

SPECIFIC WORLD NETBALL RULES



The following are quoted from “World Netball, Rules of Netball” 2024 Edition:

JEWELLERY AND NAILS

RULE 3: TEAM

12. Players may not wear anything that could endanger themselves or other players, specifically:
- No body piercings including earrings may be worn.
 - No adornment that may endanger player safety may be worn.
 - No communication devices may be worn.
 - Any other adornment worn must be securely covered with tape and/or padding.
 - Medical devices may be worn provided they are securely covered with tape and/or padding.
 - Player monitoring devices may be worn provided they are secured within the playing uniform.
 - Fingernails must be short and smooth.
 - Hair must be suitably tied back (for example in a ponytail, plait or braided) and free from any adornment.

STOPPAGES - SUBSTITUTIONS AND TEAM CHANGES

RULE 10: STOPPAGES

- Both teams have the right to make substitutions and/or team changes:
 - During an interval.
 - When play is stopped for injury/illness of a player or blood.
- Both teams may make tactical changes immediately after a goal has been scored following a request from an on-court player to hold time for this purpose, ensuring that:
 - The umpire is clear the request is for a tactical change and not for injury/illness of a player or blood.
 - Any on-court players leave the court or change playing positions without delay.
 - Any substitutes take up their position on court without delay.
 - All team officials including primary care persons remain at the team bench.
 - The umpire is able to restart play quickly so the momentum of the match is not affected.
- If undue time is taken by either team to complete substitutions and/or team changes, the infringing team will be penalised for delaying play [Rule 19.1] and [Rule 19.2]. For a tactical change, this will be immediately following the whistle for the next centre pass.
- The number of substitutions and/or team changes is unlimited during a match provided the players used are those named for the match. However, if the number of requests for tactical changes becomes frivolous the umpires may refuse the request and/or penalise the infringing team for delaying play [Rule 19.1] and [Rule 19.2].

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STOPPAGES - PROCEDURE

RULE 10: STOPPAGES

5. The umpires must hold time:
 - a. For injury/illness following a request from an on-court player, primary care person or independent concussion observer.
 - b. When they notice active bleeding, an open wound or blood-stained clothing.
6. The umpires may hold time for an emergency or in other extreme circumstances.
7. During a stoppage:
 - a. For injury/illness of a player or blood: all players not affected or being substituted remain on the court. Both umpires remain on their respective side lines.
 - b. In an emergency or in other extreme circumstances: the event organiser decides whether the players and/or umpires leave the court or not.
 - c. Team officials are not permitted on the court other than as specified in [Rule 10].
8. Play restarts from where the ball was when play stopped:
 - a. If the ball was out of court play restarts with a throw-in.
 - b. If an infringement was signalled before play was held play restarts with the sanction awarded.
 - c. If a player was in possession of the ball when time was held by the umpire, any player from that team allowed in the area may have possession of the ball for the restart of play.
 - d. If the ball was on the ground or the umpire is unable to say which team had possession of the ball, possession of the ball is awarded to the team who last had possession of the ball immediately prior to the stoppage and any player from that team allowed in the area may restart play.

STOPPAGES - INJURY / ILLNESS OF A PLAYER OR BLOOD

RULE 10: STOPPAGES

9. The umpires hold time for injury/illness following a verifiable request by an on-court player or without a request in the event there is an obvious and/or serious injury.
10. A primary care person or independent concussion observer may advise the reserve umpire to ask the umpires to hold time to facilitate the substitution of any on-court player due to a suspected concussion.
11. In extreme circumstances where player safety is endangered, a primary care person or independent concussion observer may enter the court while play is in progress. Either umpire will then immediately hold time. If this safety precaution is misused by a primary care person, they may be disciplined as outlined in [Rule 18.44].
12. The umpires hold time if they notice any player who has an open wound or who is actively bleeding (including blood-stained clothing).
13. In all circumstances above, the player concerned must leave the court within 30 seconds and receive any treatment off the court. The timekeepers advise the umpires when 10 seconds remain.
14. Only primary care person/s are permitted on the court to assess the player's medical condition. They may ask for further assistance from the independent concussion observer before assisting the player from the court.
15. If the primary care person/s or independent concussion observer advise the umpires that the player concerned cannot be removed safely within 30 seconds, the umpires will extend the time for the player to leave the court and notify the official bench accordingly.

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16. The umpires may authorise other persons (including team officials) to assist the player to leave the court if needed.
17. Any other player with blood on their body or clothing who is not actively bleeding may leave the field of play to have this cleaned within the time allowed for the stoppage by the umpires without the need to be substituted. However, any clothing that becomes blood-stained must be replaced within the time allowed for the stoppage by the umpires and this may occur away from the playing enclosure.
18. If there is blood on the ball it should be swapped and any blood on the court must be cleaned as directed by the event organiser before play restarts.
19. During the stoppage both teams may make substitutions and/or team changes, provided these are completed within the time allowed for the stoppage by the umpires.
20. If no substitution is made for the injured/ill player, or for a player who has an open wound or who is actively bleeding (including blood-stained clothing), play may resume with the position left vacant. If the player is the Centre and no substitution is made, one player must move to play as Centre to allow the match to continue.
21. If the position has been left vacant the player concerned or a substitute may not enter the match while play is in progress or they will be treated as a late player [Rule 3.8].
22. If the position has been left vacant the player concerned or a substitute may return to the court at the next break in play. If the player concerned was originally the Centre at the time of the stoppage, the umpire will hold time so they can return to the Centre position and any player who moved to play as Centre can return to the previous playing position.

TEAM OFFICIAL PROCEDURES

RULE 18: GAME MANAGEMENT

44. During a match (including intervals, stoppages and when the ball is both in and out of play) team officials and bench players must not:
 - a. Criticise the umpires or their decisions.
 - b. Use offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.
 - c. Use excessive noise or interruption.
 - d. Encourage foul play by on-court players.
 - e. Enter the court other than in extreme circumstances where player safety is endangered.

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The following are provided to clarify ERNA specific rules:

ERNA SPECIFIC (per Rules D9.1 & D9.2 of the ERNA Competitions Policy)

In the event a team has only 5 registered players on court and one is injured or has blood, instead of leaving the court, the injured player may call time for the injury/illness or blood.

The game will be stopped for up to two (2) minutes for the injured player to recover or cover a wound/clean blood. In the event of an injury where the injured player is not fit to continue playing after two (2) minutes, the team will forfeit.

All injuries in the competitions must be recorded in the Injury Book at the venue.

See “Insurance” for information on how to proceed with an insurance claim.

Ice is available free from the Physio.

ERNA SPECIFIC (per Rule B5. Rule Modifications of the ERNA Competitions Policy)

9/10yrs Division

- 1 Rule modifications for matches within the 9/10yrs Division are listed below:
 - 1.1 For Rounds 1 to 5 there will be no scoring and umpiring will be per Modified Netball Rules.
 - 1.2 For Rounds 6 to 15 there will be scoring and umpiring will be per the Competitions Policy.
 - 1.3 Winners and Runners-Up will be awarded based on the ladder from Rounds 6 to 15, there will be no Finals.

Finals

- 1 Divisions from A1 to 11yrs Div 3 inclusive will play Finals as follows:
 - 1.1 For 7 or 8 team divisions
 - Finals Round 1 will be 1st vs 2nd (Match 1) and 3rd vs 4th (Match 2)
 - Preliminary Finals will be the Loser of Match 1 vs the Winner of Match 2 (Match 3)
 - Grand Finals will be the Winner of Match 1 vs the Winner of Match 3
 - 1.2 For 6 team divisions
 - Preliminary Finals will be the 1st vs 4th (Match 1) and 2nd vs 3rd (Match 2)
 - Grand Finals will be the Winner of Match 1 vs the Winner of Match 2

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ERNA SPECIFIC (Rule D8.12 of the ERNA Competitions Policy)

Background

Whilst every effort is made to ensure teams are graded with teams of similar abilities, with team numbers dropping it is still possible for various divisions to have a broad range of abilities across the included teams.

Therefore, in 2024, a new “Capped Score” rule was adopted within the Competitions Policy, aimed at disincentivising teams from “smashing” other teams by “trying to reach 100”, as it’s generally felt that no one benefits from a heavily lopsided match.

For 2025, the ERNA Council determined that the “Capped Score” rule should only apply to Junior grades / divisions. The exact wording of the rule is as follows:

D8.12 To encourage coaches to adopt the ‘mercy rule’ and to adopt the fairest strategy with regard to for and against points for final placings, a ‘capped points’ system will be used in all Junior grades / divisions. The ‘capped score’ will apply when ERNA officials enter the official score. The points differential will be capped at 25 points.

2025 Process

The points differential will be capped at 25 points for all divisions from 16/17yrs Div 1 to 10yrs Div 3 inclusive. Where a scoresheet records a differential of greater than 25 points, 25 points will be added to the losing team’s recorded score to give a capped score for the winning team. The capped score will then be entered into PlayHQ to give the formal result of the match. No record will be kept of the actual score on the scoresheet.

What is the ‘mercy rule’?

As was discussed when the 2024 rule was adopted, there is no strict definition of the ‘mercy rule’. Rather it provides the opportunity for both teams to discuss opportunities to make the match more beneficial than a lopsided hammering.

A decision to make playing adjustments can be made at any stage that it appears that a match will be lopsided e.g. when a massive differential is recorded at the end of the first quarter and not just when the difference reaches 25 points.

Adjustments should be made during one of the quarter or half time breaks, not immediately the score reaches a differential of 25 points.

Adjustments could include the team that is winning by a large margin playing players out of position or perhaps even playing with 1 or 2 less players.

Consideration could also be made for ending the normal match at half-time with the result at that point standing. For the second half, the two teams could be mixed up so that each end of the court has players from the same club team playing against each other.

The decision regarding whether to adjust or not and how to adjust is between the two teams. There is no need to record any such decision on the scoresheet.

Being mindful

Coaches and teams are encouraged to make adjustments so that all players have the best possible experience when two uneven teams are playing against each other, through no fault of their own. One day the roles might be reversed.

What is the role of the umpires?

It is not the umpire’s job to organise teams and coordinate how a modified match is to be played. Prior to the start of the quarter when any changes are set to take effect, the teams should advise the umpires of the changes they have agreed upon. Regardless of any modifications made by the teams, the umpires will continue to umpire the match in accordance with the standard rules of netball.

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