



Junior Netball Policy

The Junior Netball Policy will be released in September 2017 and is the final stage in the development of the Junior Netball programme. The Junior Netball policy is for 5-12 year old Netballers in New Zealand.

Opportunities to discuss the policy will be provided at Zone Forums and at National Council in Wellington 2018.

A series of four articles will feature in the weekly update prior to the release of the policy to provide context around the process, research and pilot information that has helped to shape the programme and policy

Article one

Junior Netball igniting a life long love and participation in Netball

What's happened to participation and satisfaction?

There has been continued growth in Junior Netball participation numbers inline with the rollout of the programme with Year 1&2 growing by 7 % (2015) and 6% (2016) and Year 3&4 by 7% (2015) and 5% (2016)

The 2016 **futureFERNs** satisfaction survey, which was completed by players (parents), coaches and administrators, highlights that there continues to be ongoing support for the programme with 88% of respondents either very satisfied or satisfied with the programme.

The Journey

Junior Netball for 5 – 12 year olds represents approximately fifty-percent of registered Netball players. It is run by a dedicated army of volunteer's who are driven by a love of Netball and the desire to offer great experiences to our children, in one of the nations favourite games.

In acknowledgement of the importance of this area, Netball New Zealand (NNZ) undertook a comprehensive review of Junior Netball in 2012. The review which included a nationwide survey of administrators, coaches, umpires and parents as well as the establishment of a review group that included development staff from across the country, junior Netball specialists and fundamental movement skills experts. Relevant academic research relating to junior sport delivery across the world and junior Netball research across NZ was also collated and considered.

The Junior Netball Review highlighted a number of key findings:

- Netball is the most popular team sport for girls aged 5-12 and the top rated sport/activity that 5-12 year olds want to 'try of do more often' (Sport NZ's Young People's survey)
- The delivery of Junior Netball varied considerably across the country – including the starting age, modifications and the rules.
- Coaches, umpires, parents and administrators all told us that Netball could be improved by enhancing support and training of coaches and umpires to increase confidence and competence.
- There was strong support for clear guidelines for Junior Netball to ensure consistency in delivery and programmes.
- Fun was the key driver for children's participation in sport.
- Junior Netball's focus is on meeting the social, cognitive and physical needs of



children. All of the available research supports that children have more fun and learn more playing small sided games with modified rules.

- Adult versions of the game are not appropriate for children and modifications need to be made to replicate their stage of development.

As a result of the review, a number of changes to the Junior Netball Model were trialed in 2013, and implemented from 2014. These changes included the modification of Year 1 to 4 Netball with the players progressing from 4 v 4 to 5 v 5 playing formats.

Year 5 & 6 Netball

After the successful roll-out of the Year 1 to 4 programmes, the focus turned to establishing which game best suits and meets the needs of Year 5 & 6 players to complete the Junior Netball Model. In 2016 the 6 v 6 format was piloted in 28 Centres across NZ and involved 5000 players, 70 filmed and coded games (35 6 v 6 and 35 7 v 7), online surveys and Centre focus groups.

The pilot was delivered in partnership with AUT. AUT developed the research model, ran the testing, analysed the data and confirmed key findings. Using this knowledge AUT made a recommendation for the format of the Year 5 & 6 game that best meets the needs of the players.

AUT recommendation

The key findings of the study support the implementation of the 6 v 6 programme in the Year 5&6 space.

Potential player interactions are increased; the game is much faster which means players are totally involved and rotations lead to increased decision making. This creates opportunities for players to be more engaged and have increased motivation to learn.

The feedback from qualitative research suggested that the parents and coaches supported the roll out of the 6v6 format. They thought that the players enjoyed the increased involvement, liked the learning from all positions and the focus on skill learning in a confident, supportive environment.

What the 6 v 6 pilot told us

The **filmed play analysis** indicated that the 6 v 6 format when compared to 7 v 7 had

- Greater potential for interactions
- More transitions
- Significantly less whistle stoppages
- More pass completions, particularly defenders, relative to the number of players on court (12 v 14)
- 6 v 6 is more efficient, has greater performance and a higher volume of player index
- 6 v 6 players are more engaged in the game than 7 v 7 players
- The percentage of shots, successful and missed was the same for 6 v 6 and 7 v 7
- Mid-court 7 v 7 players had more pass completions than the 6 v 6 format

The survey completed by **players** found that 6 v 6 players scored higher on the scales of autonomy, competence and relatedness i.e. are intrinsically motivated and more engaged with the game.

Coaches and parents thought the player's level of perceived enjoyment was high in

6 v 6 due to high levels of involvement and being involved 'most of the time'. Involvement was the most liked aspect of 6 v 6. Rotations were also perceived as extremely important. Coaches and parents thought that players would be extremely likely to play again next year. Coaches are extremely likely to recommend 6 v 6 and parents are most likely to recommend 6 v 6.

Coaches and parents both identified that more consistent refereeing and resolving the 2nd centre issue at each centre pass were areas that needed clarifying.

Focus Groups (completed by coaches, administration and parents) identified they liked that 6 v 6 gave more opportunity to be involved; more touches on the ball, more court time and that learning all positions, the focus on skill learning and opportunity for players to make decisions were highlighted as benefits of the format. 6 v 6 was seen to transition well from 5 v 5.

The focus groups thought that rotations gave the children confidence; the players would stay in the game longer; more team encouragement and the 6 v 6 game had more emphasis on fun.

Junior programme timeline

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Junior Netball Review	Pilot: Year 1 & 2, Year 3 & 4	Phase 1: Roll out of Year 1 & 2 programme begins Phase 2: Review of the Year 5-8 programme	Phase 1 continues: Roll out Year 1 & 2 and Year 3 & 4 programmes Phase 2 continues	Phase 2 continues Pilot: Year 5 & 6	Phase 2 continues: Roll out of Year 5-8 programmes Junior Policy updated	Year 7 & 8 baseline research Measure impact of programme on Junior Players