

A Guide for Umpires of First Season Players

New players to the game of Netball break the rules often. Generally speaking they don't know much about the game, they have lots of enthusiasm and want to get on with playing. The Umpire needs to be selective about his/her calls, so that the game still remains enjoyable for these new players. As the season progresses, more infringements should be called. The Umpire needs to sum up the game in the first few minutes to see what level the players are at, and go from there. Beginner Umpires are only expected to make rulings on the player with the ball and those defending that player – no calls away from the ball are expected.

DUTIES OF THE UMPIRES PRIOR TO THE GAME

- Always check for nails, jewelry, hair tied back adornments, and sharp objects.
- No gloves are allowed and nails must be short and smooth.

OFFSIDE

- Penalize **all** Offside with a Free Pass taken where the infringement occurred

CENTER PASS

- Wait for all players to get back on side, verbally hurry them if necessary. Penalize them for delay of play only if verbal instructions ignored repeatedly.
Terminology: "Offside, Free Side_____, Centre Third"
Terminology (if delayed play): "Delay of Game, Penalty Pass ___, Center Third"
- Call Breaking when the attacking team Breaks (Free Pass Centre Third)
- Call **all** Untouched Centre Passes (Free Pass Goal Third)
- Explain positioning infringements rather than penalizing e.g. "center you must stand in the Centre Circle before I can restart"

PLAYING THE BALL

- Relax this rule for new players by allowing them to:
 - Replay the ball (catch, drop, catch). *Exception:* do not allow players to replay a ball after missing a shot at goal unless the ball contacts some part of the Goal Post including the net
 - Play the ball more than twice e.g. bounce, bounce, and catch
 - Hold the ball for longer than 3 seconds
- **Always** penalize for the following:
 - Trying to get the ball, or throw it, while sitting, kneeling or lying on the floor
 - Kicking the ball
 - Striking the ball with a fist
 - Throwing the ball completely over any third of the court

FOOTWORK

- Relax this rule for new players by allowing them to:
 - Slide the landed foot
 - Shuffle their feet slightly
 - Perform less obvious Footwork, especially when no progress down the court is made
- **Always** penalize for the following:
 - Obvious large, drawn out movements, involving shuffling and re-grounding of the landed foot
 - 3 consecutive steps down the court, especially when the player makes up a lot of ground towards his/her goal end.

OBSTRUCTION

- Relax this rule for new players by allowing them to:
 - Defend closer than 3 feet. Most new players have no idea which is the landed foot and what 3 foot looks like. Give them some latitude in this; try to educate them as well as penalizing obvious Obstruction. Anything closer than 2 feet should **always** be penalized.
- **Always** penalize for the following:
 - Intimidation, e.g. defending the face of a player rather than the ball
 - A defender moving the Goal Post, accidentally or deliberately, in such a way that it interferes with a shot at goal (“Interference with the Goal Post, Penalty Pass or Shot”, where the offending player was standing unless this places the non-offending team at a disadvantage in which case the penalty shall be taken where the non-offending player was standing).

CONTACT

- **Always** penalize for the following:
 - All obvious Contact that significantly interferes with another player. If contact doesn’t interfere with a player, don’t call it
 - Knocking the ball out of another players hands
 - Obvious pushing-off from another player
- Toughen up on calling Contact as the season progresses.

THROW IN

- Relax this rule for new players by educating them to:
 - Plant their feet to avoid Footwork
 - Stand within 6 inches from the line
 - Throw the ball before entering the court
 - Wait for all players to be on the court before throwing
- Allow the same team to retake the Throw In after you have explained it

STARTER HAND SIGNALS

- Umpires should use these basic Hand Signals to clarify their decisions and project their voices as loudly as possible
 - Footwork hands paddling up and down in front of the body
 - Direction of Pass or Throw In..... arm pointed in the direction of play
 - Hold time..... Face timekeeper and make a “T” with hands
 - Goal scored..... Arm held vertically
 - Contact Hand facing palm down taps opposite forearm

FREE PASS VS PENALTY PASS

- It is **very** important for umpires to finish their calls and award the appropriate penalties. Players who are learning need to be given clear instructions. Umpires must state the infringement and the penalty.
- If a Penalty Pass is awarded make sure the offending player stands beside and away from the player taking the penalty, and the penalty is taken from where the offending player was standing unless this places the non-offending team at a disadvantage in which case the penalty shall be taken where the non-offending player was standing. Take a few seconds to explain it to them.
- Also make sure the players take penalties from the spot you are indicating. Have them retake it, rather than penalize them, if they misunderstand you.
- *Award a Free Pass for minor infringements, e.g.*
 - Breaking (Free Pass taken in the Centre Third)
 - Centre Pass not received in the Centre Third (Free Pass taken in the Goal Third)
 - Offside
 - Footwork
 - Over a third
 - Held Ball
 - Replayed ball
- *Award a Penalty Pass/Penalty Pass or Shot for major infringements e.g.*
 - Contact
 - Obstruction
 - The defense interfering with the Goal Post during a shot at goal (Obstruction rule)
 - Intimidation (Obstruction rule)