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Let us play netball

Netball is played between two teams of seven players each. However, twelve players can be registered for a netball team, and a netball match can be played with a minimum of five players. Each player should wear a bib showing the abbreviation that indicates the player position and the two teams should wear bibs of different colours so that the two teams can be identified clearly. The captains of the two teams should toss a coin to start the match. The team that wins the toss can select either the ball or the side of the court. After the toss has been won, the two captains should inform it to the umpires who then toss a coin between them to select their roles. When the umpire blows the whistle, the two teams should take their positions inside the court.

In previous Grades you learnt netball skills such as ball controlling, footwork, attacking, and shooting. The game of netball has been created with the combination of those skills. When you were in Grade 10, you learnt the rules and regulations related to the position of players, playing time, attacking, defending and shooting in netball and also about the hand signals used by umpires in judging netball matches.

In this lesson we will discuss briefly the penalties that are given for the offences the players commit when playing netball.



Figure 5.1 - Game of netball



Activity

Divide yourselves into two groups and play a netball match following the rules and regulations that you learnt when you were in Grade 10. Those who are not playing can be the umpires.

Penalties given in netball are as follows:

1. Free Pass
2. Penalty Pass
3. Penalty Pass or Penalty Shot
4. Throw in
5. Toss Up

Free pass

For all the offences committed by a team, except for the obstructions caused to a player or players of the opposing team (eg: obstructions, impeding contacts, committing offences by two opposing players simultaneously, obstructions related to goal post), the opposing team is awarded a free pass. If a goal shooter gets a free pass when she is within the goal circle, she cannot shoot that ball.

Any player in the opposing team who is allowed to play in that area can get the free pass from the place where the offence was committed.

Occasions where a free pass is awarded

A free pass is awarded for committing the following offences:

Offences committed in handling the ball

- Rolling the ball over the ground
- Throwing the ball up and catching it again before it touches any other player.
- Throwing the ball while lying, sitting or kneeling on the ground.
- Holding the ball for over three seconds – this is called the three-second law.
- When passing the ball, the distance between the two players being less than 3 feet.
- Receiving the centre pass without touching the centre area or moving to the

centre area before the whistle has been blown.

- Players moving to areas that they are not allowed to.
- Throwing the ball over two transverse lines without being touched.
- Using the goal post as a support in receiving the ball.

Offences related to footwork

- Dragging along the ground or slipping the landing foot of the player holding the ball.
- Jumping on a foot holding the ball.
- Going a few steps holding the ball.
- Jumping up on both feet and landing on both feet without releasing the ball from hands.

The ball should be released from the hand before the foot that was used for landing after the ball has been caught is raised and landed once again. This is the rule related to footwork.

Offences related to players

- Incorrect substitution of a player or improper changing of teams.



Figure 5.2 - Awarding a free pass

Penalty pass

A penalty pass is awarded for the offences committed by two or more players of the two teams outside the goal circle.

The player who committed the offence should not join the play until the ball has been released from the thrower's hand.

Occasions where a penalty pass is awarded

- Obstructing the player in possession of the ball being within a distance of less than 3 feet from the landing foot of that player.
- Stretching the hands or extending the knees forwards when defending.
- Coming into contact with, pushing, causing to fall or hitting the opposing player or grabbing the ball off the opposing player while defending or attacking.
- Falling on or jumping upon a player of the opposing team, extending the elbow, pushing with the ball in hand a player of the opposing team or punching the ball.
- Holding on to a player of the opposing team either deliberately or accidentally.



Figure 5.3 - Awarding a penalty pass

Penalty pass or penalty shot

For offences committed within the goal circle by a player, a penalty pass or a penalty shot is awarded to the opposing team from the place where the offence was committed. The player who committed the offence should stand beside the thrower so that the thrower is not disturbed and should not join the play until the ball has escaped the thrower's hand.

Occasions where a penalty pass or penalty shot is awarded

- Same occasions where a penalty pass is awarded, committed within shooting circle.
- Extending the hands within the obstructing distance (3 ft.) so that the shooting is obstructed.
- Touching the ball with the hand or hitting the ball.
- Shaking the goal post or coming into contact with it by the defending player with the intention of obstructing the shooting.

Throw-in

When the ball runs out of the court, throwing it back into the court is called throw-in. The player throws the ball into the court setting the foot close to the boundary line from outside the court at the place where the ball ran out from. The rules related to footwork and three-second rule should be followed when taking the throw-in.

A throw-in is awarded when

- the ball touches the ground outside the court or when it touches a person or an object outside the court.
- a player who is touching the ground outside or touching a person or an object outside the ground catches the ball.
- a player who is touching the ball touches the ground outside the court.



Figure 5.4 - Throw-in

Toss up

On occasions where it is difficult to decide on the player who should be given the ball out of two opposing players, the ball is tossed up between them. The toss up is taken between the two players who were involved in the offence and at the place inside the court that is closest to the place where the offence was committed.

The two players should stand facing each other and their own goal ends with arms straight and hands to sides, but feet in any position. There should be a distance of 3 feet between the nearer feet of the two players. They shall not move from that position until the whistle is blown.

The umpire should keep the ball on the palm of her hand that is held at a level that is slightly lower than the shoulder level of the shorter player when she is in her usual standing position, and should blow the whistle and toss the ball up from a midpoint between the two players so that the ball does not go more than two feet up.

A toss up is taken when

- opposing players gain simultaneous possession of the ball with either or both hands;
- opposing players simultaneously knock the ball out of Court;
- opposing players are simultaneously offside, one in possession of or touching the ball;
- opposing players make simultaneous contact;
- the umpire is unable to determine the last player to touch the ball before it goes out of court;
- after an accident, the umpires are unable to say who had the ball, or when the ball was on the ground when play was stopped



Figure 5.5 - Tossing the ball up between two players

Judging netball matches

It is very important that netball matches are judged following the rules and regulations of the game giving players the relevant penalties in order to control netball games and to make decisions. A netball match is judged by two umpires and it is their responsibility to ensure that the following are in order:

- the court, shooting posts, and the ball
- players are wearing bibs, have trimmed finger nails and have removed jewellery.
- the 3-metre wide free zone around the court has been arranged so that the play or the judging is not disturbed.

- availability of two umpires for controlling the game and for making decisions and that they get to know each other.
- the captains of the two teams toss a coin between them and its result is conveyed to the umpires and the scorekeepers.
- the umpires judge the side that they are in charge of.
- stopwatches and score keepers are kept ready.

The umpire who wins the toss controls the half of the court that is towards the north. The umpires can use hand signals when necessary in order to further clarify the decisions that are given to players. (Refer to page 62 of Health and Physical Education textbook for Grade 10.)

You can develop the skills necessary for judging netball matches through a close study of the above facts and by engaging in play following those rules and regulations.



Activity

State what decisions you would give the players as the umpire in the following situations:

- The team in blue has received the centre pass. After the umpire has blown the whistle, the centre player (C) plays the centre pass to the goal defence (GD). This ball is not touched by any player in the centre area and when the ball comes to the goal area it is taken by the wing attack (WA).
- The centre player (C) of the team in red passes the ball to the Gall Attack (GA) of her team who is in the goal circle of their team and the Gall Attack (GA) runs forwards to catch the ball, but the Gall Defence (GD) of the team in blue intentionally comes into contact with the Gall Attack (GA) of the team in red and the Gall Attack (GA) then misses the opportunity of catching the ball.

Summary

Free pass, penalty pass, penalty pass/penalty shot, throw-in and toss up are the penalties that are given for the offences committed by players in netball.

Free pass is awarded for all the infringements committed by the player holding the ball except for the obstructions caused to the opposing player.

A penalty pass is awarded for the infringements committed by two or more players outside the goal circle.

A penalty pass / shot is awarded for infringements committed by players within the goal circle.

When the ball goes out of the court, a throw in is awarded.

If it is difficult to determine which of the two opposing players should get the ball, the ball is tossed up between the two players.

Gaining knowledge about the infringements for which the above penalties are given is important in playing, as well as in judging netball.



Exercise

1. State five offences that are committed by netball players while handling the ball, for which a free pass is awarded.
2. Write three infringements for which a penalty pass is awarded in netball.
3. Write two rules that should be followed when taking a 'throw-in' in netball.
4. Describe how the umpire tosses the ball up between two opposing players in netball.
5. What are the things that the umpires should check before the start play of a netball match?