



**INTERNATIONAL  
NETBALL  
FEDERATION**

**WHAT'S NEW in the NEW RULES? A guide to changes in the Rules of Netball from 2016**

The INF Congress in August 2015 adopted a new set of Rules. The Rules apply to all 'international play' (ie 'matches between two countries played for INF rankings points') from 1 January 2016 – most will apply at other levels soon after this date. Here is a summary of the changes.

<b>Rule 9.3.1</b>	<b>All stoppages for illness/injury or blood on a player are now 30 seconds and the player concerned must leave the court. For more serious injuries, umpires may extend the time for the player to leave the court.</b>	
<p><b>Previously:</b> The first stoppage in each quarter for injury/illness was up to 2 minutes (per team) and the player could remain on court after treatment. Remaining stoppages were limited to 30 seconds and the player had to leave the court. All blood stoppages were up to 2 minutes.</p> <p><i>The longer stoppages were often used by coaches for tactical reasons (rather than injuries).</i></p>	<p><b>Reason:</b> Injuries for all players should be treated similarly irrespective of whether they are the first player to be injured or not. As blood is often related to injury it is now treated similarly.</p> <p>This will also help speed up the game while ensuring the safety of all players is maintained.</p> <p><i>Note: interval times have been lengthened to provide additional coaching time.</i></p>	
<p><b>What does this mean in practice?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For injury/illness, only a team's FIRST stoppage in each quarter changes – all injury/illness stoppages are now of the same format</li> <li>• All stoppages involving blood on a player will be treated as for injury/illness</li> <li>• When an on court player requests time to be held (for injury/illness/blood) - the umpire asks 'why?' If a player is about to shoot for goal, the umpire may wait until this is completed. In a serious case, the umpire may hold time without any request being made</li> <li>• Only the primary care person/s may go on the court – they must wear identification supplied by the event organiser [refer Rule 5.1.2 (ii) (b)]</li> <li>• The injured/ill player must leave the court and play restarts within 30 seconds</li> <li>• The primary care person/s must advise the nearer umpire if the injured/ill player cannot be moved safely within 30 seconds. The umpire will extend the time and may permit other person/s to go on the court to assist with the player's treatment and/or removal</li> <li>• Both teams may make substitutions and/or team changes</li> <li>• The position may be left vacant (if the player is C another player must move to play as C)</li> <li>• If a position is left vacant, subsequently the ill/injured player may return or a substitute may take the court (after advising the umpire). This can occur after a goal is scored (the player must play in the vacant position) or during a further stoppage for injury/illness/blood or an interval</li> <li>• Coaching and hydration may occur but play must restart in 30 seconds</li> <li>• If there is a substitution or team change, the replacement player stands out in any penalty pass</li> </ul>		
<b>Rule 8.2.1 (i)</b>	<b>For a centre pass, the Centre must stand with at least one foot wholly inside the centre circle.</b>	
<p><b>Previously:</b> C was penalised if any part of <b>either foot</b> was on the ground outside the centre circle.</p>	<p><b>Reason:</b> to speed up play and eliminate an overly fussy rule.</p>	
<p><b>What does this mean in practice?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C needs to ensure one foot is entirely inside the centre circle (line is part of circle) – this foot is the 'landing foot' for footwork and for measuring obstruction distances</li> </ul>		

- Other foot may be in the air, in the centre circle or outside it – ie no restriction
- As soon as C has one foot in centre circle the umpire will blow the whistle for the centre pass
- Other players should be aware they need to position quickly after a goal

<b>Rule</b> <b>7.1.3 (iv)</b>	<b>Once a player taking a penalty pass is in the correct position, the player may either choose to play the ball immediately or wait for the infringer to stand out of play.</b>
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<b>Previously:</b> The player taking a penalty pass had to wait until the infringer was standing out of play. A player who did not wait until the penalty was ‘set’ was penalised.	<b>Reason:</b> This provides better options for the non-infringing team and speeds up play.  <b>Note: 3 seconds is measured from the time BOTH players are in position.</b>
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**Note:** The term ‘sanction’ is now 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

<b>What does this mean in practice?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once in position, the player taking the sanction may pass/shoot before the infringer is in place. Alternatively the player may wait for the infringer to ‘stand out of play’ before playing the ball</li> <li>• If the player chooses to play the ball immediately, the sanction will not be awarded again unless the penalised player infringed further</li> <li>• Players and coaches need to be able to assess the advisability in different situations of playing the ball before the infringer is in position</li> </ul>	

<b>Rule</b> <b>10.2 (ii) (b)</b>	<b>A defender may not deflect a shot at goal on its downward path towards the ring (this includes touching the ball up through the net).</b>
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<b>Previously:</b> This was not covered specifically. There was uncertainty as to how two existing rules might apply (including the rather vague wording ‘in any other way for any other purpose’). These were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A player may not use the goalpost as a means of regaining balance, as a support in recovering the ball going out of court or in any other way for any other purpose . . .</li> <li>• A defending player may not cause the goalpost to move so as to interfere with a shot at goal.</li> </ul>	<b>Reason:</b> Innovative ways of defending a shot (such as lifting a defensive player) have required this rule to be addressed. In addition, use of the goalpost has been clarified as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A player may not use the goalpost to regain balance or as a support to recover the ball [Rule 9.4.1 (vi)]</i></li> <li>• <i>A defending player may not cause the goalpost to move so as to interfere with a shot at goal and cause it to miss [Rule 10.2 (ii) (a)]</i></li> </ul>
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<b>What does this mean in practice?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A defending player may be lifted to deflect a shot</li> <li>• Touching/hitting any part of the goalpost (including the net) is not an infringement in itself, provided it does not cause the shot to miss (or it is used for balance/support)</li> <li>• Deflection of a shot can be made during only the upward path of a shot towards the ring. Once the ball starts to descend, no deflection is permitted</li> </ul>	

<b>Rule</b> <b>9.5.1 (i)</b> <b>(short pass)</b>	<b>When a player passes the ball there must be sufficient space for an opposing player on the court to be able to intercept the ball as it moves from the hands of the thrower to those of the receiver.</b>
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<b>Previously:</b> The rule stated that ‘at the moment’ the ball is passed there must be room for a third player to move between the hands of the thrower and those of the receiver’. This meant the rule did not always reflect the distance the ball travelled.	<b>Reason:</b> The rule now considers the passage of the ball as it moves from the hands of the thrower to those of the receiver. There must be a ‘reasonable opportunity’ for the defending team to intercept the ball as it is passed.
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<b>What does this mean in practice?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a player throws the ball against the goalpost and catches it again, this player is both the ‘thrower’ and the ‘receiver’. Such a pass may be made but the throw must cover sufficient distance that it could be intercepted by a defending player</li> </ul>	

<b>Rule 5.2.1 (iii) &amp; (vi)</b>	<b>The umpires work cooperatively and may appeal to each other for decisions.</b>	
<b>Previously:</b> An umpire gave decisions for only one half of the court (except for side line decisions and when taking a toss up). An umpire could appeal to the co-umpire for a decision if unsure.	<b>Reason:</b> It is considered important that umpires work more closely together. While division of the court remains unchanged the co-umpire may hold time for injury/ illness/blood (or other reasons) or for issues relating to game management.	
<p><b>What does this mean in practice?</b></p> <p>Either umpire may hold time as appropriate – this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for injury/illness of a player (when an appeal is made by an on court player)</li> <li>• for blood on a player (including clothing), the ball or the court</li> <li>• to avoid loss of playing time</li> <li>• for an emergency</li> <li>• for discipline reasons relating to on-court players or the team bench</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Rule 13 - Game Management</b></p> <p><i>This section of the Rules has been redrafted to provide a clearer structure for players, umpires and coaches. The main changes are as follows:</i></p> <p><b>Foul play</b> – this has been defined and includes unfair play, dangerous play and misconduct (each of which is detailed). Intimidation is now included as ‘unfair play’.</p> <p><b>Actions that can be taken by umpires</b> – these have been more clearly defined and will usually apply in the following order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cautions</b> – <i>umpire advises player that a specified behaviour needs to change</i></li> <li>• <b>Official warning</b> – <i>umpire advises player that a further breach will result in suspension</i></li> <li>• <b>Suspension</b> – <i>player is suspended from play for <u>2 minutes</u></i></li> <li>• <b>Ordering off</b> – <i>player is sent from the court for the remainder of the match.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Advancing a penalty</b> – is now related to <u>delaying play</u> ONLY [Rule 13.2.1 (i)].</p>		
<b>Previously:</b> The discipline section specified actions for breaking the Rules, deliberate delaying of play or dispute with an umpire. The umpire determined the length of any suspension, while other discipline actions were also discretionary (ie they indicated actions an umpire ‘may’ take).	<b>Reason:</b> A defined structure of actions for foul play provides clearer guidelines for coaches, players and umpires. ‘Good sportsmanship’ and player safety are foremost in these changes. Any official warning, suspension or ordering off is deemed to be made jointly and is binding on both umpires.	
<p><b>What does this mean in practice?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Umpires are <b>required to take action</b> if the foul play rule is breached</li> <li>• Players and coaches need to be aware of the actions umpires can take and the reasons for them</li> <li>• The umpire ‘cautions’ a player by instructing the player to change a particular behaviour (this will relate to careless or ill-disciplined play or repeated infringements of the same or several rules)</li> <li>• If an ‘official warning’ is given to a player the umpire will use this term and state reasons for it. The umpire signals this to the official bench [hand signal 20] thus the coach will also be informed. A player needs to be aware that any further breach will result in suspension for 2 minutes</li> <li>• Hand signals [21 and 22] are also used to indicate a player has been suspended or ordered off</li> <li>• A suspended player is seated by the reserve umpire but may join the team during an interval. The reserve umpire, when notified by the timekeeper, advises the player when to return to play</li> <li>• The controlling umpire may hold time to consult the co-umpire regarding foul play as needed</li> <li>• If the co-umpire observes foul play not seen by the controlling umpire, the co-umpire may hold time to advise this and to recommend the action to be taken (this would normally be limited to instances where the player will receive an official warning, be suspended or ordered off)</li> <li>• The umpire may request the on-court captain to speak to player/s whose behaviour is of concern [Rule 5.1.1 (v) (c) &amp; (d)]</li> </ul>		

## OTHER CHANGES

New rule	What does this mean?
<b>CHANGES RELATING TO TEAMS (players and team officials)</b>	
<p><b>Rule 5.1.2 (i)</b> A team may have up to five team officials. These will include a coach and at least one primary care person. The captain is no longer listed as a 'team official'.</p>	<p>Previously a manager was also specified. This provides greater flexibility for a team to decide the composition of its team officials.</p>
<p><b>Rule 5.1.1 (iv) (d)</b> Players' hair must be suitably tied back.</p>	<p>Hair may sometimes be a distraction and/or hazard to other players so must now be suitably tied back.</p>
<p><b>Rule 5.1.2 (ii)</b> The new rule details the requirements regarding primary care person/s, including the additional responsibility of advising an umpire if a player is too ill/injured to leave the court within 30 seconds. They may not have other duties that could affect their taking the court when required.</p>	<p>Primary care person/s must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear identification provided by the event organiser</li> <li>• advise the nearer umpire if a player is too ill/injured to leave the court within 30 seconds.</li> </ul> <p>It is important they are aware of both of these responsibilities.</p>
<p><b>Rule 8.1.1 (i)</b> If a team has fewer than 5 players when play is due to start, 30 seconds is allowed (was previously 1 minute) for additional players to arrive. A similar rule applies if a team does not take the court when requested following a stoppage [Rule 8.1.1 (ii)].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the player/s arrive within 30 seconds, play starts. A penalty pass is immediately awarded in the centre third by the transverse line nearer to the goal end of the non-infringing team. The C 'stands out of play'.</li> <li>• If they do not arrive within 30 seconds, the team forfeits the match.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rule 13.3</b> This rule outlines the behaviour expected of team officials and bench players.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either umpire may hold time and notify team officials or bench players regarding behaviour.</li> <li>• The actions the umpire may take are outlined in the rule.</li> </ul>
<b>CHANGES RELATING TO PLAY</b>	
<p><b>Rule 8.4.1 (i) (a)</b> The player taking a throw in must have at least one foot within 15 cm (6 in) of the line. <i>Previously the rule stated the player must place 'one or both feet immediately behind the line . . .'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intention is to clarify the rule not change it.</li> <li>• Stating a distance will provide a better guide for players and umpires to use.</li> <li>• Players should be aware of the place to stand when taking a throw in.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rules 8.3.1 &amp; 8.3.2</b> These rules have been clarified to eliminate some confusions regarding 'out of court' that exists in the present rule book</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This rule has not been changed.</li> <li>• The revised wording is intended simply to state the rule more clearly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rule 9.4.1 (ii)</b> A player may not throw/bat the ball deliberately at another player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The umpire will decide if an action is deliberate or accidental.</li> <li>• The sanction is a free pass.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rule 13.2.1 (i)</b> Delaying play (either accidentally or deliberately) is considered foul play – in some cases it could affect the outcome of a match. Thus a penalty pass is now awarded (previously was a free pass) and the sanction is advanced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Advancing a penalty pass' is now related to any form of delaying play or wasting time (as it is seen as disadvantaging the opposing team).</li> <li>• Deliberate infringements (especially at a crucial time in a match) may be considered by the umpire to be a delaying tactic and therefore penalised as such.</li> <li>• The rule provides guidelines about advancing.</li> </ul>

New rule	What does this mean?
<b>CHANGES RELATING TO MATCH OR TECHNICAL OFFICIALS (umpires, scorers, timekeepers)</b>	
<b>Rule 5.2.1 (i)</b> After the captains have tossed, the umpires toss for ends. The umpire winning the toss controls the side line nearer the official bench.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously the umpire winning the toss controlled the northern end of the court.</li> <li>To avoid any confusion the end controlled is now specified relative to the court.</li> </ul>
<b>Rule 6.1.1 (iv) (b)</b> In the event that both umpires indicate the centre pass direction incorrectly, the scorer notifies the umpires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously the scorer could not indicate an incorrect pass unless appealed to by an umpire.</li> <li>The event organiser decides the method to be used to advise the umpires.</li> <li>The centre pass must be checked and a wrong pass corrected before play recommences.</li> </ul>
<b>Rule 6.1.1 (v)</b> The umpire controlling the centre pass penalises any infringements either by the C taking the centre pass or an opponent defending the C.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously an infringement by the C taking the centre pass was penalised by the umpire who started play; a defending player was penalised according to the half in which this occurred.</li> <li>This provides a better division of duties.</li> </ul>
<b>Rule 6.1.2 (i) (c)</b> The umpire indicates a goal has been scored by raising one arm vertically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A hand signal [hand signal 7] is now used to indicate a successful goal (no whistle).</li> <li>When the ball goes out of court the whistle is blown only if players may not be clear the ball is out [hand signal 3 or 4 is used].</li> <li>Research indicates that eliminating whistles in the above cases should reduce the number of whistles in a match by more than 30%.</li> </ul>
<b>Rule 6.1.3 (i)</b> When the ball is out of court no whistle is needed unless it is unclear the ball is out.	
<b>Rule 6.1.4 (ii)</b> Before taking a toss up the umpire ensures players are positioned correctly. <i>Refer also Rule 8.5.2 (i)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously a player was penalised if arms/hands were incorrectly positioned for a toss up.</li> <li>The umpire will now instruct a player to position correctly before taking the toss up.</li> </ul>
<b>CHANGES RELATING TO EQUIPMENT &amp; MATCH TIMES</b>	
<b>Rule 3.3 (i) (c)</b> The ball is to be inflated to a pressure of 76-83 kPa (11-12 psi). <i>kPa = kilopascals    psi = pounds per square inch</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The inflation level is that recommended by the manufacturer. Balls may feel 'different' as no level was specified previously.</li> <li>Teams should practise with balls inflated to this level to gain familiarity with them.</li> </ul>
<b>Rules 3.1 &amp; 3.3</b> Terminology relating to the court has been clarified with some new terms introduced. Terminology relating to the goalpost has also been revised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms added include 'field of play', 'playing enclosure' and 'bench zone'.</li> <li>The upright part of the goalpost is referred to as a pole (to distinguish it from 'goalpost').</li> </ul>
<b>Rule 4.1 (i)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interval between first-second and third-fourth quarters is 4 minutes (was 3 minutes).</li> <li>Halftime is 12 minutes (may be 8 minutes). It was previously either 5 or 10 minutes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intervals have been extended to increase coaching time for teams and to assist broadcasters to meet requirements.</li> <li>The shorter halftime interval may be used if more appropriate (this will usually be when a match is not being telecast).</li> </ul>
<b>Rule 4.2 (i) &amp; (ii)</b> (i) The interval between fulltime and the start of extra time is now 4 minutes (was 2 minutes). (ii) Halves in extra time may now be up to 7 minutes in length.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This interval is consistent with other intervals and will allow better recovery and coaching.</li> <li>The shorter half-time may be used when other matches follow or any time constraints apply.</li> </ul>

New rule	What does this mean?
<b>OTHER CHANGES</b>	
<b>Rule 12</b> Although the rule regarding contact has not been changed the opportunity has been taken to clarify differences between 'contact' and 'contest' as well as to delineate what is 'interference'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rule 12.1 indicates that players may come into physical contact with each other as they strive for the ball.</li> <li>• If they do not interfere with each other's play or use their bodies to gain unfair advantage it is deemed to be 'contest' and is not penalised.</li> <li>• Rule 12.2 details various forms of interference that can occur.</li> </ul>
<b>Rule 14 Umpire hand signals</b> Some hand signals have been added. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throw in from goal line (attacking team)</li> <li>• Goal scored</li> <li>• Goal not scored</li> <li>• Incorrect playing the ball</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Official warning</li> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Ordering off</li> </ul> The following hand signals have been revised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start of play</li> <li>• Hold time</li> <li>• Incorrect entry (ie offside, 'breaking')</li> <li>• Contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The additional hand signals will allow players to know what infringement was penalised even if they do not hear the umpire's call.</li> <li>• Note that the same signal is now used for all contact infringements (umpires will no longer 'recreate the contact'). Umpires will add a brief descriptor when penalising contact infringements (eg 'contact – elbow', 'contact – on ball', 'contact – holding' etc).</li> </ul>

<b>OTHER POINTS TO NOTE</b>	
<b>5.1.1 (v)</b>	(c) Umpires may ask captain to speak to player/s whose behaviour is causing concern (d) If the captain is not on the court an on-court captain is to be advised to the umpires
<b>5.2 (i) (a)</b>	Umpires' clothing must be distinct from teams' playing uniforms but colour is not specified
<b>5.2.2</b>	Role of reserve umpire is specified (not previously included)
<b>5.3.1 (ii) (f)</b>	Scorer may advise umpires if centre pass wrongly indicated (must be before pass is taken)
<b>7.2</b>	When applying advantage the umpire calls 'advantage', signals it and states infringement
<b>8.2.2 (vi)</b>	If an opposing player catches a centre pass in the goal third advantage may be applied
<b>8.5.3 (i)</b>	In toss up, now states 'another player' to align with Rule 9.4.1 (iii) (a) (may not bat the ball deliberately at another player). Sanction is free pass
<b>9.4.1 (ii) (a)</b>	Ball may not be thrown deliberately at another player (sanction is free pass)
<b>'Action'</b>	Term used to cover 'throw in', 'toss up', 'official warning', 'suspension' and 'ordering off'

<b>WHAT OTHER DIFFERENCES ARE THERE?</b>
<b>Does the new Rule Book look different?</b> The opportunity has been taken to modernise and refresh the Rule Book. Every effort has been made to set the Rule Book out in a way that makes it easy to find a particular rule or section, while expert advice has been sought regarding layout and language usage to make it 'user friendly'. A <b>Definitions</b> section at the front provides easy reference for terms used and avoids unnecessary repetition in the Rules.
<b>Do these Rules apply to all levels of play?</b> The Rules are written for <b>international play</b> (this is defined as 'a match between two countries played for INF rankings points'). Variations in the Rules can occur for matches at other levels (but will not normally change the way the Game is played on the court). Some possible variations are indicated in Section 15.