



## **COMPETITION RULES AND GUIDELINES**

***(CRAGS)***

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**NNI Competitions Working Group  
Final revisions approved October 2023**

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## **REGULATIONS GOVERNING ALL NETBALL NORTHERN IRELAND (NNI) CLUB COMPETITIONS**

All clubs, players and relevant members should have an up to date working knowledge of the Competitions Rules and Guidance's document and World Netball Rules.

All final decisions made by the Competitions Working Group are binding, subject to appeal to the NNI Board.

### **Points of Contact**

- **Competitions Working Group** – NNI [CompWG@gmail.com](mailto:NNICompWG@gmail.com)
- **Officials Working Group** - contact [Headofworkforce@netballni.org](mailto:Headofworkforce@netballni.org)
- **Umpiring Working Group** – contact [Headofworkforce@netballni.org](mailto:Headofworkforce@netballni.org)
- **League Managers** - All teams and leagues have an assigned league manager. The list can be found on NNI website ([www.netballni.org](http://www.netballni.org)) and sent to all clubs at start of season as first point of contact for any queries /issues regarding a fixture, player registration or general competition query.
- **Head of Development** - Lisa Rickett - [Headofdevelopment@netballni.org](mailto:Headofdevelopment@netballni.org)  
Queries relating to Online team/player registration, online match result sheet queries and League Tables on NNI website.
- **Head of Workforce** - Rebecca Hope - [Headofworkforce@netballni.org](mailto:Headofworkforce@netballni.org)  
Queries relating to Umpiring/Workforce, match running score sheets.

### **1.0 GOVERNING BODY**

- 1.1 The Articles of Association of Netball Northern Ireland (NNI) will govern the game of netball from grass roots to elite athlete participation in the province.
- 1.2 The Rules of World Netball (WN) and NNI Rules are the official regulations for conducting all League and Shield/Plate matches.
- 1.3 The Competitions Working Group (CompWG) are authorised by NNI to take responsibility for the administration of netball in competitions and fixtures, and to ensure the appropriate implementation of these rules.
- 1.4 The Schools Working Group (SWG) will have responsibility for affiliated Secondary School competitions, and Primary Schools Working group have the responsibility for Primary schools' competitions.
- 1.5 Players, Coaches, Officials ,all club and NNI members should ensure they are aware of rules, penalties and are bound by the NNI [Code of Conduct](#).
- 1.6 Clubs and Schools are required to disseminate the information shared via NNI.
- 1.7 All clubs **must** have a minimum of **one** registered club member attend the NNI AGM.
- 1.8 All competition (e.g., Opening Rally, League and Shield) entry fees must be paid by specified deadline.

### **2.0 NETBALL NORTHERN IRELAND COMPETITIONS WORKING GROUP**

- 2.1 The CompWG shall consist of volunteers.

- 2.2 The CompWG shall administer and organise:
- (i) All NNI affiliated competitive club competitions.
  - (ii) All NNI affiliated Schools Competitions (devolved to the Schools Working Group and Primary schools working group)
  - (iii) The annual production of Fixture Lists and results of Senior and Junior competitions.
  - (iv) All shield and plate fixtures for Senior and Junior competitions will be drawn by CompWG.
- 2.3 The CompWG may at any time scrutinise team lists, re-registrations or other relevant material and apply competition regulations as appropriate.
- 2.4 The CompWG and NNI shall co-ordinate rules for all domestic competitions and reserves the right to amend or incorporate a new rule during that time to benefit the game and members of NNI, subject to ratification by the Board of NNI. If this does happen, then all clubs will be notified in writing of the reason and decision taken by the CompWG, through the Competitions Working Group email. Every effort will be made to ensure any update takes place after the end of each season and before the start of the next.
- 2.5 If any club has a concern or query regarding a particular rule within the current edition of the NNI Competition Rules & Guidance (CRAG), their Club Secretary **must** put it in writing to the CompWG contact ([NNICompWG@gmail.com](mailto:NNICompWG@gmail.com))

### **3.0 NNI AFFILIATION & ONLINE REGISTRATION PROCESS**

NNI affiliation runs from 1<sup>st</sup> September – 31<sup>st</sup> August the following year.

- 3.1 All Senior and Junior Club players, qualified umpires and officials must, **individually**, affiliate to NNI via the online registration portal to take part in Leagues, Shield/Plate and Tournament competitions.
- 3.1.2 All Social and Casual, Senior and Junior Club players must, **individually**, affiliate to NNI via the online registration portal to participate in opening and social Rallies and Development Tournaments.
- 3.1.3 Each Club **must** pay their affiliation fee directly to NNI via contacting [finance@netballni.org](mailto:finance@netballni.org)
- 3.1.4 No team or individual will be permitted to play any competitive matches until this affiliation and payment of NNI fees has been confirmed by this registration system .  
**See Sanction (S2)**
- 3.2 A new club or team entering the leagues, which is, or has been previously withdrawn from the leagues, may be added into the lowest league division at the discretion of the CompWG.
- 3.2.1 A club may apply to the CompWG, in writing, to enter a new team in a higher league. The CompWG reserves the right to alter League allocations and will decide where

such team(s) shall be placed.

- 3.2.2 The CompWG reserve the right to adjust teams within the leagues before the start of each season if adjustments are required due to the number of new teams entering competition in any year.

No club may have more than 2 teams in any league division.

- 3.2.3 If a new club wishes to affiliate and enter the competitions after **club registration** deadline then they need to contact NNI [headofdevelopment@netballni.org](mailto:headofdevelopment@netballni.org) .NNI and Comp WG are not obliged to accept any applications submitted after the prescribed deadline has passed.
- 3.2.4 A club shall not affiliate using the name or part of the name of an existing club without **written** permission of the established club and the agreement of the CompWG.

### 3.3 **Club Team Allocation to NNI COMPWG**

- 3.3.1 All teams **MUST** have a **minimum** of 7 players registered via the online portal for each team. **See Sanction (S3)**
- 3.3.2 Club personnel must register all players into the relevant club teams/squads using the online portal system under the "Team Panel" in current online registration system **before taking part in** their first match. **See sanction (S2)**

## **4.0 SENIOR REGISTERED PLAYERS & PLAYING UP IN THE LEAGUE AND PLAY OFFS**

- 4.1 A player from a lower club team may play on any higher club team a maximum of 4 times.
- 4.2 Prior to playing for the fifth time, the player must be re-registered with a higher team of their choice on the online registration portal and the League Manager **MUST** be notified, via League Manager email, before the player commences a match with this team. **See Sanction (S2)**
- 4.3 The player will then be a member of that team and must not play for any other team for the remainder of the season. **See Sanction (S2)**
- 4.4 The notification to the league manager needs to be sent and a confirmation response received from the League Manager prior to the individual taking the court. The responsibility is on the club to make this notification. **See Sanction (S2)**

### **Junior Registered Players & Playing Up in the Senior and Junior Leagues**

4.5 Only Junior players, 15 years old or above, can play up on senior teams. Junior player 15 years old or older can play up 4 times, and then on their 5<sup>th</sup> must be registered permanently on the senior team or higher junior team of their club's choice. Once registered on a senior or a higher junior team these players are no longer eligible to play in any other junior or senior league team for League competition only. **See Sanction (S2)**

4.6 Once Shield and Plate competitions commence, the junior team panels are reverted back to those entered at the beginning of the league season, with play up counts back to zero. Times playing up will change to maximum of 2 times and then prior to playing on 3<sup>rd</sup> time must be re-registered with higher playing team of club's choice. **See Sanction (S2)**

See Section 12 Shield and Plate Competitions.

4.7 It is recommended the final group, once selected on to the U17 National Squad, play for an U19 team or Senior Team, in the relevant competitions. However, any decision on this is for individual athlete consideration and must be made by Coaches, parents, and players collaboratively.

It is recommended All U21 National Squad players should be playing for senior teams from Premier to Senior Six, to develop their skill and stamina and provide the relevant level of challenge. However, any decision on this is for individual athlete consideration and must be made by Coaches, parents, and players collaboratively.

4.8 If a club team wishes to drop a registered team player to play in a lower team, the club secretary must contact the League Manager for permission to do so. Once permission is received the player will then be regarded as a member of the lower team and must not play for any higher team for the remainder of the season, including Shield & Plate. **See Sanction (S2)**

If an injury or illness to the player was the primary cause for the player to drop to the lower team, then the **League Manager** may consider the player's reinstatement to the higher team on receipt of written evidence.

4.9 If a registered Social Player wishes to play in a competitive match, they are required to top up their affiliation to the appropriate level and be added to relevant team panel online before they take to court. Normal playing up rules apply. **See Sanction (S2)**

## **5.0 PLAYER TRANSFER BETWEEN CLUBS**

5.1 If a registered player wishes to leave one affiliated club and register with another affiliated club, during the same season, the new club must forward the relevant details by email to the CompWG. The CompWG will then inform the relevant League Managers and the Secretary of the former club of its decision. The new club will then be notified to complete the online registration portal actions for transfer. The new club must not play that new player in a competitive match until a confirmation email has been received from the CompWG. If the new player has played in a Shield fixture for their former Club, they cannot participate in any future Shield fixtures in the same season for their new club. **See Sanction (S3(i)) & (S4)**

5.2 Players can transfer freely between clubs during off season. During the season players can request a transfer by the 31<sup>st</sup> December. The CompWG must be

approached for the group's permission. **Player transfer requests will not be considered hereafter.** Affected players can train with their new club but not play in competitive matches. ***See Sanction (S3(i))***

## **6.0 NNI JUNIOR & SENIOR LEAGUE STRUCTURE**

- 6.1 The structure of the leagues will be decided by the Competitions Working Group on behalf of NNI.
- 6.2 The NNI leagues will be split into 3 or more divisions as required - Premier League, Senior 1, Senior 2, and so on, with the Premier League division being the highest. The U19 League(s) regulations will replicate the NNI Senior League structure. Under 19 is Year 14 and below (number of leagues e.g. A, B etc in any age group may be subject to change dependant on entries in any particular season).
- 6.3 The U16 Leagues will replicate the NNI Senior League Structure. Under 16 is Year 11 and below (number of leagues e.g. A, B etc in any age group may be subject to change dependant on entries in any particular season).
- 6.4 The U14 Leagues will replicate the NNI Senior League Structure. Under 14 is Year 9 and below (number of leagues e.g. A, B etc in any age group may be subject to change dependant on entries in any particular season).

## **7.0 JUNIOR & SENIOR LEAGUE MATCH PROTOCOL & RESULT SHEET**

- 7.1 Each Team must log into the online registration portal and complete the official online team sheet with the players' name (from the team panel) by the match sheet submission deadline. ***See Sanction (S6)***
- 7.2 No team can exceed 12 players listed on the team sheet. Only the 12 players and team officials can be seated in the team bench area. ***See Sanction (S5)***
- 7.3 Each team **must** produce their correctly filled in official team sheet at the start of the match.
- 7.4 The 2 captains and 2 umpires, timer and scorer **must** sign the Official Team sheet **immediately** at the end of the match before leaving the venue, ensuring that any player who did not take the court is amended correctly before sign off by the Captain of each team. ***See Sanction (S7)***
- 7.5 Winning team must send Results via the official match sheet on email to the League Manager by the week ending date the match is to be played. In the event of a draw the home team captain should return the match sheet by the same deadline. The online team sheets for both teams **MUST** also be input accurately by this deadline, each team responsible for their own. Issues with incorrectly entered online team sheet could result in sanctions. ***(See Sanction S7)***
- 7.6 Both captains should take a photo of the final completed Official Team Sheet.
- 7.7 The Subject Title of the email to [League Manager](#) must contain League name, names of teams and score , e.g., Senior 5, Crumlin (score) v Spires 2 (score) and a clear photo of the correctly completed match sheet must be attached ***See Sanctions (S5,S6,S7)***.

## **Match Protocols**

- 7.8 Timekeepers and Scorers **MUST** sit together but separately away from team benches.
- 7.9 Home Team will be official Scorer. A coin toss is only required for first centre pass and the loser of toss will chose which goal end to start.
- 7.10 The match sheet recorded by the official scorer is deemed the official match result.
- 7.11 All matches should be on a standard court size regulations as outlined in WN Rules Edition 2020, Rule 3 Technical Specification for international games, unless prior agreement has been reached between both teams in advance of fixture being played on a smaller court in exceptional circumstances. In this instance the HOME team MUST inform the AWAY team when arranging the fixture, if the away team accepts the fixture on the noted court sizing, then the umpires cannot stop the match unless there is a safety issue, detail must also be noted on results sheet.
- 7.12 (i) All matches in the Senior Leagues and U19 League(s) shall consist of 4 quarters of 15 minutes each, with an interval of 3 minutes between the first and second and third and fourth quarters, and with 5 minutes interval at half time. Teams will change goal ends each quarter. ( WN rules 2020 Appendix D (iii) Time)
- (ii) All matches in the Junior section ( U14 and U16) shall consist of 4 quarters of 10 minutes each, with interval of 3 minutes between the first and second and third and fourth., with 5 minutes interval at half time. Teams will change goal ends each quarter. (INF rules Appendix D (iii) Time)
- 7.13 \_\_Where time is short then the relevant rules should be consulted in the current edition of WN Rule Book appendices. **(See also Late Arrival ref S19)**
- 7.14 When a draw occurs, and if a winner is needed, then extra time is required (WN Rule 4.2 2020). At this point the relevant rules should be consulted in the current edition of the INF Rule Book.
- 7.15 \_\_Any changes to time e.g., interval lengths etc., must be made with mutual agreement of the Captains and relayed to the umpires. **(See also Late Arrival ref S19)**
- 7.16 All teams should provide a minimum of five players - maximum of 7 on court, with a maximum of 12 players on the squad at match in total **( See Sanction (S5))** plus an extra person to act as the timer or scorer. This can be the coach, a spectator, reserve etc. If a reserve is needed to play, then the person being substituted can take over their role. If there are extenuating circumstances one team may provide both timer and scorer, but this should not be abused. All decisions should be taken with the agreement of both team captains and to get the match played within the time constraints. Umpires can advise, but not enforce any decision, apart from those regarding safe conduct of matches.



- 7.17 During play no coach, bench player or team official may leave the bench ( except bench players may leave for valid reasons such as warm up ( Ref WN rules 2020 13.3)). In the situation where two matches are taking place at the same time at the same venue, players ,coaches and bench officials may not move between 2 active games, the exception being Primary carer/Dr/Physio if an emergency arises.
- 7.18 To distinguish both teams in a situation that an umpire deems both team kits to be too similar, the Away team must provide contrasting-coloured bibs with position letters on front and back. These must be approved by the umpires. The CompWG advises it would be best practice for all travelling teams to bring an alternative set of contrasting bibs.

## **8.0 FORFEITS & RESCHEDULING MATCHES**

- 8.1 If forfeiting a match, an email from the forfeiting team must be sent to the league manager with the date of the match, team and reason for forfeit as soon the match is confirmed a forfeit. The non forfeiting team must be copied into the email to the League Manager ***See Sanction (S8)***
- 8.2 If a team fails to turn up or forfeits for a previously accepted confirmed match, then the offending team must pay **all** Court fees if the venue demands it, on production of a relevant invoice/receipt. This includes where a club has arranged a confirmed match on their club training night; the relevant court fees must be paid. This includes all stages of the shield and plate . Forfeit rules will apply. ***See Sanction (S8) & (S9)***
- 8.3 If Home team fails to contact the Away team a **minimum of 14 days** before the date of the fixture, then the Home team has forfeited the match. The non offending team will email the league manager and copy the offending team in the email with the date, time and evidence of emails sent. ***See Sanction (S10)***
- 8.4 If away teams do not confirm their acceptance of match date which is provided by home team minimum of 14 days in advance of each fixture, the away team will forfeit this match. The non offending team will email the league manager with fixture, date, time and cc offending team as well. Include evidence of email sent regarding match. ***See Sanction (S11)***
- 8.5 The team forfeiting may lose their Home court advantage for the 2<sup>nd</sup> leg of the fixture, if applicable, at the discretion of the League Manager and if necessary, consultation with the CompWg if required. ***See Sanction (S12)***
- 8.6 A confirmed match **may only be rescheduled in exceptional circumstances.** Exceptional circumstances shall be given a restrictive interpretation. The NNI CompWG would advise that the following are examples of exceptional circumstances (but are not confined to the following):
- Death or sudden illness of team member, club member or close family of club or team member
  - Force majeure
  - Civil disturbance
  - Facility issues / court unplayable.
  - Exceptional Weather conditions

For the avoidance of doubt matches may be rescheduled if a team has 2 or more players involved in **Official International Matches/Competitions** as confirmed by Netball Northern Ireland.

- 8.7 This decision will be made by the League Manager and if necessary, consultation with the CompWG if required.

The following are examples of what will **not** be considered as exceptional circumstances (but are not confined to the following):

- Employment commitments
- Pre-arranged holidays
- Wedding preparations
- Involvement in any other team sport (for the avoidance of doubt this shall include involvement of team members in other netball leagues such as Super League)
- Lack of transport for team members to attend.
- Moving house
- Exams
- School holidays
- Team Coach unavailability

- 8.8 The team must consult the appropriate League Manager as soon as any difficulty is known, and as far in advance of the original match fixture date as possible .

- 8.9 If a match is approved as a reschedule, all pre-Christmas matches must be played before or during the Christmas break. Post-Christmas matches must be played by the final week of the league fixture timetable. The League Manager must be advised of the rescheduled date.

- 8.10 The rescheduling of a fixture can only happen **ONCE**. The Home team reschedules the fixture and may have to use their training night to play.

- 8.11 If the new confirmed match date then becomes unsuitable no further rescheduling will occur and offending team will forfeit the match. **See Sanction (S13)**

- 8.12 Teams **must** take the court with a minimum of 5 players i.e., no team may take the court with fewer than 5 players (WN 2020 Rules; Rule 8 Starting play; 8.1 (ii) A team must take the court if there are at least 5 players present, one of whom must play as Centre) If 1 of the 5 players is injured then the match is abandoned. **See Sanction (S8)**

## 9.0 COMPETITION RULES

- 9.1 It is NNI and CompWG ambition to see **all** matches played.

- 9.2 If any Club player wishes to video any netball footage pertaining to a player's GCSE/'A' Level schoolwork or performance analysis, both Clubs and match officials must be in agreement and this consent must be detailed in writing on the match result sheet. It is also required to confirm that the venue permits this practice. If these conditions are not met, videoing will not be permitted.

- 9.3 Premier League will be utilised for umpire development including the use of video recording.
- 9.4 Home teams must arrange matches and book venues as soon as the Fixtures List comes out at the start of each season.
- 9.5 Home Team must contact the Away team a **minimum of 14 days** in advance of each fixture to arrange the date, venue and match time. Home team must formally confirm via email and Away team must confirm in response the agreed match fixture. ***See Sanctions (S11)***
- 9.6 If Home team fails to contact the Away team a **minimum of 14 days** before the date of the fixture, then the Home team has forfeited the match. **See Sanction (S11)**
- 9.7 If away teams does not confirm their acceptance of match date provided by home team minimum of 14 days in advance of each fixture. The away team will forfeit this match. ***See Sanction (S11)***
- 9.8 All Home teams **are required to offer one date**. All Away teams **must make** the Home teams aware of any difficulty they might have with fielding a team and ideally both teams can mutually agree a suitable date. If suitability/participation is due to religious reasons e.g., Sunday match, then the Home team must offer an alternative day.
- 9.9 Matches in the leagues may be played on any day of the week, in the week ending, as stated on the Fixtures List, except Premier League which is mainly set via Friday night fixtures.
- 9.10 When setting the time for matches, all clubs should take into consideration the distance and time needed by the Away team to reach the venue, in the interests of good sportsmanship.
- 9.11 All matches scheduled for weeknights should start no later than 8:30pm.
- 9.12 All matches scheduled for Saturday or Sunday should finish by 6:00pm.
- 9.13 It is the duty of each club to fulfil all their scheduled competition fixtures.
- 9.14 If a team forfeits **more than one quarter** of its scheduled matches in any competition it will be dropped one or more League Divisions and may risk being excluded from entering a particular competition/rally, at the discretion of the CompWG, in the following season, whichever is appropriate. ***See Sanction (S14)***
- 9.15 If a club, having more than one league team, withdraws a higher team from a competition then the lower league team must be renamed accordingly, e.g. the 1<sup>st</sup> team withdraws, the 2<sup>nd</sup> team is renamed the 1<sup>st</sup> team and replaces the latter in the 1<sup>st</sup> team's original higher league.
- 9.16 If a club team wishes to withdraw from an NNI League mid-season, they **must** officially inform their League Manager and the CompWG **before** withdrawing.

**NB: If the club team needs any assistance to continue participating in the league, then please contact [headofdevelopment@netballni.org](mailto:headofdevelopment@netballni.org)**

- 9.17 If a team withdraws from an NNI league during the season, the CompWG reserves the right to adjust the points within the League Table to ensure fairness for the other teams affected by the withdrawal. For example, all affected matches will be **removed**, and any points derived from these matches will be removed from their totals to ensure that fairness is maintained for accurate comparison of records at the end of the season.
- 9.18 Competitive matches **must** have 2 registered qualified umpires, one umpire provided by the 'Home' team and one umpire provided by the 'Away' team. Excluding Premier League whose umpires will be appointed by the Officials Working Group. **See Sanction (S17)**
- 9.19 The scoring system for all NNI Leagues and Shield Matches is as follows:
- |                              | <u>Pts</u> |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Win                          | 3          |
| Draw                         | 1          |
| Loss                         | 0          |
| Forfeit (Offending team}     | -3         |
| Forfeit (Non-offending team) | +3         |

## **10.0 PROMOTION, RELEGATION AND PLAY OFFS**

- 10.1 The CompWG reserves the right to alter and adjust the number of teams to be promoted and relegated to individual leagues depending on team numbers entering the leagues for the following season.
- 10.2 At the end of the season, one or more teams with the most points in any League Division will be promoted to the league above.
- 10.3 At the end of the season one or more teams with the least points in any League Division will be relegated to the league below (if applicable).
- 10.4 In the event of a tie, which directly affects the win, promotion or relegation of a team, the following rules may be implemented by the CompWG:
- The goal difference of each team will be taken into consideration (goals scored minus goals conceded)
  - Goal average (goals scored divided by number of games applicable)
  - **In an event one of the teams having their goal difference affected by forfeited matches, then all goals scored by and against the forfeiting team(s) in all games shall be omitted from the calculations of BOTH team's level on points.** Goal difference will be taken from like for like games completed by teams on equal points removing the effect of forfeited games for all parties.
- 10.5 The teams who finish 2<sup>nd</sup> bottom (or as noted in specific season play off illustrations) and 2<sup>nd</sup> top (or as noted in specific season play off illustrations) in concurrent leagues **will have a play-off game on** a single event day hosted by NNI, to play for the remaining promotion place winner securing promotion or holding their place in the higher league.

- 10.6 Forfeits in respect of play off matches will result in the forfeiting club having to pay the full court hire fee for the match, this is at the discretion of the CompWG. **See Sanction (S9)**

## **11.0 NNI JUNIOR & SENIOR SHIELD AND PLATE COMPETITIONS**

- 11.1 NNI Shield and Plate competition entry rules and regulations follow the NNI protocols and procedures.
- 11.2 The player and club registration rules 3.3.1 to 3.3.2 apply to the NNI Shield & Plate matches. **See Sanctions (S2 & S3)**
- 11.3 The player team allocation and Play up rules, once Shield and plate competitions commence (both junior and senior) the required team panels are reverted back to those entered at the beginning of the league season (# See 4.8 Ref point above)), with play up counts back to zero. Times playing up will change to maximum of 2 times and then prior to playing on 3<sup>rd</sup> time must be re-registered with higher playing team of club's choice.
- \* Please note re-registrations will not be approved to take place on quarter, semi, final days they must be done in advance of any relevant matches taking place.
- 11.4 Each Shield & Plate Comp Team **must** log into the online portal and complete the official team sheet with the players' names completed in full. **See Sanction (S2)**
- 11.5 No team should exceed 12 players listed on the team sheet. Only the 12 players and team officials can be seated in the team bench area. **See Sanction (S5)**
- 11.6 During play no coach, bench player or team official may leave the bench,( except bench players may leave for valid reason such as warm up ( Ref WN rules 2020 13.3)). In the situation where two matches are taking place at the same time at the same venue, players and coaches and bench officials may not move between 2 active games, the exception being Primary carer/Dr/Physio if an emergency arises.
- 11.7 The first round of this competition is a Pool structure with a round robin format. All teams are expected to fulfil their fixtures to produce a ranking of teams in each group. The top two in each pool group will progress in the competition, if required, the next two highest ranked teams by points/goal difference, to fill the spaces available.
- 11.8 Any team(s) who forfeits a match at any of the stages (Pool, Knockout, Quarters, Semi-Finals and Finals) **will be** eliminated from the whole competition. **See Sanction (S16).**
- 11.9 All registered teams which forfeit any Shield or Plate match **will be** excluded from Shield and Plate competitions the following season at the discretion of the Competitions Working Group. **See Sanction (S16)**
- 11.10 As soon as the team receive the fixtures, it is the responsibility of the first-named team (on the left) in both parts of the competition to:
- Contact the opposing Team Secretary to inform them of **at least 2 proposed dates** and ask for their preferred date.
  - These dates **must** be inclusive of training nights for both teams if initial dates alternatives cannot be agreed upon.

- The first named team can provisionally book a venue and relay this to their opposition.
- When the date, venue and time of a Shield fixtures at Pool Stage has been mutually agreed and arranged between the 2 teams, the Shield and Plate Manager **must be immediately** notified of these dates, and match result sheets forwarded within 48 hours of agreed date or week ending at pool stage. **See Sanction (S6)**
- If neither team can come to an amicable agreement, then the Shield and Plate Manager needs to be informed **immediately** and will decide on when the match will be played in line with any reschedule requests if possible ( Section 9 refers). If required, the Shield and Plate Manager may liaise with the CompWG.
- It is imperative that all Shield and Plate matches are played by the fixture dates unless permission to reschedule has been granted by the Shield and Plate Manager.
- All results sheets must be returned **by week end date** of the match to the Shield and Plate Manager [shieldandplatem@gmail.com](mailto:shieldandplatem@gmail.com)  
**See Sanction (S6)**
- When returning the match result sheet of a Shield fixture via email it is imperative that the names of the Shield, Pool Group, names of the 2 teams and score are entered into the subject heading of the email.
- NB illegible or incomplete match sheets may be rejected and as a result risk losing winning points if not completed or made clearer within deadline timeframe **See Sanction (S6)**

11.11 The cost of all court hire in pool, quarter and semi-final stages **must be** split equally between the two teams involved in every match.

11.12 At the Pool stages of the competition all matches should be played at a mutually agreeable venue. **Umpires do not have to be neutral.**

11.13 **\*\***Players must have participated in at least 1 match within the pool, quarter, semi finals stages to be eligible to play in the Finals.

11.14 The Shield and Plate Quarter Final, Semi Final and Final will be organised by the NNI COMPWG. (See section 12.0). Teams cannot reschedule quarter final or semi-final and finals.

11.15 All courts cost for quarter final, and semi-final will be split between team's payments for courts to be made to NNI via Bacs

11.16 Finals days will be arranged by CWG and Netball NI all costs provided.

## **12.0 SHIELD & PLATE MATCH PROTOCOL & RESULT SHEET**

12.1 All Shield and Plate matches played within NNI competitions will follow 'League Match' regulations, on scoring, courts, and match duration, as stated under Section 7.0-7.17.

12.2 Completed Match Results Sheets should be filled in correctly with names of each team, centre passes and scores. They then must be signed by both umpires and two captains, photographed and emailed by the winning team to the Shield and Plate manager [ShieldandPlateM@gmail.com](mailto:ShieldandPlateM@gmail.com) . **Both team captains should take a photo for reference.**(s)

- 12.3 If a Shield or Plate quarter or semi-final match results in a draw the procedure for Extra Time (after a draw at full time) is as follows:
1. There is an interval of 4 minutes at the end of full time.
  2. Extra time consists of 2 halves of equal length, not exceeding 7 minutes each, with a half time interval of 1 minute.
  3. Teams change ends at half time.
  4. The first centre pass in each half is taken by the team entitled to the next centre pass.
  5. In the event of a tie remaining at the end of extra time, a visual sign is placed at the official bench to indicate that play will continue until one team leads by 2 goals.(as outlined in **WN Rule INF 2020 RULES, rule 4: match duration. 4.2 Extra time**) will be followed.
- 12.4 CWG will arrange the date, time and venue for the ¼ final, semi-finals and final matches court hire. Therefore, will endeavour to ensure extra 30 minutes booked in case of drawn match. move
- 12.5 Forfeits may result in payment of full court hire on production of invoice from the booking team and will be issued to the forfeiting team; this is at the discretion of the CompWG. **Also see pt 13.4 .See Sanction (S 8 & 9)**
- 12.6 Under no circumstances are coaches, players, spectators etc. permitted to approach an umpire once the full-time whistle has been blown, either on the field of play or beyond, to query/challenge decisions made during the match in line with the Code of Conduct. Clarification of rules may be sought as per **WN Rule 5 Match Personnel (v) Role of Captain**
- The captain has the right to approach the umpire during an interval for clarification of any rule. Any player/s for whom the clarification is relevant may accompany the captain.
  - No other discussion will be entered into.

### **13.0 RESCHEDULING OF SHIELD AND PLATE MATCHES**

- 13.1 A match at Pool Stage may only be rescheduled after consultation with the Shield & Plate Manager, who **must** be consulted as soon as any difficulty arises.
- 13.2 Any reschedule of a quarter , semi-final and final is at the discretion of the Competition Working Group.
- 13.3 The rescheduled fixture should be played **within 7 days** of the date of the original fixture or 48 hours before the quarter finals, whichever comes first. **See Sanction (S18)**
- 13.4 Cancellation & Forfeit of Shield or Plate matches at the 'Pool' stage and or knock out stages will result in the team leaving the competition, and may be excluded from the competition the following season at the discretion of the Competition Working Group **See Sanction (S13)**

## **14.0 SHIELD AND PLATE FINALS**

- 14.1 The NNI COMPWG will arrange the quarter, semi and finals on the dates stated in the Fixtures List. ( see 13.2 above relating to reschedule)
- 14.2 The NNI COMPWG will decide the venue of all Quarter, semi and finals.
- 14.3 Umpires will be appointed by NNI Umpire Working Group. For Shield and Plate quarter finals, semi and finals. Payment for Umpires for Quarter Finals and Semi-Finals will be covered by the teams. NNI will cover payment of umpires on Finals Day.
- 14.4 Final matches, each team must ensure all players nominated maximum 12 players and comply to rules 11.4 and 11.5. **See Sanction (S5)**
- 14.5 The NNI COMPWG will organise the Table Officials, from within the Competitions Working Group, Umpires working group and/or volunteers, for Finals Day.
- 14.6 On match day Team and Officials' benches should adhere to WN guidelines and NNI regs as noted for event Only recognised Team Officials and players should be on the Team Bench. This is compulsory on Finals Day.
- 14.7 Communication at events will take place between all appropriate match personnel simultaneously, i.e., Captain, Officials and Competition Manager and only take place at the Official's Bench.
- 14.8 At all Shield and Plate Finals, NNI Official match result sheets will be completed by match Table Officials and then collected by the Competitions Manager.
- 14.9 In Shield & Plate Quarter/Semi and Final matches, a winner is needed, ( (Reference 12.3 regarding a draw. )

## **15.0 KIT/DRESS UNIFORM**

- 15.1 Any new clubs entering the league for the first time cannot adopt identical playing/match kit of other affiliated teams. All club colours must be officially registered by sending an email to the CompWG. A confirmation email must be received before any playing/match kit order is made.
- 15.2 Any existing club making changes to their playing/match kit (colours and design) must be officially registered by sending an email to the CompWG. A confirmation email must be received before any kit order is made.
- 15.3 Inclusive kit is encouraged; dresses are not compulsory.

## **16.0 ADDITIONAL NNI EVENTS , TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITION**

### **16.1 NNI Opening Rally**

The Opening Senior Club event of the netball season is usually a round robin format.



The Rally may be divided into multiple sections covering the NNI Leagues

- Date: Usually 1 or 2 weeks prior to the start of season, determined by CompWG
- Venue: Determined by CompWG on an annual basis.
- Cost: Entry fees are set by NNI in each year
- Time: Times may vary depending on the entries received by NNI CompWG.
- Matches: The number of entries received by the COMPWG determines match length

## **16.2 Rules and Regulations**

Club Secretaries/Administrators must complete the entry Form for the Opening Rally if they wish to enter a team.

This completed form must be returned with all other documentation and obligatory competition fees paid via bacs to the NNI.

Each team **must** name a coach/person in charge, an umpire (if required from club) and an adult to do score/time for each of their matches.

Each team is allowed to play up to twelve players in each match. The twelve players can be from any team **within the club**.

Non-participation without prior notification must pay related entry and umpire fees if applicable.

## **17.0 JUNIOR (Mini/U14/U16 NETBALL NI DEVELOPMENT TOURNAMENTS)**

- 17.1 Each junior club contact will be sent a Junior Tournament Application form to register for the competitions. **Closing dates will apply.**
- 17.2 Each form must be returned to the NNI with the appropriate fees by the set date and a copy of the form emailed to the relevant noted contact on entry form.
- 17.3 Each team **must** provide an umpire for the duration (if required) and pay the appropriate fee. Each team must nominate a coach, person in charge and an adult to do score/time for each of their matches.
- 17.4 On the day of the tournament, players can only play for the team/club with whom they have registered unless the NNI COMPWG deems otherwise.
- 17.5 No junior aged player registered as a team member for a Senior League Team can participate in this tournament. The NNI COMPWG and Junior League Manager's decision is binding in the event of any dispute, subject to the right of appeal.
- 17.6 In the event that a junior aged player, who has played for a senior team and is named on the Team etc. to play, the Junior League Manager **must** inform the club that the player cannot participate at any stage of the Tournament.

## 18.0 UMPIRES

- 18.1 There **must** be 2 qualified umpires for every competitive fixture. If a team fails to provide an umpire, the forfeit sanction will apply. However, the match can still be played by mutual agreement, but the non-offending team will receive the points.
- 18.2 Newly Qualified Cs over the age of 18 can only Umpire in Senior Division 3-5 for first season or until they are Signed off by an NNI mentor. (NNI mentor is those that have completed the Europe Netball Assessors training and approved by NNI).
- 18.3 Newly Qualified Cs only appointed to games within their age groups. E.g., U19s can only umpire at this age group or below etc.
- 18.4 All NNI Competition matches involving Premier League teams **must** be umpired by a minimum **of 2 'B' award umpires** or higher appointed by Umpire Working Group. Any Talent Identified C Umpires may be appointed by the Umpires Working Group and provided appropriate mentoring.
- 18.5 For Shield and Plate quarter finals, semi-finals and Finals, umpires will be appointed by NNI Umpire Working Group. Payment for Umpires for Quarter Finals and Semi-Finals will be covered by the teams. NNI will cover payment of umpires on Finals Day.
- 18.6 A registered qualified umpire has the authority to caution, warn, suspend or order off a player, bench player or coach if their behaviour is offensive, disrespectful or intimidating (**WN 2020 Rules, Rule 13 Game Management covers all actions that may be taken by umpires and 13.3 Discipline of team officials and bench players**)
- If ANY player/bench official/Coach is cautioned 5 times within a season they will receive a one match ban for the next match following the 5<sup>th</sup> Caution.
  - If ANY player/bench official/Coach is warned 3 times within a season they will receive a one match ban.
  - If ANY player/bench official/Coach receives a suspension, they will receive a one match ban.
  - If ANY player/bench official/Coach receives an ordering off or asked to leave the hall they will be receive a 2-match ban and a disciplinary investigation will be carried out. NNI Competition's Disciplinary panel ?
  - All umpires will record Game Management actions via the Player Discipline record section on the team sheet and will be monitored by NNI.
- 18.7 Umpires should only commit to a fixture if they are **confident**, they can fulfil it.
- 18.8 Once committing to a fixture, Umpires **must** attend, or work with the match organiser to **find** a suitable replacement if they are unable to fulfil a fixture.
- 18.9 Under no circumstances are coaches, players, spectators etc. permitted to approach an umpire once the full-time whistle has been blown, either on the field of play or beyond, to query/challenge decisions made during the match in line with the Code of Conduct. Clarification of rules may be sought as per **WN Rule 5 Match Personnel (v) Role of Captain.**

- The captain has the right to approach the umpire during an interval for clarification of any rule. Any player/s for whom the clarification is relevant may accompany the captain.
- No other discussion will be entered into.

18.10 At **NNI Premier League**, following the conclusion of the match Umpires will return to their area and will be available for 5 MINUTES for rule clarification purposes only.

*The following must be adhered to:*

- 1 *Both umpires and mentor/assessor/NNI rep must be in attendance. Coaches CANNOT approach individual umpires.*
- 2 *Coaches or Captains may only approach for **Clarification on rules**. All other team members to remain at bench and not with the coach.*
- 3 *Anything other than clarification on rules, then the mentor/assessor/NNI rep will step in, and the conversation will finish, and the individual will be reported to NNI.*
- 4 *Umpires & mentor/assessor/NNI rep will only be available **5 mins** once game has concluded.*

## **EQUALITY STATEMENT**

If there are any issues within this document which are perceived by any party as conflicting with their rights, that party should bring these to the attention of the Competitions Working Group.

## 19.0 APPENDICES

### Appendix A - NNI DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS - SANCTION LIST

**As soon as a difficulty arises, contact the relevant League Manager immediately for advice. Shield and Plate = (S&P)**

#### KEEP THEM FULLY INFORMED

<b>Incorrect Registration/Affiliation Club &amp; Player</b>		<b>Offending Team</b>	<b>Non-offending Team</b>
<b>S2</b>	Any Club plays an incorrectly registered/unregistered/ NNI unaffiliated junior/senior, social player.	The match is declared null and void. 3pts will be deducted from offending teams points total if they win and 1 point deducted for a draw	Will be awarded the 3 points for the match
<b>S3</b>	Team/s under the minimum 7 players registered on online portal both League and Shield & Plate competition.	The team will be deducted -3 points  For S&P- the team will leave the competition.	S&P will be declared winner of this match-pool stage. S&P knockout will progress to the next stage.
<b>S3(i)</b>	Playing a newly transferred player from another NNI club before permission has been given or after the transfer time period has expired to transfer.	The match is declared null and void. 3pts will be deducted from offending teams points total or 1 if a draw. S&P -The team will leave the shield and plate competition.  The above apply plus: the NNI CompWG will determine if there is a further penalty for using this transferred player without permission.	Will be awarded the 3 points for the match. S&P - Group stage - Will awarded win points -pool stage. Will proceed to next stage- Knockout stage.
<b>S4</b>	Playing a transferred player in the shield and plate competition when they had already played with another club.	S&P -The team will leave the shield and plate competition	Group stage -Will awarded 3 points - pool stage. Will proceed to next stage- Knockout stage
	<b><u>Junior &amp; Senior League, Shield &amp; Plate Match Protocol &amp; Result Sheet</u></b>	<b>Offending Team</b>	<b>Non-offending Team</b>
<b>S5</b>	A team exceeds 12 players listed on the team sheet.	The match is declared as a forfeit. If they have won the match, then 3 points will be	Will be awarded the points.

		deducted from the offending team's total score. 1 for a draw	
<b>S6</b>	If the winning team, or home team in event of draw, submits match sheet after week ending deadline	The match is declared void. If they have won the match, then 3 points will be deducted from the offending team's total score. 1 for a draw  S & P – within 48 hours or week ending at Pool Stage	Will be awarded the points.
<b>S7</b>	Illegible or incomplete match sheet	May be refused by the League Managers and points may not be awarded to the offending team/s	may not be awarded the points
	<b><u>Forfeiting/Cancelling</u></b>		
<b>S8</b>	Team which forfeits a match	They will be deducted - 3points.  Shield & Plate will leave the competition, and may be excluded from entering the following season at discretion of the CWG  Play Offs – Will remain in ,or be moved to, the lower league in question. Must also pay full court fee for play off match booking	Will be awarded 3 points.  S&P will be declared winner of this match-pool stage. S&P knockout will progress to the next stage.  Play Offs – Will remain in ,or be moved to, the higher league in question
<b>S9</b>	If a team fails to turn up or forfeits for a previously accepted confirmed match. If having made no contact since the confirmation to accept.	They will be deducted -3 points. Shield & Plate will leave the competition. Play Offs – Will remain in ,or moved to, the lower league in question  The offending team must pay <b>all</b> Court fees if the venue demands it, on production of a relevant invoice/receipt.	Will be awarded the points.  S&P will be declared winner of this match-pool stage. S&P knockout will progress to the next stage. Play Offs – Will remain in ,or be moved to, the higher league in question

<b>S10</b>	If Home team fails to contact the Away team a <b>minimum of 14 days</b> before the date of the fixture,	then the Home team has forfeited the match. Deduction -3 points. Shield & Plate will leave the competition.	Will be awarded the points after email has been sent to League manager with details and LM has confirmed
<b>S11</b>	If away teams does not confirm their acceptance of match date provided by home team in advance of each fixture.	The away team will forfeit this match. Deduction -3 points  Shield & Plate will leave the competition.	The non-offending team will gain the 3 points after they have emailed the league manager with details of fixture, date and have cc offending team as well. Include evidence of emails sent to away team regarding match. LM will confirm and non-offending team will gain winning 3 points. S&P AS IN S15
<b>S12</b>	Any team cancelling an Away league match	May forfeit home advantage in the return fixture.	
<b>S13</b>	The granted rescheduling of a fixture can only happen once and must be a mutually agreed date, time and venue and 2 dates offered to the club for this match to be played.	Offending team will forfeit and deducted -3 points.  Shield & Plate will leave the competition.	Will be awarded the points.  S&P As in S15
<b>S14</b>	Any team forfeiting more than one quarter of its league matches in any season	May be dropped one or more league divisions and risks being barred from a competition the next season at the discretion of the Competitions Working Group.	
<b>S15</b>	If an Away team arrives to find a court unavailable	The Home team's court is double booked, etc. On evidence of a confirmed booking from club and mistake proved by centre reschedule will be granted.	If no reschedule requested/ granted Will be awarded the points
<b>S16</b>	Any team forfeiting one match in the Pool stage of Shield & Plate competition -or- any team forfeiting a match at any Knockout	Will be eliminated from the whole competition. The offending team may be excluded from entering the	S& P pool – will be awarded win.

	stage of the Shield & Plate competition	Shield & Plate competition the following season.	S& P knock out- Will progress to the next stage.
<b>S17</b>	Failure of a team to provide/or have arranged the necessary qualified umpire – if not applicable for an extension	Will result in the points for that match being forfeited -3	Will be awarded the 3 points for the match
<b>S18</b>	If a team requests to cancel or postpone a match due to unforeseen reason, they should give at least 24 hours' notice, prior to the pre-arranged start time of the match, to the opposing team's club secretary. The League Manager <b>must</b> be consulted as soon as the difficulty arises.	If venue costs are incurred then the team cancelling must pay for them, on production of an invoice. If extension not granted the game will be a forfeit and -3 points	If extension not granted, then will receive 3 points
<b>S19</b>	If any team arrives on court more than 10 minutes after the official match start-time. The CompWG stipulates that all teams are afforded this 10-minute leeway	The team will forfeit the points for that match to the non-offending team -3  Shield & Plate will leave the competition.	Will granted 3 points.  S&P will be declared winner of this match-pool stage. S&P knockout will progress to the next stage.

Appendix B – NNI Official Match Sheet

**Official Match Sheet**

DATE.....VENUE.....

LEAGUE				SHIELD			
TEAM:				TEAM:			
If a player is playing up a team then the Captain must write in the empty box on player line whether it is the 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> time.							
GK				GK			
GD				GD			
W				WD			
D							
C				C			
W				WA			
A							
GA				GA			
GS				GS			

Winning Team	Score	Losing Team	Score

Officials' Names	Print Name	Signature	Grade
Home Umpire			
Away Umpire			
Captains			
Video permission 4 signatures	Team 1 Team 2	Umpire 1 Umpire 2	

Player	Team	Caution/ Warning/Suspension/ Ordering off	Time	Issued by Who



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Player Discipline *Any game management protocols used during the match must be recorded below.*



## **Appendix D - Domestic Match Protocols and Etiquette for Umpires , Officials and Teams/Players.**

### **Guidance based on WN Match protocols and 'Rules of Netball' 2020 (which should be used for further clarification of rules if required)**

1. The purpose of these guidelines is to:
  - a. Streamline match conditions across all league disciplines in Northern Ireland
  - b. Increase the professionalism of the domestic game.
2. Improve understanding of match protocols and rules to reduce misunderstanding and breach of rules at fixtures.

### **Expectations of the Umpire**

#### **Umpires:**

1. Will arrive 15 minutes before the start time of the match and be professionally dressed in clothing that is distinct from the teams' playing uniforms and suitable sports footwear. (NNI COMPWG would suggest white is worn).
2. Inspect the court and goal posts to ensure they conform to rules and provide a safe environment for play.
3. Ensure that players and bench officials **only** are sitting on the team bench.
4. Agree which goal end each umpire will control.
5. Whether extra time will be played if scores are tied at full time.
6. To umpire according to the Rules of the International Netball Federation.
7. To forward by email, the name(s) of player(s) who have been disciplined and a report to the NNI within 7 days of the match taking place. The NNI COMPWG Secretary/Chair should also be copied into all correspondence regarding discipline of players.
8. Umpire **at least** 6 matches per season in order to keep up their level of performance and for their name to remain on the Umpiring Register, maintained by NNI.

### **Expectations of Players, Team Officials and Supporters**

- Players, team officials, bench officials and supporters are requested to show respect and courtesy to everyone involved in netball by refraining from making derogatory comments before, during or after the match. **See NNI Code of Conduct on Netball NI website (www.netballni.org) downloads section**
- Teams should arrive in good time for a match (minimum 15 minutes before agreed start time). If any team arrives on court more than 10 minutes after the official match start-time, then they will forfeit the points for that match to the

non-offending team. The CompWG stipulates that all teams are afforded this 10-minute leeway. (S19) Forfeit rules apply.

### **Expectations of the match organisers, Coach and Captain**

- Secure the court booking (where applicable) and commitment from the other team before approaching umpires to fulfil a fixture.
- Ensure that the pre-booked umpire and opposing team secretary is reminded of the fixture **within 3 days** of the match.
- Provide two balls that meet all the specifications stated in the rules. The same ball will be used throughout the match unless the umpires ask for it to be replaced.
- Appoint a primary care person for the match if applicable to level
- Ensure that all players arrive at the match location on time for the fixture.
- Ensure that the playing enclosure meets the required specifications.
- Prepare the playing enclosure for the fixture.
- Ensure that all players have hair tied back appropriately and that all Jewellery is removed (if a wedding ring must be worn it should be taped)
- Ensure that all players have their nails cut and shortened to avoid injury to other players.
- Ensure that captains carry out a toss for first centre pass and goal end and ensure that this is communicated to the umpires.
- Carry two sets of bibs in case of similar uniforms at the fixtures.
- Ensure players are wearing registered playing uniform /colours if no registered kit available in circumstance relayed to umpire( e.g., new player, choosing alternative kit configuration and suitable sports footwear

### **Complaints**

- Any complaint, request or point of information should be emailed by the club secretary to the League Manager or Shield and Plate Manager , where applicable. It will then be brought to the NNI CompWG for their attention. If any matter is not settled at the NNI Working Group level, then it will be NNI who shall make a binding ruling on the matter, subject to any right of appeal.
- **NB** If your club has a problem or query, **do not** approach a member of the CompWG at a match when they are there as a player, coach, bench official or umpire. Please follow the procedure of contacting them by email.
- The Competitions Working Group will meet monthly during the season to discuss any issues as required