



GAME MANAGEMENT

The Rules of Netball have very clear and specific rules for dealing with misbehaviour on the court, and umpires are obliged to follow them.

18.2 Players on the court are responsible for complying with the Rules of the Game and are expected to respond to rulings by the umpires and adjust their play accordingly.

18.4 A player who infringes any part of the foul play rule [Rule 19] must be specifically disciplined with the prescribed game management action.

The stages you will see are:

1. Proactive advice. This will be words like “you need to adjust”, “that was late”, “be careful with that action”. Take this as a chance to alter your play before it gets to the next step. The umpire is under no obligation to use this step, especially if actions are blatant.

2. Advancing a penalty. This has replaced the caution, but you’ll still hear a description of the action that has led to it. If a penalty is advanced, it’s not just on a whim – it’s for breaking a specific part of the foul play rule, and players (and their coaches) should take steps to address the behaviour. The penalty pass is moved up to half a third, and the infringing player stands out of play at that spot, or if they would be offside, at the edge of their area.

3. Warning. This will include the word “warning” and the crossed arms signal. This is used if behaviour continues after an advance, or in some cases it can or must be the first step. A warning needs to be taken seriously, because the next step is serious.

4. Suspension. This is used if behaviour continues after a warning, or in some cases it can or must be the first step. The player is suspended from the court for 2 minutes, and during this time, they sit with the scorers. Their position is left vacant during the 2 minutes, unless they are the Centre, in which case one player moves and that position is left vacant. At the end of the two minutes, the player or a substitute returns to their original position.

5. Ordering off. This is used if behaviour continues after a suspension, or in some cases it can or must be the first step. The player is removed from the court for the remainder of the game. Their position is left vacant for 4 minutes, unless they are the Centre, in which case one player moves and that position is left vacant. During the 4 minutes, the ordered off player sits with the scorers, after which they return to their team bench and a substitute can fill the original position.



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The behaviours that umpires are required to deal with (assuming that players and coaches haven't done so first!) are:

A. **Unfair play** – this will result in a penalty being advanced (at a minimum). This includes:

a. **Delaying play**. Where a player deliberately wastes time or delays play, for instance by throwing the ball away, refusing to stand out of play, refusing to give the ball back, etc.

b. **Intentional infringing**. This could be a single instance of blatant disregard, like running through an offside area, stripping the ball from an opponent's hands or obstructing from well under the legal distance.

c. **Repeated infringing**. There's no specific number of times, but when a player is being repeatedly called (including advantage calls) and there is no adjustment, it falls into this category.

d. **Disputed ruling**. Players must not dispute the umpires' rulings (though they may ask the umpire to repeat the infringement penalised or seek clarification of where a sanction or action is to be taken)

e. **Intimidation**. Deliberate actions to distract, like putting a hand in an opponent's face, swiping the ball at their face, making unnecessary loud or sudden noises, stomping the ground, etc.

B. **Unsporting behaviour** – this will result in a warning (at a minimum). This includes:

a. **Retaliation**. A player must not retaliate even if an opponent infringes the Rules of the Game.

b. **Abusive behaviour**. A player must not use any offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures towards anyone in the playing enclosure.

c. **Actions contrary to good sporting behaviour**. A player must not act in a manner contrary to accepted standards of good sporting behaviour.

C. **Dangerous play** – this will result in a suspension, or ordering off if it is deemed to be intentional or highly reckless.

Dangerous play is unnecessarily forceful, careless, reckless or dangerous actions that could affect the safety of another player, for instance by hitting them in the head, causing them to hit their head or fall to the ground.

Remember that players are free to approach the umpires at an interval to seek clarification, for instance if they're not sure what the behaviour is that they need to change or if they don't know what the next step in the process will be.