South Australian United Church Netball Association

TOP TIPS FOR UMPIRING 8 & UNDER AND 9 & UNDER NETBALL

#1: It's **NOT** modified

Unlike many other netball associations, SAUCNA juniors do not play under modified rules. The only changes that occur for 8 & Under and 9 & Under in SAUCNA competitions are as follows:

- Size 4 ball
- 12 minute quarters (relevant for Winter competition only)
- Injury time – up to 1 minute, with no requirement for the player to leave the court or be replaced (in Summer, with central timing, practicalities need to be considered and match should be stopped for as little time as possible)
- Procedures for a draw (Major Round matches ONLY)

All other netball rules apply and should be umpired as per INF Rules.

#2: Sanctions are awarded to a team, not to a player

Umpires cannot tell players which particular player/position needs to take the ball. Instead, the penalty/free pass/throw in is <u>awarded to a team</u>.

As umpires are not there to coach, it cannot be assumed which player/position a coach wishes to take the ball.

If no one from the team awarded the ball is forthcoming in coming to take the ball, then a comment such as "someone from Hallett Cove needs to take the ball".

#3: Coaches must remain in the designated coaching area

Coaches cannot walk up and down the side of the court. The coach must <u>coach from the designated coaching area</u> which is either to the left of the umpire or on the narrow sideline (Association courts). Different spots may be more appropriate at suburban court locations and you should ask a senior umpire or court supervisor if you are unsure. If there is more than one coach for a team, then all coaches (or any spectators giving coaching directions) must stand together in the designated area. A team cannot have multiple coaches around the sidelines in various positions. Nobody, coach or spectator, can be positioned on the goal line. If a coach (or spectator) is not in the correct position, then the umpire needs to stop the game and ask them to move to the correct area.

#4: Umpires should avoid going on to the court unless absolutely necessary

In order to allow the game to flow and to give the players the necessary space that they need, it is important that umpires avoid going onto the court. Use a clear voice and strong hand signals to indicate where you would like a team to take a free/penalty pass. If after a clear visual and verbal instruction the players are still unclear, only then should an umpire enter the court only to indicate where the pass should be taken.

#5: Use clear and simple language, whilst still educating players on correct terminology

Always use the correct terminology when penalising players and support this by following it with a clear and simple explanation, e.g. "Stepping. Remember we have to keep our feet still when we catch the ball." The use of correct terminology helps for when players transition to higher age grades of netball and the simple explanation helps the players understand what has gone wrong.

#6: Penalise, penalise, penalise
Penalise the infringements!

Too often it is heard of umpires commenting that they haven't picked players up for infringements because 'they're only little' or 'they're just learning'. By not picking players up for infringements, it presents challenges and confusion for players (and coaches/spectators) when they move up into the higher age grades. They do not understand why they have been able to do something for so long before but are now not getting away with it.

As umpires, letting things go also makes things more confusing. For example, if stepping is not picked up, how can 3ft be determined for obstruction?

Young players are quick to learn. More often than not, if umpires pick up 20+ stepping infringements in the first quarter, the players will learn to adjust their play and the umpires may find they are only picking up 5 or fewer instances of stepping come the final quarter. Picking the players up for infringements allows for the players to learn and develop their skills.

#7: Have an understanding of the ability/experience of the players before beginning the game
Talk to your co-umpire or the coaches before the match begins (particularly at the beginning of a season) to get an understanding of the experience level of the players. The approach an umpire needs to take when umpiring a group of 6/7 year olds who have never played before compared with umpiring a skilled group of 9 year olds who have been playing for 3 years, would be vastly different and having this information before you begin the match can be very helpful.

#8: Use common sense
A common sense approach needs to be taken when umpiring 8 & Under and 9 & Under matches. Examples of this include a player crying and upset on court. While in older grades, an on court player would be required to call time before the game could be stopped; in 8 & Under and 9 & Under, it would be common sense for an umpire to stop play if there is a clearly distressed player on the court. Another example may be if a player is being continually picked up for something or appears particularly confused about an infringement they have been penalised for. In such cases, an umpire could provide a more descriptive explanation as to what is happening to help the player understand.

#9: Approach your umpiring with a positive manner
These players are at the very beginning of their netball journeys and we want them to enjoy their netball experience. Keeping positive as an umpire will help to ensure this occurs. If you are out there enjoying yourself, this feeling will help the players have a positive experience and help support them learning the game and rules.

#10: Don't be afraid to ask questions or for help and support with your umpiring
If you have any questions about umpiring 8 & Under and 9 & Under netball at SAUCNA, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with the SAUCNA Umpires Committee. If umpiring at central courts, there is usually someone in the clubrooms you can speak to if you have a question or require assistance.