

# Netball NSW

Inclusive Uniform Guidelines for Associations & Clubs

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## Background

Netball NSW is committed to creating an environment where people can participate in netball in the manner in which they feel most comfortable. Netball NSW is also committed to ensuring our netball community is a welcoming and inclusive environment for all players and officials regardless of race, skin colour, national origin, religion, gender, age or disability.

There are a multitude of reasons why a player or umpire may not feel comfortable wearing a traditional playing dress or umpiring uniform and that current uniform options may not suit their individual needs and preferences.

A recent study, *What Girls Want in Sport Uniforms to Make Them Feel Comfortable and Confident to Participate in Sport: [A National Study](#)* by the Victoria University found that girls need to be provided with flexible options of uniform styles (65%) that are made from comfortable material and designed for girls (61%). The study found:

- 85% prefer to wear shorts during sport outside of school
- 85% prefer to wear t-shirts during sport outside of school
- 64% prefer to wear dark coloured bottoms during sport outside of school
- 58% do not want to wear skirts during sport outside of school

It is clear that a lack of appropriate uniform options is a key barrier to participation for women and girls more generally in netball. However, there is evidence to suggest it may be a larger barrier for engaging and retaining other underrepresented groups in netball, from people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to transgender and gender diverse people as well as males.

The [SPRINTER Netball Participation Study \(2020\)](#) indicates that only 2% of registered Netball NSW members were male in 2020. A comparison of Census data (2016) and the SPRINTER Netball Participation Study (2020) also highlights the current lack of representation of culturally and linguistically diverse communities within netball:

- fewer Netball NSW members (8%) speak a language other than English compared to 25% of the NSW population
- fewer Netball NSW members (6%) are born overseas compared to 27% of the NSW population
- those from a multicultural or CALD background are more likely (32%) to drop out after only one year than English speaking or Australian born counterparts (24%)

Netball NSW has worked alongside our apparel partner [Valour Sport](#) to produce a range of alternate uniform options which provide more choice for players and umpires, while still allowing for matching designs and team cohesion for players and visibility of umpires while officiating.

## **Purpose**

This document has been created to outline Netball NSW's position on inclusive uniforms, providing clarity on acceptable team and umpiring uniforms in line with the [Rules of Netball](#) (2020 Edition). This document will provide guidance to Affiliated Associations and their Clubs in aligning their uniform policies with Netball NSW's position in order to contribute to creating more welcoming and inclusive netball environments across NSW.

## **Position Statement**

Netball NSW believes that all participants should, as far as possible, be supported in wearing a uniform that allows them to participate in netball in the manner in which they feel most comfortable. Netball NSW encourages all Affiliated Clubs and Associations to embrace adaptability and flexibility around uniforms in order to encourage continued participation and enjoyment in our sport.

# Application

## Players

### WHAT THE RULES OF NETBALL SAY

#### 5. MATCH PERSONNEL

##### 5.1 TEAM

##### 5.1.1 Players

- i. During a match players must wear:
  - a) Registered playing uniform and suitable sports footwear (spiked soles are not allowed).
  - b) Playing position initials 150 mm (6 in) high which must be clearly visible and worn above the waist, front and back.
  
- iv. Players may not wear anything that could endanger themselves or other players, specifically:
  - a) No adornment or jewellery may be worn other than a wedding ring which must be covered with tape
  - b) A medical alert bracelet may be worn provided it is covered with tape
  - c) Fingernails must be short and smooth
  - d) Hair must be suitably tied back

**Note:** The Rules of Netball do not indicate that the registered playing uniform must be a dress. The rules indicate that it must be the registered playing uniform. **A registered playing uniform is defined by the Club and approved by the competition organiser (the Association).** This means Clubs and Associations have the chance at the grassroots level to ensure uniforms are inclusive for everyone.

### APPROACHING THE RULES IN AN INCLUSIVE WAY

- Allow individual players in each team to choose any combination of uniform items. However, Clubs and Associations should ensure that these items are of similar designs to create continuity of uniforms throughout the team and assist umpires to officiate the game, for example:
  - t-shirts, singlets or long sleeve t-shirts must be the same design as the top of the traditional playing dress;
  - t-shirts, singlets or long sleeve t-shirts must still be able to clearly display a playing positional bib;
  - the choice of bottoms must either include the same design as the dress/top or could be a designated block colour to match the uniform (i.e. black, royal blue, navy blue etc.);
  - head or face coverings should be a designated block colour to match the uniform (i.e. black, royal blue, navy blue etc.);
  - allow the wearing of skins/leggings as long as they are completely black, white or in a block colour to match the uniform;
  - Refer to [Valour Sport ONE TEAM](#) information for a full example of uniform options.

- Uniforms must not present a genuine safety risk to the wearer or other players (i.e. open pockets, buttons or zippers).
- Players are not required to justify their choice of uniform, however, players may be required to provide information pertaining to items they wish to wear in order to allow the Club or Association to facilitate that uniform choice.
- Players may choose a uniform style that covers additional body surface including the legs, arms and/or head.
- It is perfectly acceptable for players to wear head coverings for religious reasons. Such head coverings must be:
  - made of soft material;
  - tight and non-flowing, edges must be held securely or tucked into the shirt;
  - not cover positional bib;
  - tied on or fastened by clips and non-sharp pins;
  - be all black, all white or team colours.
- Head coverings should be included as an item in a club's playing uniform for a competition.
- If jewellery is not able to be removed for religious / medical reasons, it is the player's choice to play with them, and this player accepts the risks involved.
- Jewellery which cannot be removed for religious / medical reasons should be covered with padding / tape as necessary to prevent injury to others. Jewellery or other items which cannot be securely covered or taped **must be removed per the Rules of Netball.**

## Match Officials (Umpires)

### WHAT THE RULES OF NETBALL SAY

#### 5. MATCH PERSONNEL

##### 5.2 MATCH OFFICIALS

The match officials are two umpires and a reserve umpire.

- i. The match officials:
  - a) Wear clothing that is distinct from the teams' playing uniforms and suitable sports footwear.

**Note:** The Rules of Netball do not indicate that the uniform must be white. The rules indicate that the clothing must be distinct from the playing uniforms. In the same way that players should feel comfortable in their playing uniform, match officials should have the opportunity to choose a uniform they feel comfortable in.

### APPROACHING THE RULES IN AN INCLUSIVE WAY

- Maintaining the white shirt or choosing another bright/florescent coloured top but allowing darker coloured skirts, skorts or shorts to be worn.
- Allowing all match officials regardless of gender identity, the choice of wearing shorts or long sport pants rather than a skirt.
- Allowing match officials who wish to cover additional body surfaces including the legs, arms and/or head for religious and / or cultural reasons, to do so by wearing garments (such as leggings, long sleeved shirts/ skins etc). Such additional garments should be in a block colour.
- It is perfectly acceptable for match officials to wear head coverings for religious reasons. Such head coverings must be:
  - made of soft material;
  - tight and non-flowing, edges must be held securely or tucked into the shirt
  - tied on or fastened by clips and non-sharp pins;
  - be all black, all white or match the officiating uniform colours;

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