

Umpire responsibilities under COVID 19 rule modifications and risk mitigations

GET IN, PLAY SAFE, GET OUT

Prior to a match:

- Read Personal Risk Assessment
- Read "OPT IN" statement and confirm
- Use Symptom Checker – at home and then at the venue for access
- Ask the person asking you to umpire/Home team about any specific venue Entry/Exit requirements (e.g. one way systems) and any other specific risk mitigation information
- Know who the COVID Officer/s is/are for the session you are attending (central venue/Home Team)
- Make sure your equipment (e.g. whistle) is cleaned at home prior to leaving
- Personal items should be clearly marked and not shared e.g. drinks bottles, towels
- Arrive ready to Umpire (in Kit, with Whistle, timer, Drink) – No changing facilities to be used
- Travel to the venue on your own. If this is not possible, follow the latest government guidance https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925684/coronavirus-safer-travel-easy-read-guidance.pdf

Arriving at the Venue:

- Arrive on Time. Do not arrive excessively early
- Maintain social distancing
- Register at the venue:
 - Undertake final health screening
 - Complete Test and Trace protocol
 - Complete any venue/club/league registration requirements (should know in advance – advised by activity organiser)
- Make sure you are ready to officiate – no changing facilities will be available
- Umpires are not required to wear a face mask/covering if indoor facilities are being used; however, may be required to do so based on any venue specific protocols when arriving and departing a venue.
- You must wait in the designated holding area until advised to access the court area.

Pre Match checks and protocols:

- Umpires are only responsible for themselves. They are NOT responsible for Health Screening of individuals or for actual sanitisation of equipment. Check with Home team/league that goal posts have been sanitised.
- Umpires should be socially distanced from each other and the players at all times, including when seated at officials bench.
- Sanitise hands prior to match and at the start of every quarter.
- Spectators should be outside the court area (i.e. behind a fence) and must remain socially distanced and gather in groups of no more than six.

Player Checks:

- Nail checks should be conducted socially distant from 2m.
- Do checks in an open circle and follow with briefing.

Umpire Briefing:

- Give an Umpire Briefing to both teams, to include:
 - 1) Advise players that they should not be consciously increasing risks
 - 2) Reminder of rule modifications – 4ft spacing for the start of play; 4ft marking; 4ft position of penalised player; removal of idle interactions; removal of toss ups. Advise players to look for umpires as will be trying to help players to stay on the right side of the modifications
 - 3) Advise NO stepping in (e.g. GS stepping in at a shot)
 - 4) Team to sanitise ball every 15 minutes or sooner
 - 5) Players to sanitise hands before each quarter and immediately after they return to their team bench at the end of each quarter
 - 6) If the goal post is touched during play (with hand or leant on by a player), the umpire will hold time and the home team must sanitise the post before play can be resumed. Umpire will blow whistle and signal to restart.
 - 7) No excessive shouting is allowed e.g. LEFT, LEFT, LEFT. Umpire to give a quiet word to remind the player/coach.
 - 8) Team talks are to be held socially distanced and it is suggested that teams stand on court in the goal third in front of their team benches.
 - 9) Those sitting on the team benches to be 2m apart or 1m+ if wearing a face mask/covering.
 - 10) Bib Sharing is not permitted. Ask what bib alternatives are to be used. Remind teams that no pins are allowed on bibs. It is the teams' responsibility to be prepared.

Coin toss:

- Only the Home team captain is to touch the coin. Ensure all involved remain socially distanced.

Balls:

- It is each team's responsibility to ensure ALL equipment is cleaned prior to play (including ball and post/post protectors) and match balls are appropriately pumped up
- Ensure there are 2 sanitised match balls – the umpires do not touch the balls.
- The balls are kept at the team benches and each team is responsible for their own ball.
- The balls must be sanitised every 15 minutes during activity
- The umpires are not required to deliver the ball for a centre pass.
- The Centre from the team who is taking the first centre pass of each quarter will be responsible for bringing the ball onto court. The second ball is the reserve.
- During play, if the ball is touched by anyone other than the on court players (e.g. if ball enters adjacent court / touches a spectator), the umpires should hold time and replace the 'contaminated' match ball with the second clean ball. The team whose ball is contaminated should have a nominated person to clean that ball ready for use again if required and it then becomes the reserve ball. Umpire restarts play with whistle and restart handsignal.

Goal Post / Protectors:

- The goal post / protectors need to be sanitised before the start of play; at the end of the match; and if anyone touches them.
- If the goal post / protector is touched during play (with hand or leant on by a player), the umpire will hold time and the Home team must sanitise the post before play can be resumed. The Home team should have a nominated person who will come over and wipe the post with a sanitising wipe. Umpire will blow whistle and signal to restart.
- If the ball gets stuck in the net, a player can tap the post with their foot to release the ball.

Intervals and Social Distancing

- When you arrive, place your chairs (or bags) in a position away from the players.
- Chairs (or bags) should be 2m apart
- When the final whistle for a quarter is blown, wait on your side line for the teams to leave the court and return to their team bench areas
- From a position on court and socially distant from the teams just remind them that they should be sanitising the ball
- Return back to your chair/bag and sit/stand socially distanced from your co-umpire
- A few moments before you blow the 30 second warning whistle, make sure you sanitise your hands
- As you blow the 30 second whistle, return to your side of the court
- Players must wait for umpires whistle before entering the court at start of play and after an interval
- Umpires may be required to time matches including intervals and stoppages so ensure you have timers with you. There is no requirement for a full technical table at this stage of return to netball.

Injury, Illness or Blood Stoppages

- Umpires should follow the standard injury rules as outlined in the Rules book
- Remain on your side line and position away from players
- First aiders should wear a face mask/covering when dealing with an injured player. They must sanitise hands before and after treating player; and wear gloves when dealing with open wounds.
- Do not be afraid to extend the injury time to ensure the team who the injured player belongs to can safely assess the injured player and then sanitise the court if the player was on the ground
- If the floor was sanitised, ensure the team responsible makes sure it is dry before play continues.
- Restart play with the whistle and restart handsignal as normal

Post Match and Exit:

- Wait on side line until teams are safely at their benches before you move to officials bench
- Sign paperwork using own pen (ideally paperwork will be electronic only)
- Sanitise hands following match
- Collect all personal items and exit courts promptly
- Follow venue specific exit requirements e.g. One way system.
- Do not use changing facilities
- Each match is a separate session so umpires should sign-off court and sign in again to the next session.
- If you develop symptoms, notify NHS Test and Trace and the identified COVID Officer – you will also be required to self-isolate as per government guidance.
- The COVID Officers will be constantly reviewing the risk assessment and management plan and any feedback will be welcomed.

Game Modifications

Modifications were created to:

- Reduce the risks identified in standard netball
- Remove face-to-face interactions of less than 1 m, for longer than three seconds – highest risk
- Reduce the number of interactions within 1 m not face-to-face for longer than three seconds – medium risk (e.g. side to side; back to back)
- Ensure all risk interactions had to be less than 15 minutes in total across all match play
- Reduce idle interactions or periods of rest when players are stood within 1 m unnecessarily

Other objectives were to:

- Stay as close to the standard format of the game as possible
- Enhance off court safety and hygiene measures to support on court modifications

All match play and competition will be played to the modified rules until social distancing is relaxed.

Umpires play an important role in these modifications but this is no more than any other group involved. Two umpires are required at all times to ensure adherence.

Players and coaches have a responsibility to avoid putting themselves and others at risk by following the modifications put in place and umpires will support them. It is everybody's responsibility during this time to follow all of the protocols in place. With good compliance from all, there should be no issues.

The following must not take place between players during any training sessions or at netball matches:

- There should be no pre-match huddle – players should remain socially distanced for any pre-match team talk
- No pre-match or pre-quarter 'hands in'
- No shouting or cheering
- No quarter or half time huddles
- No high fiving
- No post-match hug circles or handshakes
- Any post-match paperwork should be shared digitally (this could be e mail or photograph)
- No post-match team teas or sharing of snacks and confectionary
- Team selfies must be socially distanced

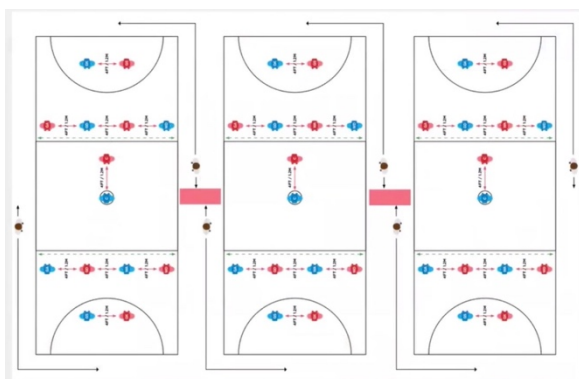
As of 28 September, for any netball activity indoors/outdoors, coaches/officials/volunteers and the team bench are not required to wear a face mask/covering but it is encouraged; and social distancing must be adhered to.

In a bid to protect the safety of players, umpires may consider penalising an infringement where they may have previously played advantage.

EN Recommendations

- Games can be 4 x 15 minutes but 4 x 10 minutes may be preferable in the short term
- Umpires may play and umpire in a day. The risk of participating in netball is limited to the on court play within a game. Umpires are socially distanced from all participants when in officiating role.
- An umpire may umpire multiple matches (including at different venues) but the umpire must ensure they complete test and trace procedures at each venue or match.
- Umpires should only umpire a maximum of 2 matches a day in any circumstances to ensure they keep mental sharpness, give the best of themselves and give teams what they deserve.
- Players may only play one match/train with one team maximum per day under the rule modifications. No more than 60 minutes match play in a day due to risk mitigation factors. Playing in multiple games would increase the number of people that would be exposed within this environment and would present a greater risk of COVID 19 spreading.
- On court players should not wear face masks as they inhibit breathing.
- If a player has to wear gloves for medical reasons, they must change them at least every 15 minutes (or alongside the hand hygiene protocols stipulated by the league). The change should be for a completely new and washed pair of gloves, not a set previously worn in the game. Sanitising gloves instead of replacing them is not accepted.
- All spectators should complete test and trace protocols even if outside the court area i.e. behind a fence. England Netball recommends that clubs discourage spectators from attending unless necessary for young people with specific needs.

Umpire and Scorer Positioning



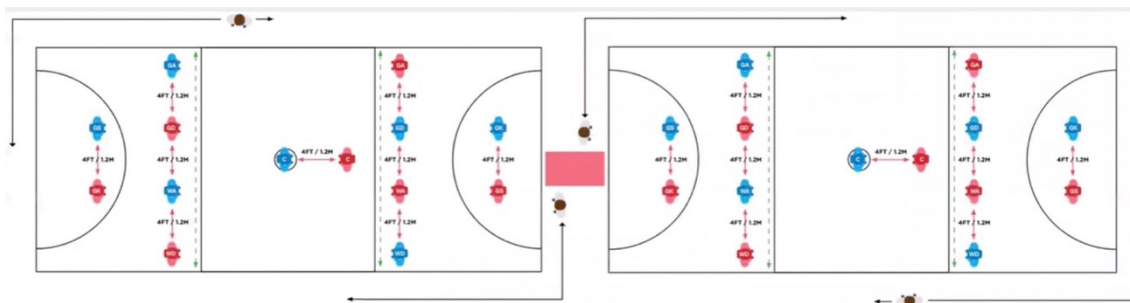
Multiple court venues

At a multiple court venue, it is preferable to leave middle courts free.

Umpiring where multiple courts are in use:

- Consider the running paths of the umpires.
- Only ever cross paths back to back – least risk in these situations.

Ideally there should be 2m run off between courts.

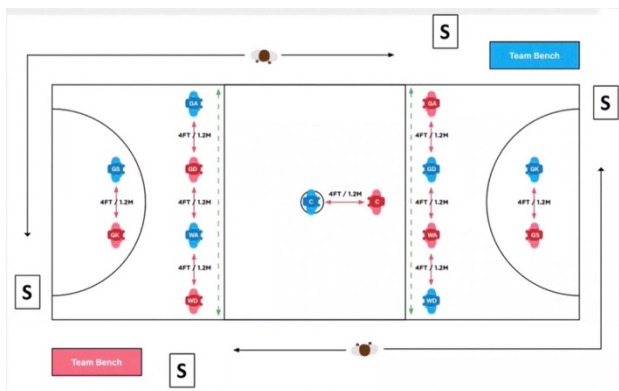


If there is narrow run off between and behind courts (i.e. less than 2m):

- When courts are side by side:
 - Umpires are to position slightly deeper along the side line to the RIGHT of the Centre circle i.e. goal end and slightly wider on the goal line i.e. where the goal circle meets goal line.
- When courts are end to end:
 - Umpires are to position short of the goal post on the goal line i.e. where the goal circle meets the goal line. This is to avoid the concentration of players under the goal post and the increased risks associated.
- By doing this, it creates an exclusion zone of approx. 4 – 5 ft between the umpires. It is unlikely that umpires will move beyond the goal post due to the concentration of players in the goal circle and around the goal post.

Initial return to play is all about game facilitation and getting everyone back on court. Umpires need to avoid coming into contact with players. Less emphasis is being placed on umpires' correct positioning for vision.

If there is good run off, positioning is not affected and umpires are expected to move and position as normal.



Scorers should:

- be together but remain 2m apart;
- be positioned away from benches and spectators;
- be able to see goals scored.

Team Benches should:

- Be positioned diagonally rather than on same side to provide more social distancing for movement of umpires.
- If there is less than 1.5m run off to the side of the court, position the team bench behind the goal line on the opposite side to where the umpire will run/position.

COVID Officer (Home team/league) should have arranged the team bench positions as part of their risk planning.

4ft Spacing v Contest

What we have to avoid:

- Face to Face within 1m e.g. under the goal post with arms up
- Face to Face within 2m for longer than 3 seconds – because then we start breathing each other's exhalations

What we can do:

- Run together side by side – even touching shoulders
- Defend from front to back or side to side for less than 3 seconds
- Contest for ball – provided players are involved in the phase of the play
- Move/confuse the space whilst within 4ft

The key is to keep moving and avoid standing still / close to someone else. As soon as a player has the ball, then others need to find distance.

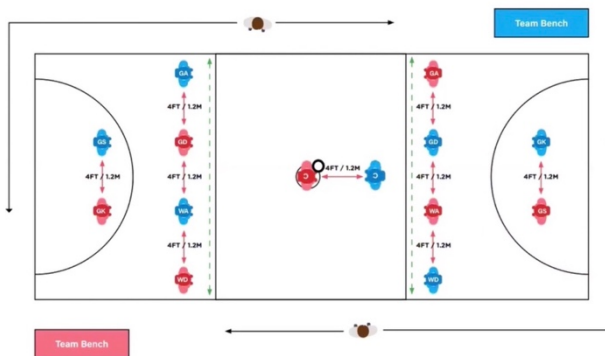
What is an idle interaction?

- Normally happens when the ball is in another area of the court and players are not involved
- Examples include: on the circle edge; on the transverse line; whilst walking back to centre pass; returning to the team bench at the end of a quarter
- It can happen:
 - when players are having a rest period in play
 - After a goal is scored
 - At the end/start of a quarter

Removal of idle interactions

- Players not engaged in play or who are stood still are required to be positioned 4ft away from another player.

4 ft Spacing for the Start of Play



GS and GK are required to start inside their respective goal circles. This is to avoid congestion on the transverse line.

- It is not an infringement if they are not inside. The umpire is to remind them.
- If centre pass is going in that direction, the umpire may hold time fractionally and advise GS/GK to move inside the goal circle.
- If centre pass is going in the opposite direction, the umpire will have a quiet word off of the play.

GA, GD, WA and WD on the transverse line

- These players can be anywhere in the goal third.
- If stationary, all players are required to position themselves a minimum of 4ft away from their opposing players and team mates at the start of play. This will be managed by the umpires.
- If players are running back to the transverse line after a goal has been scored, then they may be side by side.
- On transverse line, movement is key. Can be closer than 4ft as long as moving to confuse the space.

Centres in the centre third

- If face to face, must be 4ft away.
- If defending centre is defending an opposition player who is on the transverse line prior to coming into the centre third, they must be 4ft away.

4 ft Marking

- The defending distance has been increased from 3ft to 4ft.
- Particular attention must be paid in the goal circle when defending or waiting for a rebound under the goal post. This will be blown as distance.

4 ft Positioning of the Penalised Player

- Penalised players for major infringements (obstruction, contact) or under Game Management are required to position beside the player they infringed but from a distance of 4ft away. This will be managed by umpires when an infringement occurs.
- The pass can still be taken before the infringing player is in place.

Removal of Toss ups

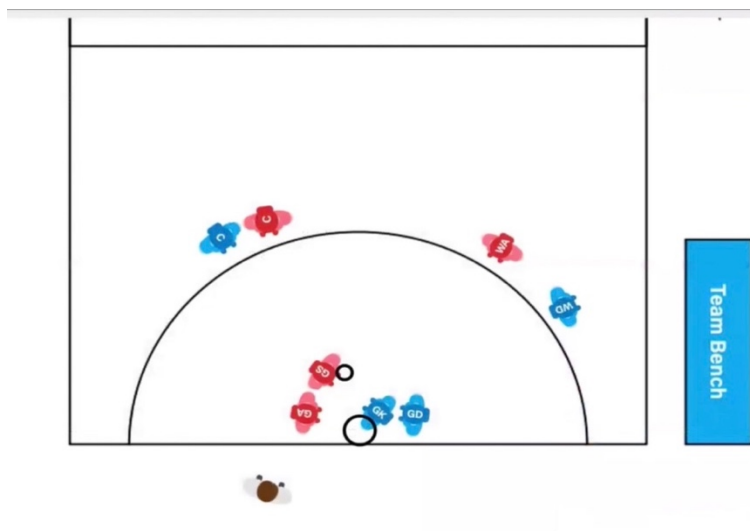
- No toss ups are permitted. They have been removed due to the increased risk that they place on both players and umpires.
- In the event a Toss up would be awarded, the umpire will blow the whistle and award a free pass to the team who had possession of the ball immediately prior to the situation that caused a Toss up to be considered.
- The umpire will briefly hold time, instruct the ball to be returned to the relevant team and play will be restarted on the umpire's whistle with appropriate restart hand signal.
- E.g. Two opposing players gaining possession, contacting each other simultaneously or two opposing players entering an offside area where one or both touch the ball – a free pass is awarded on court to the team who were in possession prior to the simultaneous action occurring, to be taken where the infringement occurred.
- E.g. At a centre pass, two opposing players enter the centre third before the whistle is blown and one or both of them touch the ball – a free pass is awarded on court, in the centre third, where the ball was touched, to the team who were in possession prior to the simultaneous breaking.
- E.g. Two opposing players simultaneously send the ball out of court or the umpire is unable to determine which player touched it last – a free pass is awarded on court, to the team who were in possession prior to the simultaneous out of court occurring, to be taken where the two players were standing when they sent the ball off court.
- E.g. If, after a stoppage, the umpires are unable to determine who was last in possession of the ball, or if the ball was on the ground, a free pass will be awarded to the team who took the last centre pass.

The Goal Circles – Examples of player set-ups

Circle players may be within 4ft in active play if they:

- Are moving/confusing space on circle edge and inside the goal circle
- Are side on to their opponent
- Are behind their opponent

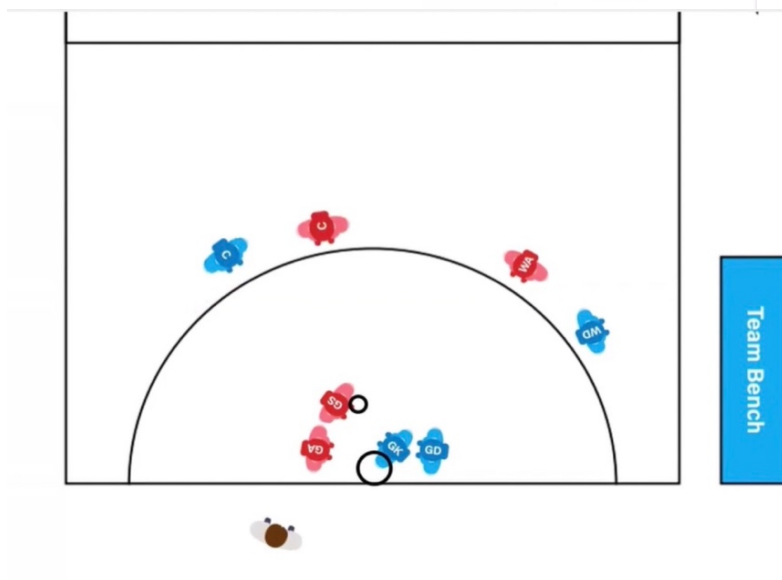
They cannot remain in these positions for longer than 3 seconds.



Be aware of circle edge players.

When in idle interactions, they must be 4ft apart.

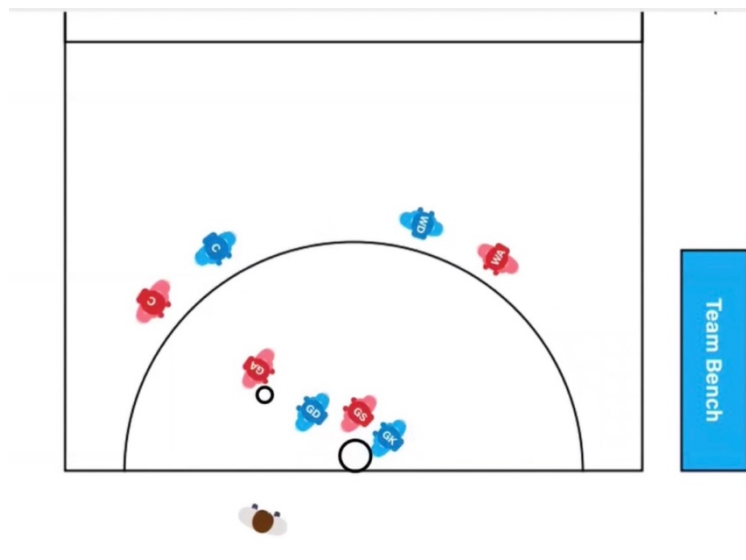
Use Quiet word to remind Centres to move apart.



GA and GS are side by side less than 4ft away but GS has ball and therefore they are in active play at this time.

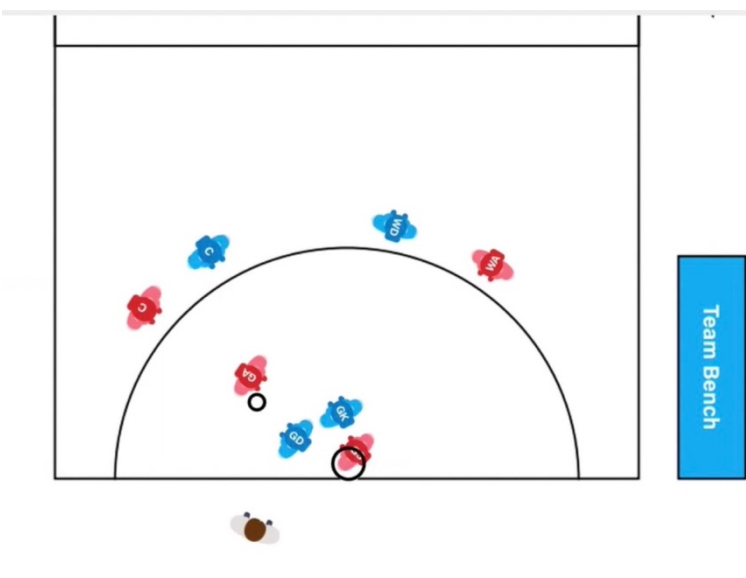
GK is 4ft away from GA and GS.

GD is front to back with GK within 4ft.



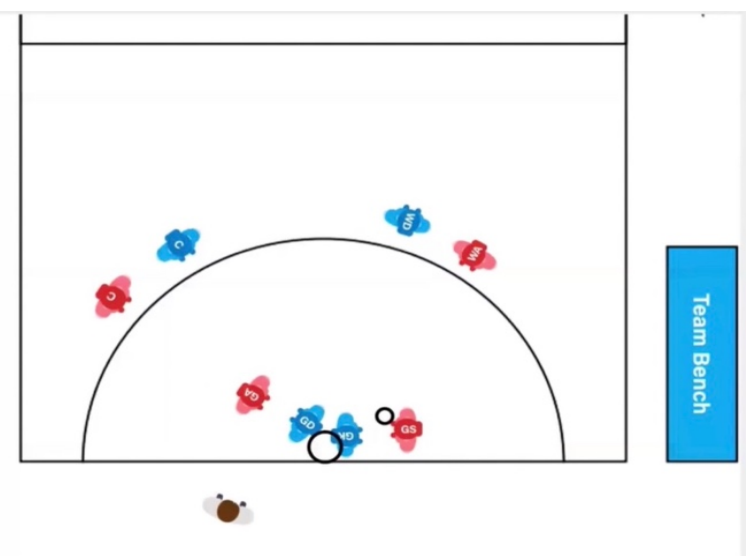
Team Bench

GA has possession of the ball and GD is 4 ft away.
GS is within 4ft of both GD and GK. Facing front to back with GD and GK is front to back behind.



Team Bench

GA has possession of the ball and GD is 4ft away.
GD and GK are side to side within 4ft.
GS is behind the GK front to back in a rebound position.

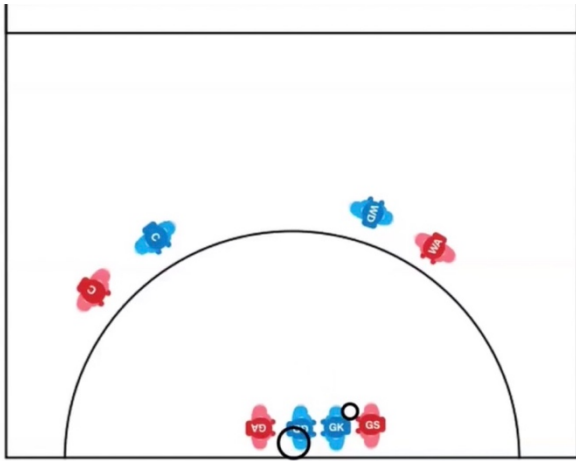


Team Bench

GS has possession of the ball and the GK is face to face within 4ft.

- This could have happened because the GS has received a pass from WA and turned around quickly; and it is ok if they are in this position for a second.
- The GK should realise that they need to move away to 4ft.
- If the GK does not move, the umpire should advise the player to move.

The GD is within 4ft of GK front to back.
The GA is face to face with GD but there is 4ft distance between them.



Team Bench

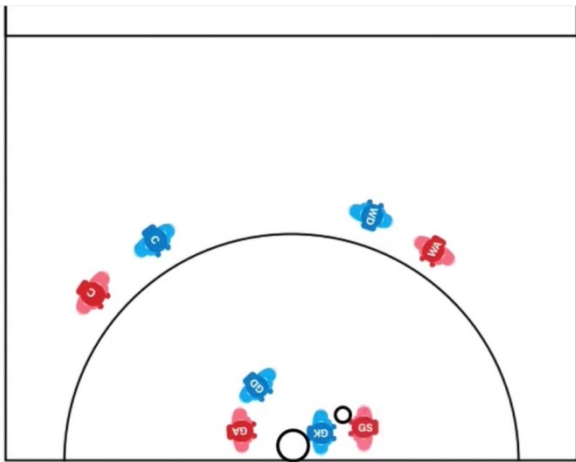
GS has possession of the ball.

GK is within 4ft of both GS and GD. GK has back to GS but is face to face with GD.

GD is within 4ft of GA and GK. GD has back to GA but is face to face with GK.

It is the players' responsibility to move from the face to face situation so one of / both GD and GK must move immediately.

- If no one moves, the umpire should advise them to move.



Team Bench

GS has possession of the ball.

GA and GD are side to side within 4ft of each other.

GK is face to face with GS; and GS takes a step in towards GK so that she is within 4ft.

- This is not allowed. It is dangerous. However, it may be an old habit of the player.
- Blow whistle immediately to hold time.
- Say "GS you need to step back".
- GS will then step back .
- Play will then continue with GS in possession of the ball. Umpire blows whistle and uses restart handsignal.
- If necessary, speak to captain and coach at interval to reinforce rule modification requirements.

Game Management

- Game Management rules apply as normal.
- Umpires need to support players to change their behaviour as required.
- Players and coaches need to take responsibility to change their behaviour if asked and to adhere to the modifications.

Umpires should:

- Manage the game with frequent quiet words to support players to change their behaviour.
- If necessary, hold time to advise players to adhere to the modifications. No penalties should be applied initially.
- Ask to speak to Coaches and Captains at Quarter/Half time to reinforce reminders if required.
- Persistent or deliberate infringements that risk the health of other players should be dealt with quickly but should not occur if players are taking responsibility and coaches are supporting the umpires.
- Any serious infringements may be escalated quicker than normal or dealt with by using a higher sanction to protect the safety of other players.
- Remind Players, Captains and Coaches of NO excessive shouting using a quiet word. Instructions can be given.
- Spitting is an order off offence.

A shooter who lessens the distance between herself and a defender is directly increasing the risk to her and her opponent and should be avoided. Players and coaches should understand their responsibilities to reduce risk and support the umpires to apply the modifications.

With good compliance by players and good preparation by coaches to avoid this, we can continue to keep everyone on court as safe as the current situation allows.