

Netball Victoria: Promoting Male Participation in Netball Policy

September 2018

Introduction

Netball Victoria (NV) and its Affiliates welcome the opportunity for males to participate in netball. Creating and fostering opportunities and choice for both mixed-gender and single-gender competition is vitally important to showcase netball as a strong and contemporary sport which provides every individual the opportunity to participate in a manner that is appropriate to their ability, comfort and personal preference. Encouraging a lifelong involvement in, and love of netball starts with inclusive participation, particularly at the grassroots level. We are all committed to providing a safe, fair and inclusive sporting environment where all people can contribute and participate.

Netball Victoria has created this policy to support and encourage the participation of males in grassroots netball. The policy aims to provide affiliates with clear direction and information to support the development of mixed-gender and male single gender competition. We appreciate that not every Affiliate may be able to create or foster mixed or male single gender competition due to a variety of reasons including access to suitable facilities. However, as a collective, we believe the Victorian netball community can develop and foster a larger number of playing options for males.

While males make up approximately 49% of the Victorian population, they are approximately 3% of Netball Victoria's membership. At the junior level, this equates to around 1%. However, participation of males in school netball programs (both primary and secondary) through School Sport Victoria is very strong and growing. In addition, the market for social mixed competition is very strong across the social/private provider industry. Overall, we believe that there is demand for male competition. Providing opportunity for mixed and male single gender play is helpful to achieving one of netball's overall strategic objectives of *Growing Netball* and supports the growth of Affiliates, particularly in the social netball market.

Under the NV Gender Regulation, males from age 13 are not permitted to participate in female competitions. To provide opportunities for participation, males should be supported and encouraged to play mixed and where possible, male single gender competition.

How will Netball Victoria help?

- Support and promote the development of junior male competition via the Victorian Men's and Mixed Netball League (VMNL)
- Adopt a Gender Regulation including the requirement to be clear and transparent on gender for all competitions including in by-laws
- Improve the visual imagery of males across all channels including social media, digital and website
- Encourage Affiliates to notify NV of their mixed/male competitions so that these can be published and promoted on the NV website as a reference for all clubs, associations, leagues, members, schools and participants
- Establish channels and opportunities for Affiliates to connect and collaborate on developing new mixed and male competitions
- Create and promote new mixed divisions across all NV competitions, for example State Titles and Association Championships

- Support improved connections from school-based competitions and play to 'club-based play'
- Encourage Affiliates to try new formats such as Rock Up Netball and create new mixed divisions.

How can Affiliates help?

- Ensure all competitions have clear and transparent gender requirements covering the labelling or title of competitions, by-laws, promotions, advertising and general communications (including fixturing and ladders)
- Consider ways to provide a range of options for playing netball - female, male and mixed competition
- Look for opportunities to meet the demand for social mixed play by offering a different format of play eg Rock Up Netball
- Consider collaborating with other Affiliates and local primary and secondary schools to create a new mixed competition particularly suitable for males aged from 13 years
- Create new mixed or male divisions across tournaments and round robins
- Develop strong links with local primary and secondary schools into your club
- Use the support of NV to promote new mixed competitions, find other interested affiliates and collaborate on mixed play opportunities
- Consider if any existing competitions should be changed to a mixed competition
- Engage with clubs, players, parents and local primary and secondary schools to seek feedback on how mixed competitions could be provided
- Enter mixed teams into NV competitions
- Host exhibition or 'come and try' events to generate interest
- Seek support from NV or the VMNL for mixed gender proposals
- Increase the number of males in your NetSetGO program – including participants and volunteers
- Enter a male team to play in the Victorian Men's and Mixed League (VMNL) junior competition
- Encourage more males to undertake accreditation in coaching and umpiring
- Refer interested individual male players to the VMNL competition
- Use new mixed competitions to create more opportunities for females and males to take on leadership roles, coaching and umpiring