promote the junior Netball programme and provide an opportunity for all coaches, managers, parents, supporters and teachers involved with Junior Netball to discuss and understand the programmes and philosophy.
- Engage with Schools and Clubs prior to the season commencing and ensure all teams are provided with an opportunity to play Netball.
- Ensure junior Netball is delivered in its entirety in accordance with the Guidelines set out in the futureFERN Manual.
- Provide and promote coach and umpire development programmes for all levels of junior Netball.
- Co-ordinate scheduling of school and community events and competitions.
- Provide competitions that ensure accessibility for all with consideration to the following:
 - Affordability
 - Providing tiers of competition to ensure teams are evenly matched
 - Providing opportunities for children and young people who are disadvantaged or whose participation is limited for any reason
 - Providing competitive and social competition opportunities
 - Actively promoting and implementing the Minimum Half Game policy.

Netball Centres continued next page...

- Ensuring the length of the season is appropriate to the level of player to avoid unnecessary duplication or overlap with other sports.
- Offer Netball at times and for durations to suit junior participants and their parents (e.g. week nights, short seasons)
- Make Netball accessible by establishing endorsed venues if appropriate
- Provide player development opportunities through development programmes for Year 7 & 8 players.
- Implement, monitor and review Health and Safety Policy and procedures.
- Endorse and support the principles of Fair Play.
- Establish and maintain a high level of communication with Zone personnel, Schools, Clubs and endorsed venues to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to the delivery of Netball programmes and effective sharing of resource
- Endorse and support the delivery of NetballSmart content and initiatives.
- Proactively seek funding to support the delivery and implementation of this programme.

ZONES

- Establish and maintain a high level of communication with Netball Centres to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to the delivery of Netball
- Ensure the guidelines for the implementation and delivery of the junior Netball in their Zone are being met and complete endorsement for all junior Netball providers.
- Ensure Zone Netball events are delivered safely, meeting all Health and Safety guidelines.
- Support Netball Centres to implement, monitor and review health and safety policy and procedures.
- Provide and promote coach and umpire development programmes for all levels of junior Netball.
- Work with Netball Centres to co-ordinate scheduling of school and community events and competitions.
- Ensure equal opportunities are provided for all participants, particularly for those who are disadvantaged or whose participation is limited for any reason.
- Support the planning and implementation of development opportunities for Year 7 & 8 players
- Actively endorse and promote the Minimum Half Game policy.
- Endorse and support the principles of Fair Play
- Support and promote the delivery of NetballSmart programmes in all Netball Centres and Zone events.
- Proactively seek funding to support the delivery and implementation of this programme.

NETBALL NEW ZEALAND

- Develop a Junior Netball programme for Year 1-8 players and provide guidelines to support the successful implementation and delivery across the country.
- Provide a NNZ Safe Netball for Children Policy to ensure the Vulnerable Children's Act requirements are met.
- Provide up-to-date coach and umpire development programmes
- Provide up-to-date resources to assist coaches, umpires, administrators and teachers to run safe, challenging and enjoyable programmes for players.
- Provide a Health and Safety policy and procedures that reflect best practice.
- Train Zone-based coach developers to implement the development programmes.
- Support and assist Zones and Netball Centres to provide junior Netball in accordance with the Junior Netball Policy and the future FERNs manual.
- Provide a NetballSmart programme to all levels of Netball in conjunction with ACC.
- Engage and communicate with the Ministry of Education to promote the programme and develop better links between Schools and Clubs/Netball Centres.

Coach and Umpire alignment and development opportunities

The cornerstone of a successful junior Netballer's pathway is quality coaching and umpiring.

The people involved in the delivery of junior Netball have a significant impact on the quality of the overall player pathway.

It is important that people who help or coach children are trained and supported to understand the specific needs of young people as they develop in Netball.

Quality Coaching

Coaches have a major influence on the holistic development of young people in Netball by supporting their development in the physical/technical skills and strategies within the rules of Netball, sporting behaviours and lifestyle/social skills.

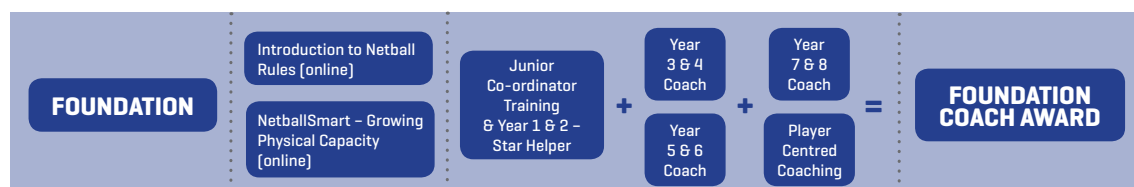
Quality coaching is an essential element in creating a positive experience for young people in Netball. Coaches have a responsibility to assist in building the confidence, self-esteem and ability of young people through their own positive role modelling and equitable treatment of all participants.

NNZ strive to achieve excellence in coaching practise by providing a national Coach Development Framework that empowers coaches to engage in coach development to provide high quality coaching to all players.

The Junior Coordinator, Star Helper and coaches play a significant role in the delivery of the programme and have a large influence on a child's enjoyment and experience of our game.

NNZ recognises that there are a large number of parents and volunteers that want to provide a great experience for our young players and need support and opportunities to develop their confidence and skills.

The Junior Netball programme provides numerous opportunities for parents and volunteers to support the programme from the Star Helper to the Junior Coordinator roles, and the many coaches that contribute to the success of this programme.



The Foundation Coach Award is awarded to those coaches who have completed all foundation coach development workshops. For more information refer to <http://netballnz.co.nz/get-involved/coaching>

Quality Umpiring

Umpires are a vital component of the game of Netball, ensuring that the Rules of Netball are applied fairly and consistently. Quality umpiring can create a positive experience for teams on the court and help develop awareness of the boundaries that the rules of the game create for us.

At the early stages of development with Year 1 to 4 players, the focus is on letting the players play. During game time, to assist the players, a coach is on court. This person provides gentle instructions to keep the game moving and limit stoppages.

Umpires are introduced from Year 5. Umpires at this level should:

- Ensure the court and its surrounds conform to the rules and are safe for play
- Use simple language
- Be consistent, polite 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 programmes.

NNZ provides an Umpiring Pathway and accreditation framework that allows umpires to learn the core techniques, building confidence by allowing practical observation at an appropriate level.

Qualified Umpire Development personnel at Zone and Centre level facilitate umpire development through workshops and delivery of umpire development modules.

INTRODUCTION TO UMPIRING

An introduction to umpiring ensuring new umpires learn basic umpiring principles, including an introduction to the rules, with practical learning followed by practical coaching and observation.

CENTRE UMPIRE AWARD

An award for newer umpires who may have some netball or umpiring experience and want to start on an umpire development pathway, or umpires who have completed the Introduction to Umpiring course and wish to continue with their umpiring.

The Introduction to Umpiring and Centre Umpire Award, coupled with a knowledge of the variations in modified Netball, are considered beneficial for umpires who officiate at Junior Netball level.

JUNIOR NETBALL PATHWAYS

Children and adolescents should partake in 60 minutes per day of moderate exercise for health and wellbeing. Globally, the level of activity of children and adolescents is unacceptably low. Netball training and game time supports provision of physical activity for children and adolescents.

Young players should be encouraged to participate in a range of sports at a young age developing a broad skill set. Early sport specialisation should be avoided.

Developing fundamental movement skills (FMS) and allowing young people to play and explore, is important for establishing lifelong commitment to physical activity. In addition, school-age children who develop FMS show increased health benefits, higher levels of physical activity, greater cardiovascular fitness, greater self-esteem and reduced risk of obesity.

The modified games in the junior Netball programme encourage deliberate play that involves early developmental and physical activities that are intrinsically motivating, provide immediate gratification, and are specifically designed to maximise enjoyment. Deliberate play in the younger years establishes a wide range of motor and cognitive skills.

The NNZ Netball Pathway supports the overall philosophy of developing children and adolescent's confidence and competence to participate in physical activity, and encourages diversification to promote lifelong participation in Netball and sport.

The game grows as the players grow.



JUNIOR NETBALL PATHWAYS

Year 1 & 2

5 to 6 year olds

Sporting involvement: Broad range of activities and deliberate play, 60 minutes per day

Sessions: 30 – 45 minutes, 1 session per week

Competition: Team or individual entry. No scores kept, but teams should be graded. No competition ranking or leagues.

Tournament Guidelines: Festival Day, 45 minutes

Year 3 & 4

7 to 8 year olds

Sporting involvement: Broad range of activities and deliberate play, 60 minutes per day

Sessions: 45 – 60 minutes, 1 – 2 sessions per week

Competition: Team or individual entry. No scores kept, but teams should be graded. No competition ranking or leagues.

Tournament Guidelines: Festival Day, 45 – 60 minutes. Minimum half game policy applies. Ensure all players get equal game time.

Year 5 & 6

9 to 10 year olds

Sporting involvement: Broad range of activities and deliberate play, 60 minutes per day

Sessions: 45 – 60 minutes, 1 – 2 sessions per week. Training should not exceed competition time.

Competition: Competition with focus on all round development and equal opportunities to play all positions. Scores are taken and teams are graded. No competition ranking or results tables. No representative teams. One-day tournament – school based teams

Tournament Guidelines: One-day tournament /Festival Day. 90 minutes total time per player per day. Minimum half game policy applies. Ensure all players get equal game time.

Year 7 & 8

11 to 12 year olds

Sporting involvement: Broad range of activities and deliberate play, 60 minutes per day

Sessions: 60 minutes, 2 – 3 sessions per week

Competition: Competitive and social competitions with focus on all round development and equal opportunities to play all positions. Scores are taken and teams are graded. No representative teams. Tournaments – school based teams.

Tournament Guidelines: One-day tournament, 120 minutes, Two or more consecutive day tournaments, 60 minutes per day. It is preferable that tournaments at this age are one day only and spread out during the season. If a two-day tournament is required, the week's loading needs to be reduced. Minimum half game policy applies. Ensure all players get equal game time.



Player Eligibility

Junior Netball has been designed to meet the physical, cognitive, spiritual and social needs of players with competition structured for the various stages of development.

It is preferable that players only play within their year group.

In smaller schools or clubs where players may be required to play above or below their age group to enable all children to play, it is recommended that players should be placed in teams that match their stage of development.

Game Time

Considerable research has identified that lack of game time is a significant cause of players leaving the game and lowering retention rates.

In view of this research and player feedback, a **minimum half game for every player** policy has been implemented.

It is compulsory for every player from Year 1 to 8 to play a **minimum of a half game** which could consist of two separate quarters. This also applies to all tournament play. Where rolling substitutions are permitted, for example, at Year 3 & 4, players must still play a minimum of half a game.

NNZ will promote the minimum player participation time alongside local Netball Centres and Zones. Netball Centres and Zones will actively implement the policy and proactively educate coaches and parents on its importance.

Boys in Netball

All boys may play Netball alongside girls up to the age of 12 without restriction.

Year 7 and 8 boys who are over the age of 12 years may continue to play Netball at the discretion of the Netball Centre. NNZ recommends a maximum of three boys playing on court at any one time, one in each third.

Netball Centres and Zones are encouraged to develop alternative competitions for boys, 13 years and older, (Year 9 and above), who wish to continue playing Netball.

JUNIOR NETBALL GAME FORMATS

The following tables provide a snapshot of recommended game progressions for junior players.



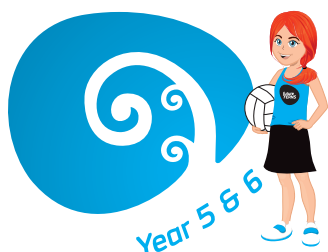
futureFERNs



This level introduces Netball to 5 to 6 year olds. The aim is to develop fundamental movement and ball skills. The 20-minute game that follows the initial skill session is played on one third of a full-size court, by teams of four, with the emphasis on equal participation. Modified equipment is used.



The focus for this age group is to develop further skills, while still playing on a reduced court size with modified equipment. The format promotes lots of scoring, lots of touches on the ball and fun for all participants. With five players in each team and rotating positions, this ensures everyone has an equal chance to develop.



Netball continues to be modified for players of this age. The focus is on learning and continued development of fundamental movement and basic Netball skills. The 6v6 game is fast and provides players with lots of touches on the ball to enhance skill development, engagement and enjoyment.



Players have developed a considerable understanding of the game, and are now playing seven-a-side. The emphasis is on converting fundamental movement skills to foundation Netball skills. Performance, challenge and 'playing' are key motives for this age group. Ensuring positional rotation and playing at least half a game will give each player the opportunity to participate and develop.

Year 1 & 2 – Play, Explore, Develop

Overview	Netball Modifications
Game format	4 v 4
Game Day format	20-minute skill session followed by a game of two 8-minute halves.
Session duration	30 – 45 minutes. Modify the time according to group size, ability level, age, health status and weather conditions etc.
Goal height	2.1-metres (if goals are not available, a hula hoop held by a parent provides more success).
Ball size	Modified ball – 20cm textured-surface ball.
Umpire/game leaders	Use of the Junior Coordinator or Star Helper allowed on court to assist and support players.
Use of whistle	No whistle.
Rules of play:	Key differences from normal Netball rules:
• Time with ball	• Ball can be held for up to 5 seconds before pass or shot.
• Footwork	• Players are encouraged to stop after receiving the ball but there is no footwork rule.
• Defending player	• No marking the player with the ball, i.e. allow them space to pass.
Substitutions	Rolling substitutions – players should have equal time on court.
Court size	One third of a court.
Positions	No set positions – coloured bibs or existing bibs turned inside out will work well.
Player participation time	Minimum of half a game.
Rotations	No rotations required.
Court set-up	No goal circles, 2 x goalposts or hula hoops.
Movement on court	No restrictions or court markings.
Competition set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team or individual entry. • No scores kept, but teams should be graded. • No competition ranking or leagues.



Year 3 & 4 – Play, Explore, Develop

Overview	Netball Modifications
Game format	5 v 5
Game Day format	15-minute skill session, game 4 x 8-minute quarter.
Goal height	2.6 metres
Ball size	Size 4
Umpire/Coach	Coaches can support at this level and can move around on the court as required to assist and support players. Rules are simplified and focus is on letting the game flow and minimising stoppages.
Use of whistle	No whistle – support and explain decisions to players.
Rules of play:	Key differences from normal Netball rules:
• Time with ball	• Ball can be held for up to 5 seconds before pass or shot.
• Footwork	• Encourage players to land balanced.
• Defending player	• Enforce 1 metre distance to allow players space to pass.
Substitutions	Rolling substitutions – players should have equal time on court.
Court size	Two thirds of a court.
Positions	2 x Attacker, 2 x Defender, 1 x Centre.
Rotations	Players to rotate to ensure opportunity in all positions.
Player participation time	Minimum of half a game.
Court set-up	Two thirds of the court with a goal circle marked in each third, two portable goals or one fixed and one portable goal.
Movement on court	Court split in half – C can move everywhere except the goal circles, A & D half of area including goal circle.
Competition set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team or individual entry. • No scores kept, but teams should be graded. • No competition ranking or leagues.



Year 5 & 6 – Play, Explore, Develop

Overview	Netball Modifications
Game format	6 v 6
Game Day format	4 x 8-minute quarters
Goal height	2.6 metres
Ball size	Size 4
Umpire/Coach	Umpire
Use of whistle	Whistle
Rules of play:	Key differences from normal Netball rules:
• Time with ball	• Ball can be held for up to 5 seconds before pass or shot.
• Footwork	• The player may not re-ground first grounded foot.
• Defending player	• Must retreat 1 metre.
Substitutions	Substitutions can be made at an interval or when play has stopped for injury or illness.
Court size	2 x Attacker, 2 x Defender, 2 x Centre.
Positions	Players to rotate to ensure opportunity in all positions.
Rotations	Minimum of half a game.
Player participation time	Full court.
Court set-up	C can move everywhere except the goal circles, A & D can move in two thirds of the court.
Movement on court	Court split in half – C can move everywhere except the goal circles, A & D half of area including goal circle.
Competition set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition with focus on all-round development and equal opportunities to play all positions. • Scores are taken and teams are graded. • No competition ranking or results tables. • No representative teams. • One-day tournament – school based teams/ Festival Day.



Year 7 & 8 – Play, Explore, Develop

Overview	Netball Modifications
Game format	7 v 7
Game Day format	4 x 10-minute quarters
Goal height	3.05 metres
Ball size	Size 5
Umpire/Coach	Umpire
Use of whistle	Whistle
Rules of play:	
• Time with ball	• Ball can be held for up to 3 seconds.
• Footwork	• The player must not re-ground first grounded foot.
• Defending player	• Must retreat 0.9 metre.
Substitutions	Substitutions can be made at an interval or when play has stopped for injury or illness.
Positions	GK, GD, WD, C, WA, GA, GS
Rotations	Continue to provide opportunities for players to play a variety of positions.
Player participation time	Minimum of half a game.
Court size	Full court
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive and social competitions with focus on all-round development and equal opportunities to play all positions. • Scores are taken and teams are graded. • No representative teams. • Tournaments – school based teams.



HOW MUCH NETBALL IS HEALTHY?

Junior Netballers grow and mature at different rates. Netball offers a range of opportunities and programmes 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.
- Help develop FMS, physical capacity and physical literacy.
- Leave decisions about specialisation as late as possible [see earlier in document].

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

The Development Process

Child development is driven by three distinct processes: growth, maturation and adaptation.

GROWTH

- Growth is a complicated process because parts of the body mature at different rates, and periods of growth vary considerably between individuals.

MATURATION

- Maturation is the genetically programmed series of changes leading to maturity. These changes occur in the same sequence for all children but there are great individual differences in; the onset of puberty, how long puberty takes [it can be 18 months to five years] and how much growth occurs in the adolescent growth spurt.
- Chronological Age is of limited value in determining levels of maturity.

ADAPTION

- 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.

Physical activity is essential for normal growth and development. However, excessive involvement can compromise a young player's health and wellbeing, and can adversely affect their performance in Netball and other sports, as can under involvement.

Over-training, over-competing and early specialisation can result in serious outcomes affecting the dynamics and timing of growth and physical maturation, injury, illness, negative psychological effects and burnout.

During growth spurts, training and competitions for developing and growing players need to be carefully planned to avoid injury.

The risk of bone fracture, growth plate injuries and soft tissues injuries increases during rapid growth. On-going development of FMS is vital during the growth phase.

For further information on playing guidelines [training loads and frequency] refer to The Netball Pathway on pages 12 to 13.



NetballSmart, is NNZ's official injury prevention programme.

Due to the nature of the game [explosive, powerful movements, repeated landings and the restrictive nature of the footwork rules], Netball has a high inherent injury risk.

The key to enjoying playing Netball is being prepared. That means being physically fit, knowing appropriate injury management and understanding correct technique. It's about ensuring all players are physically and technically prepared before taking to the court.

NetballSmart is a world-leading programme with a comprehensive approach to keeping players on the court.

NetballSmart content has been integrated into all Junior Netball Coaching workshops and resources.

For further information on injury prevention refer to <http://netballnz.co.nz/useful-info/netball-smart>

Specialisation

Early sport specialisation [playing one sport only for greater than 8 months of the year, playing/training in one sport greater hours per week than chronological years] is contraindicated to athlete development, and increases injury rate.

Early specialisation reduces athleticism [competence in a broad range of motor skills] and can lead to burnout.

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. Up to Year 8, it is recommended that players experience playing a variety of positions to acquire a broad range of fundamental and basic Netball skills. The key messages at junior level are:

- ✓ Focus on individual development and developing all players.
- ✓ Focus on having fun so interest is maintained until players are at an age and stage to specialise.
- ✓ Junior players should be encouraged to participate in a wide range of sporting activities.
- ✓ In most cases childhood success does not lead to adult success.
- ✓ Expose players to as many different Netball experiences as possible [rotate position and teams].
- ✓ Be patient, leave decisions about specialisation as late as possible. Commence talent development once players reach high school.
- ✓ Those with potential for the future are able to realise that potential later in life as a senior athlete [to be able to win when it counts... as a Silver Fern].

Early diversification:

- Does not hinder elite development at an appropriate age.
- Is linked to longevity in sport participation.
- Broadens experiences without specific skill development in one sport.
- High level of deliberate play promotes intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is linked to ongoing participation in sport beyond “sampling years”.
- High levels of deliberate play vs deliberate practise in multiple sports in the “sampling years” promotes experimentation in “safe environments and assists in skill acquisition.”

At the end of Year 8 [at approximately 13 years old], children can choose their favourite sport and specialise more or just continue to use sport as a means of recreational activity. If the earlier years are well planned, late adolescent [16 years old] athletes have developed the physical, social, FMS and motor skills and cognitive skills to move into highly specialised training in one sport.



Player Development

The junior Netball programme focuses on ensuring all young players have the best possible opportunity to reach their potential physically, psychologically and socially.

For that to occur, all young Netballers need enjoyable, quality development experiences in their early years, to build their self-belief and ignite their passion and enjoyment for sport in well-rounded environments.

Coaches and parents need to be aware of what encourages and detracts children from playing sport. Recent research shows that children play sport for friendship and social engagement as well as the desire to participate in a competitive activity.

Parental support is pivotal in children starting and maintaining involvement in sport.

Encouragement by friends is also a positive driver to children's sport engagement. Negative experience with coaches is the most common deterrent to playing organised sport.

Specific guidelines for providing a sound foundation for player development include:

- Regulate length of a season to 3 or 4 months, with a maximum of 6 months.
- Limit lengthy travel to organised competitions.
- Introduce grass-roots sport programmes that focus on trying different sports.
- Provide healthy competitive opportunities. Athletes like a competitive setting, however do not over-emphasise winning and long-term outcomes such as championships in the sampling years. Tournament settings should provide opportunity for a range of athletes to contribute to the team.
- Discourage early specialisation in one sport – athletes should make these decisions at late adolescence when they are both physically and mentally equipped. Preparing athletes to foster lifelong engagement in sport or specialisation should be the priority.
- Ensure children play all positions in a given sport. Do not limit the tall athletes to GS and GK positions and limit their FMS and skill acquisition.
- Deliberate play vs deliberate practise provides a safe environment for skill experimentation. Promote deliberate play within and beyond organised sport.
- Design, play and practice activities that focus on fun, FMS development, integrated neuromuscular training and short-term rewards.
- Provide relevant feedback, appropriate to the player's development.

As young people make the choice to pursue their sport to an elite level, and their future potential is realised, talent development can commence. This stage of development is not recommended till at least high school years [13 to 16 years].

Player development programmes bridge the gap between the early years of playing and participating with developing and performing in a chosen sport.

Year 7 & 8 player development programme

The focus of the player development programme, targeted at Year 7 & 8 players, is:

- To provide players with the opportunities to start focusing more on their desired sport and 'to continue to progress to becoming the best that they can be'.
- Year 7 and 8 is too early to specialise, therefore the programme will encompass a wide range of technical and tactical development.
- Implement a national approach for the development of talented young players that can prepare them for the future game at the highest levels when they are physically, psychologically and socially ready.
- Refocus on FMS as athletes move through puberty. Female athletes negatively change their jump and landing mechanics post puberty.
- To widen and improve the talent base through comprehensive development opportunities [physical, psychological and social skill development].
- Create a pathway for players to enhance their capability to progress towards specialisation and representative honours [age group representative teams, e.g., U15, U17, U19 representative teams]

NNZ have developed a Year 7 & 8 player development programme for use at Zone and Netball Centre level.

This programme replaces the previous Year 7 & 8 representative structure. The programme will develop the athlete as a whole including enhancing the FMS, physical capacity, skill base and game understanding and introduce applicable athlete life and sport science topics.

Tournament formats for Year 7 & 8 players

To ensure the continued development of a broad base of players, Year 7 & 8 tournament play will be based on school or club team entries.

To assist Netball Centres in catering for larger numbers of team entries, use of the SKED competition management software programme is recommended [currently under development by NNZ].

For further information on Player Development refer to the reference section of this document.



KEEPING NETBALL SAFE

As providers of junior Netball, we are committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all members, providing a safe environment to participate in Netball.

Safe Netball for Children

NNZ is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children participating in Netball. We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practices that protect children from harm and exploitation while participating in our activities.

The Safe Netball for Children Policy 2017 provides guidelines for the provision of safe Netball practices across Netball.

Refer to <http://netballnz.co.nz/useful-info/resource-library/netball-nz> to access a copy of the Safe Netball for Children – NNZ Policy 2017.

Health and Safety

NNZ, Zones and Netball Centres are committed to the health, safety and well-being of all its members and participants and are dedicated to providing a safe environment to participate in. This means that everyone involved with junior Netball needs to be safety-conscious and take all practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of everyone, including reporting any unsafe condition, behaviour, equipment, hazard/risk, accident, incident and near miss to management immediately.

FACILITIES

Netball courts should be inspected prior to each training session or match to ensure that:

- The court surface is safe for play, is free of litter, water, court debris (gravel, stones, etc.) and slippery agents such as moss or high polish floors.
- 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.
- Adjustable rings are firmly secured.
- There is a run-off space around each court that is clear of obstructions (drainage culvert, chairs, signs, bags, spectators etc.)
- Lighting posts are well clear of the court and appropriately padded.
- Lighting is provided during low-light conditions (twilight/ night/overcast).
- Any obstructions or objects that cannot be moved but may cause injury e.g. fire hose boxes, post holes for other sports e.g. tennis nets – must be either padded or covered,
- Changes of surface from the court to the run-off are demarcated and secure e.g. from wood to carpet, from asphalt to grass/gravel.

EQUIPMENT

Netball providers should ensure the use of suitable equipment for the activity and the players' size and development. Requirements for modified equipment is outlined in the section Junior Netball Game Formats [pages 18-21].

Portable goal posts must be adequately weighted to prevent tipping in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Consideration must be given to environmental factors and their impact on participants.

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 e.g. heat, cold, rain or wind.

Providers must 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.

It is advisable that road conditions are also considered when deciding if play will be cancelled or postponed. Check with NZTA for updated road conditions.

Participants should be encouraged to wear sunscreen on exposed skin when appropriate.

Compared to adults, children and young people have a larger ratio of skin surface area to body mass and their sweat glands and thermoregulation are immature, making them more susceptible to heat loss or gain. Rules regarding the wearing of uniforms should take into consideration temperature variances to ensure player safety and comfort.

CONCUSSION

Concussion is a brain injury that can occur in any sport, particularly where there is full body contact. Concussion is caused by the impact of force (a blow) to a part of the body, not necessarily the head directly.

The three R's: Recognise, Remove and Refer are critical when dealing with a suspected concussion.

Any player with a suspected concussion **[Recognise]** should be immediately **Removed** from play, and should not return to activity until they are assessed medically **[Refer]**.

- Players with suspected concussion should not be left alone.
- If referred, parents/coaches need to follow GPs /Sports Doctors' guidelines.
- When a possible concussion occurs, it is important to take action and to get help.

For further information on concussion refer to ACC SportSmart <https://accsportsmart.co.nz/concussion/>

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 adequate nutrition may become tired and lethargic, and 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, encouraging 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.
- Offer plenty of fluids before, during and after sport as children can overheat and dehydrate quickly.
- Seek professional advice from a sports dietician and/or sports doctor if they are concerned about a child's nutrition.

Girls who under-eat while training [energy deficient syndrome] potentially have an increased risk of developing stress fractures and amenorrhoea. Later in life this combination may manifest as decreased bone mineral density.

Participants should be encouraged to maintain fluid balance and hydration. Participants 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 the preferred drink for maintaining fluid balance of young players. Sports drinks are not necessary or recommended for this age group.

PRIVACY POLICY

NNZ is committed to ensuring participants privacy is protected according to the relevant privacy legislation. Schools, clubs, Netball Centres and Zones must ensure compliance to the legislation. Refer to NNZ Privacy Policy <http://www.netballnz.co.nz/privacy-policy>

USE OF IMAGES

Netball providers must be aware of the potential risks linked to the use of photographs/videos of young people in sport. No visual or audio material of junior participants in any medium is allowed without parental/guardian consent.

It is recommended that Centres seek such permission as part of the registration process.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND STRESS

Whether children and young people find playing Netball stressful depends largely on the attitudes of teammates, parents, coaches and officials. Netball should be a positive experience for the players, and adults should assist by encouraging and supporting the young Netballers.

ANTI-DOPING

NNZ is committed to the advancement of clean sport that rejects cheating through the use of performance enhancing drugs and methods.

NNZ are in partnership with the national anti-doping organisation, Drug Free Sport New Zealand [DFSNZ] to:

- Promote a culture of clean sport.
- Deliver anti-doping education.
- Organise and implement testing programmes.
- Report doping and suspicious activity.
- Support athletes to compete drug free.

For full information about anti-doping, visit <http://www.drugfreesport.org.nz/>

While drugs are less likely to be a problem at junior level, it is important that Netball providers offer education so that the players understand that drugs harm performance and development.

Less common, but still of concern, is the use of performance enhancing drugs, which some young people may use in response to pressures to 'win at all cost'.

All involved in junior Netball can help players develop appropriate attitudes by discussing the issue with them, by emphasising participation and performance of skills and by setting a good example as role models.

SMOKE FREE

NNZ has a smoke free policy at all events and Netball Centres. The following areas must be smoke free:

- All indoor areas.
- All outdoor playing/training areas.
- All spectator areas (standing and seated, covered and uncovered).
- All canteen, catering and eating and drinking areas.

DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

All Netball providers should ensure that they have a clearly documented plan that outlines the actions and processes that need to be followed in an emergency situation.

- Ensure the contact details of parents/guardians for all junior participants are available in case of an emergency.
- Ensure the facility has a well-stocked first aid kit available and encourage teams to also provide their own.
- It is recommended that Netball providers have current first aid qualifications.
- Emergencies should be formally reported, discussed, and changes made to procedures if needed, as per the Netball Centre's policy.

STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The risk of contracting infectious diseases such as hepatitis, meningitis, 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 personal items such as drink bottles and towels.
- adopting and following specific procedures for incidences involving blood and other bodily fluids, including removing or cleaning blood-stained clothing/equipment.
- keeping infected players away from training and competition areas.
- maintaining personal hygiene standards.

It is advisable that if a child is not well (in particular, the illness is affecting the chest) then that child should not train or play.

CODES OF BEHAVIOUR

New Zealanders are extremely passionate and proud sport participants and supporters.

Sport plays an important role in the lives of our junior players and it is vital that everyone involved, including players, parents, umpires, coaches and volunteers, support, encourage and allow junior players to enjoy participating in sport.

Every child has the right to play. Every child has the right to be fully included regardless of disability, ethnicity, religion or gender. If a child makes a commitment to play Netball, that child, regardless of their ability, must be offered full support and inclusion.

Young people are easily influenced and negatively affected by adverse experiences.

Netball New Zealand has developed a general Code of Conduct, which is located in schedule 4 of the Netball New Zealand Regulations. Refer to the NNZ Regulations 2017 via this link: <http://netballnz.co.nz/useful-info/resource-library/netball-nz>

In addition to NNZ's Codes of Conduct, the following role-specific Codes of Behaviour identify key principles on which coaches, umpires, parents and young players should base their Netball involvement. The adoption of these codes will inherently provide a positive experience and will encourage players to maintain a lifelong involvement in the game.

Player Code of Behaviour

<p>Play for fun and enjoyment of Netball.</p>	<p>Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not bully or take unfair advantage of another player.</p>	<p>Control your temper. Verbal abuse or deliberate contact and abusive behaviour is unacceptable.</p>
<p>Play according to the rules of Netball and the principles of fair play.</p>		<p>Play equally hard for yourself and your team. Your team's performance will benefit and so will you.</p>
<p>Be a good sport. Cheer all good play from your team and the opposition.</p>		<p>Appreciate and co-operate with your coach, team-mates and officials, as there would be no game without them.</p>
<p>Take responsibility for your performance on and off the court.</p>	<p>If decisions don't go your way, be a good sport and carry on - everyone makes mistakes.</p>	<p>Bring a positive sporting attitude to each practice and game.</p>


Umpire Code of Behaviour

<p>Umpire the rules of Netball fairly, without fear nor favour</p>	<p>Treat all players, coaches, bench officials and fellow umpires with respect, at all times</p>	<p>Ensure all players are able to operate in a safe environment.</p>
<p>Display high standards of behaviour and personal appearance which promote a positive image of Netball and umpiring at all times.</p>		<p>Support and encourage other -umpires and -bench -officials.</p>
<p>Be courteous, respectful and open to discussion and interaction.</p>	<p>Enjoy the game.</p>	<p>Keep up to date with the latest rule changes and modifications relevant to junior Netball.</p>
<p>Be a good sport and understand that actions speak louder than words.</p>	<p>Place the safety and welfare of players above all else.</p>	<p>Fairly apply the relaxed rules, guiding and supporting all players.</p>

Parent/Spectator Code of Behaviour

If children are interested, encourage and support them to play.	Everyone makes mistakes but role model sporting behaviour by skipping over wrong umpire calls and carrying on.	Recognise and value the importance of coaches and other volunteers, who give their time and resources to provide Netball. They deserve support.
Teach children that effort is as important as victory, so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.	Encourage children to play to the rules and respect umpires' decisions.	Lead by example.
Children learn by taking risks and making mistakes, so encourage and support this.		Support the removal of verbal and physical abuse from the game.
Applaud good play by players on both teams.	Remember children are involved in Netball for their enjoyment, not yours.	Avoid forcing children to play if reluctant.

Coach Code of Behaviour

<p>Remember children's main reason for playing is for fun!</p>	<p>Be a role model and ensure players display the same qualities.</p>	<p>Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of players.</p>
<p>Encourage effort and skill; this will increase self-esteem and self-confidence.</p>	<p>Encourage players to show respect for opponents, team-mates, umpires, officials and spectators.</p>	<p>Respect the talent, development stage and goals of each player.</p>
<p>Display a professional manner with regard to language, preparation, planning and presentation.</p>		<p>Treat all equally and cater for individual difference based on gender, ethnic origin, religion or ability.</p>
<p>Follow the advice of medics when determining if an injured player is ready to resume playing or not.</p>		<p>Ensure players enjoy and develop their skills and play by using positive, specific and constructive feedback.</p>
<p>Be reasonable in demands on player's time, energy and enthusiasm.</p>	<p>Allow opportunities for players to develop decision making skills.</p>	<p>Commit to increasing knowledge of sound coaching principles and development stages of young children.</p>

REFERENCES AND USEFUL DOCUMENTS

USEFUL WEBSITES

Netball New Zealand: www.netballnz.co.nz

futureFERNS: www.mynetball.co.nz/futureferns/home

NetballSmart: netballnz.co.nz/useful-info/netball-smart

USEFUL LINKS

Netball New Zealand Code of Conduct: <http://netballnz.co.nz/useful-info/resource-library/netball-nz>

Netball New Zealand Coaching Framework: <http://netballnz.co.nz/get-involved/coaching>

Player Profiles: <https://www.mynetball.co.nz/futureferns/kids/player-profiles>

Sport NZ's Talent Plan: <http://www.sportnz.org.nz/about-us/our-publications/our-plans-and-programmes/talent-plan/>

Physical Literacy: <http://www.sportnz.org.nz/about-us/who-we-are/what-were-working-towards/physical-literacy-approach/>

Vulnerable Children's Act [reprinted April 2017]: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/DLM5501618.html>

WADA Parents' Guide to support clean sport: https://www.wada-ama.org/sites/default/files/education_parents_guide_cleansport_print_en.pdf

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Early Specialisation article: AOSSM Early Sport Specialization Consensus Statement. LaPrade et al. The Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine, 4[4], 2325967116644241 DOI: 10.1177/2325967116644241

Youth Sports article: Jean Côté & David J. Hancock [2016] Evidence-based policies for youth sport programmes, International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 8:1, 51-65, DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2014.919338



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