



**WALES** NETBALL  
PÊL-RWYD **CYMRU**

# National Competition Handbook 2024/2025

# **NATIONAL COMPETITION HANDBOOK 2024/2025**

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# GENERAL INFORMATION

## CHAMPIONSHIP RULES

### 1. GENERAL RULES

- 1.1 All championship matches shall be played in accordance with the official 'Rules of Netball' as set out by the International Netball Federation (World Netball).
- 1.2 The Competition Umpire governs the event in accordance with the Championship Rules. In the event of a dispute their decision is final.

### 2. MATCH FIXING

- 2.1 Match fixing will not be tolerated in any Wales Netball sanctioned event. If any/all the following instances occur and match fixing is suspected, an immediate investigation will ensue:
  - 2.1.1 Any agreement or conspiracy (orally or in writing) between a match-fixer (e.g. Coach, team manager, athlete, spectator, umpire, technical official, event organiser) and one or more person aimed at unlawfully influencing or altering the result of a match or competition.
  - 2.1.2 The deliberate loss of a match or a phase of a match, e.g. conceding goals, conceding penalties, conceding possession of the ball. Wales Netball may determine this via: previous score lines, umpire observations, officials observation.
  - 2.1.3 Deliberately performing badly during a match in relation to previous tournament performance, e.g. poor defending or attacking. Wales Netball may determine this via: previous score lines, umpire observations, officials observation.
  - 2.1.4 The deliberate misapplication of the Laws of the Game by the umpire and/or other match officials, e.g. wrongfully awarding penalties, etc.
  - 2.1.5 Interfering with the action on the court/facility, the playing surface or equipment, e.g. puncturing balls, setting off a fire alarm etc.
  - 2.1.6 Deliberately neglecting to take action on the court even though it would be required under the Laws of the Game, e.g. not penalties, etc.
- 2.2 During the investigation Wales Netball may, but is not limited to:
  - 2.2.1 Revoke points for the match in question until investigation has concluded.
  - 2.2.2 Request a replay of a match.
  - 2.2.3 Speak to a member of the suspected match-fixers region/league committee.
  - 2.2.4 Immediate suspension from the competition, resulting in forfeiting any current placing.

**2.3** If Wales Netball staff determine after investigation that one or multiple of the above infringements has occurred, the following sanctioned may be applied:

**2.3.1** Future suspension from Wales Netball sanctioned competitions.

**2.3.2** Revoking of the right for the Netball Club in question to be a member of Wales Netball for a specified term.

### **3. MEMBERSHIPS**

**3.1** Clubs should hold a current affiliated Organisation Category membership to Wales Netball.

**3.2** Schools and Colleges should hold a current affiliated Organisation Category membership to Wales Netball.

**3.3** Players should be a current affiliated member of Wales Netball within one of the following categories:

- 7 – 11 Age Category (£10 for the season): For those members playing in junior clubs.
- 12 – 18 Age Category (£20 for the season): For those members playing in junior clubs.
- Full Adult Category (£40 until 31/10 every season, then £45 from 1/11 onwards): For playing, coaching, or umpiring members over the age of 18.

### **4. INJURY/BLOOD**

**4.1** No injury time is permitted. Injured players should be removed from the court as soon as possible and substituted immediately. In the event of a serious injury the player must not be moved without medical supervision. If necessary, the match will be abandoned and may be rescheduled if the result impacts on the overall outcome of the tournament.

**4.2** No player may remain on court who is bleeding from an open wound. Players who are bleeding, have an open wound or bloodstained clothing must leave the court and be substituted but we no longer require a player with dried blood on them to be substituted. Players with dried blood are now permitted to clean up quickly and continue playing. This will usually happen while the bleeding player is being substituted or other players or the ball are being checked for blood. Any players with blood on them and/or their clothing must leave the court within 15 seconds and have the blood-stained clothing replaced, and blood cleaned off their body. They must remain off court when play restarts. They may return to the court as a substitute or to fill a vacant position. They may only return to the court after being checked by the umpire once a goal has taken place and a centre pass is not in play. During the stoppage both teams may make substitutions and/or team changes, provided these are completed within the time allowed for the stoppage by the umpires.

**4.3** Wales Netball cannot accept any responsibility for accidents or injuries to unaffiliated players or spectators, which may occur during Championships.

**4.4** Accidents sustained by affiliated members will be covered as per terms and conditions of Members insurance ([walesnetball.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Summary-of-cover-2023-2024-1.pdf](http://walesnetball.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Summary-of-cover-2023-2024-1.pdf))

## **5. PIERCINGS**

**5.1** All piercings must be removed prior to taking to court.

**5.2** Players with single ended dermal piercings that require medical removal may only take to court, if the following conditions are met:

- A medical exemption letter from a doctor is provided to, and approved by, the Competition Organiser ahead of the competition taking place (medical exemption letters provided on the day of a competition may not be accepted and the player in question may not be allowed to partake in the competition).
- The piercing is suitably covered with a padded dressing and securely taped.
- The player presents themselves to the competition Umpire Mentor for a final check, prior to taking to court.

## **PRE-COMPETITION AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **6. SPORT:80 ENTRY**

**6.1** For all competitions: entry forms, team lists (including Wales Netball affiliation numbers), and payments must be completed via Sport:80. Late entries may not be accepted.

**6.2** Each team must have a minimum of a Coach, Team Manager and Scorer. The roles of Coach and Team Manager must not be doubled up with other roles/age groups.

**6.3** Each team may name up to a maximum of 12 squad players and must name a minimum of 10 players. Only players who have been named on the team list submitted via Sport:80 may take to court. Amendments to the submitted team lists can only be made 3 weeks or more ahead of the event. Team list deadlines will not be reopened for late entries or amendments.

**6.4** If a club's team list drops to below 10 players within the 3 weeks leading up to the event, team managers can request changes to the team sheet up to 48 hours before the event. Changes can only be made in cases where medical notes can be provided. Please speak directly to the Competition Organiser ahead of the event to discuss. Medical notes provided on the day of a competition may not be accepted and the replacement athlete may not be allowed to partake.

### **7. TEAM ELIGIBILITY**

**7.1** Players are advised to play in their age group. Teams participating in:

**7.1.1** U12 & U14 may consist of players that are 10 years of age at midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August immediately prior to the championship, this is the minimum age any

player can be to participate in those age categories. A team may consist of a squad of up to 12 players, only three of whom may be 10 years of age.

**7.1.2** U16, U18 & U19 may consist of players that are 13 years of age at midnight on the 31st of August immediately prior to the championship, this is the minimum age any player can be to participate in those age categories. A team may consist of a squad of up to 12 players, only three of whom may be 13 years of age.

## **8. TEAM COMPETITION DAY RESPONSIBILITY**

**8.1** Teams must register on time and check the fixtures and event timings for any amendments.

**8.2** Captains shall toss for first centre pass or choice of ends at least 5 minutes prior to their match commencing – players must ensure an Umpire is witness to this.

**8.3** Teams must be courtside at least 5 minutes prior to their match start time. All players must be on court for the start of the match. Any team not on court for the scheduled start (or no later than a minute after the scheduled start of the game) will forfeit the game, with the opposition awarded the full “win” points and goals. The number of goals awarded will be based on the average number of goals scored in the competition, with witness by the Competition organiser. Persistent lateness may result in disqualification from the competition.

**8.4** Each team is responsible for providing a non-playing person to record the score for all of their matches.

## **9. SCORING**

**9.1** At half time the two scorers should confirm the score and the next Centre Pass with each other and both umpires. At full time, the scorers must confirm the final score with each other and ensure umpires have both signed, before submitting the score sheets to the official's desk.

**9.2** A hooter will indicate to the umpires to start/end the period of the game, but the match itself is controlled by the umpires' whistle. The game will not start /end until the umpire blows the whistle.

## **10. COMPETITION POINTS**

**10.1** Match points will be awarded as follows for all age groups.

- 5 points for a win
- 3 points for a draw
- 2 points for losing within 5 goals for matches longer than 30 minutes duration.
- 1 point for scoring more than 50% of the winning team's final score.
- 0 points for a loss

- 10.2** In the event of a points tie, positions shall be decided on 'Goal Average' (i.e., goals for, divided by goals against). Should goal average not differentiate between the teams then 'Goal Difference' will be used (i.e., goals for, minus goals against).
- 10.3** If 'Goal Difference' does not differentiate between the teams, the result of the group match(es) between the teams will be the decider. If the result of the group match(es) does not differentiate then the team with the greatest number of goals scored will take precedence.
- 10.4** In the event of a draw during knock out stages two minutes each way of extra time shall be allowed (with no half time). If it is still a draw at the end of extra time the winning team will be the first team to achieve a one goal advantage for games of less than 30 minutes, and a two-goal advantage for matches longer than 30 minutes.
- 10.5** Wales Netball has the right to adapt and alter the rules of Championships accordance to the circumstances.

## **11. UMPIRING**

- 11.1** Wales Netball will control and organise all umpires for National Competition Finals. Umpires will be selected through the umpire pathway. Umpires will not take position of scorer at any National Championships.
- 11.2** Clubs, schools, and organisations will need to supply their own umpires at all U16 Regional Rounds.
- 11.3** In the event of emergency circumstances, Wales Netball reserve the right to change original allocated umpires.

# NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (U12, U14 & U16)

## OVERVIEW

The National U12, U14 and U16 Club final is organised by Wales Netball to enable clubs to compete against each other to determine a national winner, with the purpose to encourage participation in netball through an open, fair, and transparent competition. National Clubs creates opportunities to play at a higher level, against teams not known to them. National Clubs creates opportunities for the players and coaches to come against other clubs nationally of the highest standards rather than playing against local clubs. It therefore provides clubs with a Goal/Target, inspiring them to improve, and reaffirms the important position of local leagues to netball development in Wales. National Clubs can also be used to gage the players development through areas and clubs.

### 1. COMPETITION STRUCTURE

1.1 The competition shall compromise of the following structure:

- (Local Rounds – Dependent on Area)
- League standings (U12 & U14)
- Regional Rounds – U16 (Wales Netball to organise with Tournament Organisers)
- National Final – (Wales Netball)

1.2 U12 and U14 qualification will be determined by final league placing in the respective top division of the affiliated junior league in the region. The number of places each affiliated junior league has, has been determined based upon a combination of a) the number of established junior leagues in that region, and b) the amount of netball activity occurring in that region

1.3 The below determines the number of places each junior league has.

Region	Junior League	Qualifying Spots per U12 and U14 League
Cardiff	Cardiff & Vale Junior League	2
South East	South East Junior League	2
Glamorgan Valleys	Glamorgan Valleys Junior Netball League	2
Afan Nedd Tawe	Swansea Youth Netball League	2
West Wales	Carmarthenshire Netball Development Centre	1
	Pembrokeshire Junior League	1
Mid Wales	North Powys Junior League	1
	Ceredigion Junior League	1
North West Wales	North West Wales Junior League	2
North East Wales	Deeside Junior League	2

1.4 Qualifying regional rounds for U16 will take place in the eight areas of Wales as defined by Wales Netball. The regional rounds will be organised by the Wales Netball appointed Tournament Organisers in those areas. The two qualifying teams from each area will be invited to the National Finals.



## **2. PRE-COMPETITION AND ADMINISTRATION**

- 2.1** Entry forms, team memberships and payment to all competitions must be processed through Sport:80. Late entries will not be accepted.
- 2.2** Prior to the championship, final and regional round, each team must add a minimum of 10 members and a maximum of 12 members to their club for each age group.
- 2.3** Please see more information regarding Sport:80 entry here: **SPORT:80 ENTRY**
- 2.4** No player may play for more than one club at any national competition (Regional Round/ League or National Championship Final). Where a player plays for more than one club, the elected club must be denoted as their 'Primary Club' in their Sport:80 profile. See below - 4.4.2

## **COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY**

### **3. AGE GROUP ELIGIBILITY**

- 3.1** Players must be under 12, under 14, under 16 years of age at midnight 31st August immediately prior to the competition.
- 3.2** No player under the age of 10 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August immediately prior to the competition may compete in the U12 & U14 Championship. A team may consist of a squad of up to 12 players, only three of whom may be 10 years of age.
- 3.3** No player under the age of 13 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August immediately prior to the competition may compete in the U16 Championship. A team may consist of a squad of up to 12 players, only three of whom may be 13 years of age.
- 3.4** The U16 Championship is open to all players affiliated to, and playing in teams, that play in a Wales Netball affiliated League/s
- 3.5** The U12/U14 Championship is open to all players affiliated to, and playing in teams, that play in the designated Wales Netball affiliated League/s, as specified in the Table in 1.3

### **4. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

- 4.1** All players and officials must be individually affiliated to Wales Netball.
- 4.2** Players are only eligible to represent their primary clubs in national competitions (regionals and finals). This must be denoted in their Sport80 profile using the primary club function by October 31<sup>st</sup>\*. Players will not be eligible to represent any other club at a national competition should they transfer after this date, as they are cup-tied to their original primary club.

\*This date may be revised in the future at the discretion of Wales Netball.

- 4.3** The following are the only exceptions to the October 31<sup>st</sup> date set-out on 4.2, and Wales Netball reserves the right to request additional evidence if these scenarios arise:

- 4.3.1** Where a player is brand new to community netball in Wales and has affiliated to Wales Netball for the first time mid-season, and therefore designated their Primary Club after the October 31<sup>st</sup> date.
- 4.3.2** If the League which a player plays in starts after October 31<sup>st</sup>. Where this is the case the players primary club must be designated no later than 4 weeks after the start date of the respective league.
- 4.4** Prior to the U12/U14 National Club Championship Final entry deadline, all players are required to have taken to court in Wales for their primary club a minimum of 4 times in the respective Wales Netball League they have qualified via:
- 4.4.1** Games only count toward eligibility criteria if they have been played in the affiliated Junior League which they have qualified for the tournament via (i.e. the 'qualification league').
- 4.4.2** Games played in any league/s (irrespective of affiliation status) that are not the 'qualification league' will not count towards eligibility.
- 4.4.3** Games played in any league/s not affiliated to Wales Netball will not be counted towards eligibility criteria (e.g., England Netball affiliated leagues/competitions, BUCS affiliated leagues/competitions or private/social league/s not affiliated to Wales Netball).
- 4.4.4** This will be evidenced by official team sheets submitted to the relevant league/s, as per league/s requirements.
- 4.4.5** It is the responsibility of the club to ensure that team sheets are submitted according to league/s requirements.
- 4.4.6** In exceptional circumstances additional evidence may be considered on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of Wales Netball.
- 4.5** Prior to the U16 Regional Round entry deadline, all players are required to have taken to court in Wales for their primary club a minimum of 2 times in any Wales Netball affiliated league/s games (in the current season).
- 4.6** Prior to the U16 National Club Championship Final entry deadline, all players are required to have taken to court in Wales for their primary club a minimum of 4 times in any Wales Netball affiliated league/s games (in the current season):
- 4.6.1** Games played in any affiliated league/s within Wales count towards eligibility criteria.
- 4.6.2** Games can be played across multiple affiliated league/s within Wales.
- 4.6.3** Games played in any league/s not affiliated to Wales Netball will not be counted towards eligibility criteria (e.g., England Netball affiliated leagues/competitions, BUCS affiliated leagues/competitions or private/social league/s not affiliated to Wales Netball).
- 4.6.4** This will be evidenced by official team sheets submitted to the relevant league/s, as per league/s requirements.

**4.6.5** It is the responsibility of the club to ensure that team sheets are submitted according to league/s requirements.

**4.6.6** In exceptional circumstances additional evidence may be considered on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of Wales Netball.

**4.7** Where there are no league/s requirements for team sheet submissions the following will apply:

**4.7.1** The act of a club registering a team for the National Clubs Championships (regional round or final) will be taken as confirmation that each member of the team meets eligibility requirements.

**4.7.2** The Wales Netball Code of Conduct, Ethics and Behaviour, sets out an expected minimum standard of behaviour and conduct for clubs, which requires those involved to (amongst other things), at all times:

- Participate within the rules and regulations of the game.
- Be honest, consistent, objective, impartial and courteous when applying the rules of the game.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.

**4.8** If a club knowingly names a player/s who do not meet the eligibility criteria when registering a team for National Club Championships (regional round or final) this will be deemed as a breach of the Code of Conduct, and the relevant disciplinary process will be instigated which may result in the club's permanent exclusion from Wales Netball Competitions.

## **5. TEAM ELIGIBILITY**

**5.1** For a team to be eligible for a place in the U12/U14 National Club Championship final, the club is required to denote at the beginning of the season which league their team/s will be qualifying via:

**5.1.1** A club may only denote one qualifying league for all club teams.

**5.1.2** A club may denote multiple teams in the denoted qualifying league.

**5.1.3** Wales netball will circulate a denotation form in September prior to the competition, which must be completed by the specified deadline for teams to be considered eligible.

**5.1.4** If the denotation form has not been completed, then irrespective of final league standing the team will not be eligible for the National Club Championship final, and the position will be given to the next eligible team in the league standings.

**5.2** For U16 National Club Championship final seventy percent (70%) of players must be the same as the original team stated on the Sport:80 regional round team list. Any new additions to the team list for the final (i.e., the 30%), must have taken court for their primary club, at least 4 times at any affiliated league/s games within Wales (in the current season) prior to the National Club Championship Final entry deadline, as stated above.

**5.3** No player may play for more than one age group or more than one club in the National Club Championship – Regional Rounds or Final.

## **6. MALE PARTICIPATION**

- 6.1** U12 National Club Championship Wales Netball regulations for National Competitions is that participating teams may be mixed or single sex (Female Biological Sex), male participation is restricted to a maximum of 2 players on court at any one time, with a maximum of one male player in each third.
- 6.2** U14 & U16 National Club Championship Wales Netball regulations state that participating teams must be single sex only (Female Biological Sex).

## **7. UMPIRING**

- 7.1** Wales Netball will control and organise all umpires for National Competition Finals. Umpires will be selected through the umpire pathway. Umpires will not take position of scorer at any National Championships.
- 7.2** Clubs, schools, and organisations may need to supply their own umpires at all Regional Rounds, dependent on area.
- 7.3** In the event of emergency circumstances, Wales Netball reserve the right to change original allocated umpires.

# INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

## OVERVIEW

The National Inter County Championship is organised by Wales Netball to enable area teams to compete against each other to determine a national winner. The purpose of the event is to encourage participation in netball through an open, fair, and transparent competition. National Inter County Championship creates an opportunity for individual players to play for their county, coming up against teams and players not known to them within their area. It therefore provides individuals with a Goal/Target, inspiring them to improve.

### **1. COMPETITION STRUCTURE**

**1.1** The competition shall comprise of the following structure:

- District Round (dependent on area)
- County training (selections of 12 players per team go through to nationals)
- National Final A&B – (Wales Netball)

**1.2** The criteria for selection will be established by the Area Association Committee. This may lead to a variation in eligibility, but the Areas are the final arbiters of who plays in their team.

### **2. COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY**

**2.1** Players must be under 12, under 14, under 16 or under 18 years of age at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August immediately prior to the competition.

**2.2** All players and officials must be individually affiliated to Wales Netball.

**2.3** No player under the age of 10 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August immediately prior to the competition may compete in the U12 & U14 Championship. A team may consist of a squad of up to 12 players, only three of whom may be 10 years of age.

**2.4** No player under the age of 13 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August immediately prior to the competition may compete in the U16 & U18 Championship. A team may consist of a squad of up to 12 players, only three of whom may be 13 years of age.

**2.5** Performance athletes selected into the following squads will not be eligible to play in the Inter County Competition, to protect them for international preparation and competition:

**2.5.1** Athletes selected into the Welsh Feathers Squad.

**2.5.2** Athletes selected into the Cardiff Dragons NSL Squad.

**2.5.3** Athletes selected into the Wales U17 Europe Netball (EN) long squad, will not be available to play in the Inter County Tournament to protect them for EN preparations.

**2.5.4** Athletes selected into Cardiff Dragons NPL squads at U17/ U19 or U23 level.

### **3. PRE-COMPETITION AND ADMINISTRATION**

- 3.1** Entry forms, team memberships and payment to all competitions must be processed through Sport:80. Late entries will not be accepted.
- 3.2** Prior to the championship each county team must add a minimum of 10 members and a maximum of 12 members to their club for each age group.
- 3.3** Please see more information regarding Sport:80 entry here: **SPORT:80 ENTRY**
- 3.4** No player may play for more than one age group in the Inter County Championship
- 3.5** When there is an A and B team, players cannot move between teams once the entry form deadline has passed.
- 3.6** If a team drops to 7 players on the event day, it is at the discretion of the Competition Organiser to discuss potential player movement between A and B squads, to ensure player welfare is prioritised.

### **4. UMPIRING**

- 4.1** Wales Netball will control and organise all umpires for National Competition Finals. Umpires will be selected through the umpire pathway. Umpires will not take position of scorer at any National Championships.
- 4.2** Clubs, schools, and organisations may need to supply their own umpires at all Regional Rounds, dependent on area.
- 4.3** In the event of emergency circumstances, Wales Netball reserve the right to change original allocated umpires.

# **NATIONAL SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIP (ANN SMART TROPHY & PRESIDENT CUP)**

## **OVERVIEW**

The National School Championship is organised by Wales Netball to enable schools to compete against each other to determine a national winner, with the purpose to encourage participation in netball through an open, fair, and transparent competition.

### **1. COMPETITION STRUCTURE**

**1.1** The competition shall comprise of the following structure:

- County/Regional Rounds – (School Associations to organise with the support of Wales Netball, if requested).
- National Final – (Wales Netball).

### **2. COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY**

**2.1** Players must be under 16 or under 19 years of age at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August immediately prior to the competition.

**2.2** No player under the age of 13 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August immediately prior to the competition may compete in the U16 & U19 Championship. A team may consist of a squad of up to 12 players, only three of whom may be 13 years of age.

**2.3** All players and schools must be affiliated to Wales Netball.

**2.4** All players must be on the school or college register prior to entering.

### **3. PRE-COMPETITION AND ADMINISTRATION**

**3.1** Entry forms, team memberships and payment to all competitions must be processed through Sport:80. Late entries will not be accepted.

**3.2** Prior to the championship each school must add a minimum of 10 members and a maximum of 12 members to their club for each age group.

**3.3** Please see more information regarding Sport:80 entry here: **SPORT:80 ENTRY**

**3.4** No player may play in both the Ann Smart Trophy & President Cup.

**3.5** Players involved with “consortia” schools may choose which school they play for. If that school is subsequently knocked-out in a qualifying round the player cannot play for another “consortia” or school in a later round.

#### **4. UMPIRING**

- 4.1** Wales Netball will control and organise all umpires for National Competition Finals. Umpires will be selected through the umpire pathway. Umpires will not take position of scorer at any National Championships.
- 4.2** Clubs, Schools and organisations may need to supply their own umpires at all Regional Rounds, dependent upon region.
- 4.3** In the event of emergency circumstances, Wales Netball reserve the right to change original allocated umpires.