



Coaching Players with a Disability

Netball Australia is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities in Netball. They are working to make netball more accessible for people with a disability, not only to players, but also to coaches, umpires, other officials and administrators.

To ensure that people with disabilities may enjoy high quality experiences through the game of netball, Netball Australia focuses on awareness training for coaches, umpires and volunteers.

Netball is based on general movement and ball skills and its structured format, placing restrictions on the areas of the court into which a player may go, means that it is truly a team game. With minor modifications to the rules with regard to mobility, equipment and decision-making, netball can offer the rewards of social connectedness, co-operation, fitness and fun to almost anyone who wants to take part.

Good coaches adapt and modify their coaching and create an environment that caters for individual needs and allows everyone to take part. The onus of inclusion rests with the coach. **Inclusive coaching should not be considered a separate coaching skill but a reflection of good coaching practice.**

Inclusion is not an issue specific to people who have impairments. There will be many reasons why a person may not be fulfilling their potential in a specific activity. Being inclusive means adapting and modifying coaching practices and activities to ensure that every participant – regardless of age, gender, ability level, disability or ethnic background – is included.

These simple tips provide some basic ways of including people with a range of abilities in netball.

1. Use a ball or balloon containing bells, seeds or rice to assist with aural tracking. Research from The United Kingdom has indicated that sound balls aid development in all young children, not just those who have vision impairments. Sound balls can also help provide focus for young people who have spatial/perceptual difficulties, or high levels of distractibility. Some people may respond negatively to the use of balloons. Balloon balls (a balloon inside a material cover) can provide a more acceptable and safer alternative. Brighter balls and bibs and textured balls can also be helpful.
2. If people are intimidated by hard, fast moving balls, use slower moving, softer balls (like sponge or foam balls) until their skills and confidence are more developed. Slower moving balls can give participants more reaction time and can be used until coordination and anticipation skills have improved.
3. Flashcards can be useful for people who use sign-supported English or who have a specific hearing or cognitive impairment. Cards can have a picture or symbol of the activity or be colour coded to match specific activities.
4. Communicate with the person about what they **can do** and discuss ways of involving everyone in the group. Alter your teaching style by using different verbal cues and simpler instructions.
5. The CHANGE IT model for inclusion provides an outline to ways activities can be modified to be more inclusive, coaches can change one or all of them.

C	Coaching style
H	How to score or win
A	Area
N	Numbers
G	Game Rules
E	Equipment
I	Inclusion
T	Time