

Initiative overview

Q: What is the Green Band initiative?

The Green Band initiative is a statewide project by Netball Victoria to promote respect and safeguard umpires under the age of 18. Umpires under the age of 18 will be required to wear a green wristband or scrunchy while officiating netball games, making it clear to players, coaches, and spectators that they are young umpires. This initiative is part of Netball Victoria's ongoing commitment to child safety and creating a safe and supportive environment for all participants.

Q: Why are green wristbands and scrunchies used?

The green wristbands and scrunchies function as a visible reminder to players, coaches, and spectators that the umpire is under the age of 18. This helps promote empathy, understanding and respect while officiating, and reinforces Netball Victoria's commitment to child safety.

Q: When does the initiative start?

Phase 1 of the Green Band initiative commences in March 2025, with wristbands and scrunchies distributed to all affiliates. Once you receive your wristbands and scrunchies, you can begin implementation.

Q: What evidence is there that the initiative will be effective?

The Green Band initiative was successfully launched in the 2024 Parkville Netball Spring Season, where umpires under the age of 18 wore green wristbands. The initiative received overwhelmingly positive feedback, highlighting the importance of identifying young umpires and fostering respect from players, coaches, and spectators. This success underscores the importance of statewide implementation to enhance the child safety environment across the sport.

Q: Why is the Green Band initiative necessary?

The Green Band initiative is a direct response to the increasing occurrence of poor spectator behaviour across the state, both in netball and other sports. With growing instances of abuse and disrespect towards junior umpires, this initiative aims to foster a safer and more supportive environment, reinforcing a zero-tolerance policy for abusive behaviour.

Q: How were young people consulted in the development of this initiative?

The Netball Victoria Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was consulted as part of this pilot project and their feedback was clear - abuse and poor sideline behaviour is prevalent in our community. The first-hand accounts provided were alarming, and the effect this is having on young umpires' mental health highlights the need for the Green Band initiative.

Q: Why is the initiative being expanded to associations, leagues, and clubs?

By expanding the Green Band initiative, Netball Victoria is demonstrating a strong commitment to child safety and a positive sporting environment. This initiative promotes consistent protection and respect for young umpires across the state and sets a new standard for the netball community, fostering a safer and more welcoming space for everyone.

Q: Does wearing a green wristband reflect an umpire's skill level?

No, the green wristband is purely an indicator of age and does not reflect the umpire's ability or experience.

Q: How will Netball Victoria track the success of the Green Band initiative?

Netball Victoria will be collecting feedback from affiliates, young umpires, and the netball community to assess the effectiveness of the initiative. This feedback will help in making any necessary adjustments and ensuring the ongoing safety and respect of young umpires in the future.

Initiative implementation and umpire participation

Q: Who is required to wear the green wristbands or scrunchies?

All umpires under the age of 18 who are officiating netball games are required to wear either a green wristband or a green scrunchie.

Q: What is the purpose of the scrunchie?

The scrunchie serves the same purpose as the wristband, acting as a visual reminder that the umpire is under the age of 18. They can be worn in the hair or around the wrist and can even provide the added benefit of doubling as a centre pass indicator should the umpire wish.

Q: Can an umpire wear both a wristband and a scrunchie?

An umpire can choose to wear the wristband, the scrunchie, or both - it is entirely up to them. What is important is that they wear at least one and that it is clearly visible.

Q: How do affiliates receive the wristbands and scrunchies?

Affiliates can request wristbands and scrunchies by completing the Green Band Request Form, which has been sent to you by the Netball Victoria team. Netball Victoria will then coordinate with you to arrange delivery. The quantity requested should reflect the number of junior umpires in your competition.

Q: Do we have to order wristbands and scrunchies separately?

No, the number you request in the Green Band Request Form will correlate to both wristbands and scrunchies. For example, if you indicate that you have 40 junior umpires and would like 40 wristbands and scrunchies, you will receive 40 wristbands and 40 scrunchies (80 items in total). This ensures that junior umpires can freely choose to wear one, the other, or both, based on their preference.

Q: Should the umpire be given a wristband and scrunchie to keep or should it be returned at the end of each day?

This is up to the preference of your association/league and your umpires.

Q: How often do wristbands and scrunchies need to be washed?

The frequency of washing wristbands and scrunchies depends on how often they are worn, how sweaty they get, and personal preference. If scrunchies are worn in the hair, they should be washed regularly to maintain cleanliness and comfort. It is recommended to wash both wristbands and scrunchies frequently to ensure they stay clean and fresh.

Q: How can associations, leagues, or clubs order additional wristbands in the future?

Netball Victoria will provide the initial wristbands and scrunchies for the first phase to associations and leagues at no charge. From April 2025, additional bands can be purchased by contacting Netball Victoria Member Services on (03) 9321 2255 or email memberservices@netballvic.com.au

Q: Who is responsible for ensuring the wristbands or scrunchies are worn?

Umpire Supervisors, Court Supervisors, and Competition Managers are responsible for ensuring that all umpires under 18 are wearing a green wristband or scrunchie and that it is visible during matches.

Q: Do we need to implement the Green Band initiative if we already have a junior umpire initiative?

Yes, while you may have a junior umpire initiative in place, the Green Band initiative builds upon the success of the pilot at Parkville Netball and will ensure consistency statewide. It aligns with Netball Victoria's commitment to Child Safe Standard 2 and helps associations, leagues, and clubs demonstrate that strategies are embedded into their organisation.

Q: Is the Green Band initiative a recommendation or a requirement?

Under section 4.3 of the Affiliation Policy, affiliates are required to comply with the principles of the Green Band initiative and ensure that green wristbands are provided for umpires under 18. While this initiative is aligned with Netball Victoria's child safety standards, it also supports the protection of clubs, associations, and leagues. Compliance with this initiative helps ensure your organisation meets its child safety obligations and demonstrates active efforts in safeguarding young people in your care.

Q: Will there be any consequences for affiliates who do not comply with the Green Band initiative?

Non-compliance with the Green Band initiative could affect your affiliation with Netball Victoria, as it is part of the 2025 Affiliation Policy. Compliance with this initiative helps ensure your organisation is meeting its child safety obligations, and Netball Victoria takes this seriously as part of its commitment to protecting young umpires.

Managing Sideline Behaviour

Q: What does poor sideline behaviour look like?

Poor sideline behaviour can be demonstrated as any of the following:

Disputed rulings, negative comments, aggressive or foul language, verbal, or physical threats, approaching umpires inappropriately or creeping in on an umpire's personal space.

Q: What should happen if poor sideline behaviour occurs?

If poor behaviour is observed, Umpire Supervisors or Competition Managers should address and manage the concern. Any complaints or concerns must be reported following Netball Australia's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Q: Can umpires penalise poor behaviour of spectators or people on the sideline?

No. Umpires are only responsible for officiating the game (on the court or bench) and handling issues related to the players, coaches, and team officials. Any issues with sideline behaviour by spectators should be handled by competition management or supervisors, not the umpire.

Q: What if an umpire feels unsafe or intimidated?

Umpires should request the presence of an Umpire Supervisor or Court Supervisor if they feel unsafe, anxious, or uncomfortable. The Green Band initiative ensures that proper support is available to address such situations.

Q: What happens if a spectator or coach exhibits inappropriate behaviour towards a young umpire?

Inappropriate behaviour towards a young umpire should be reported to the Umpire Supervisor, Court Supervisor, or Competition Manager. All complaints will be addressed under the appropriate child safety policies, and any incidents will be treated seriously.

Q: How is Netball Victoria ensuring the netball community, particularly spectators, is informed about this initiative?

Netball Victoria will provide ongoing messaging on social media platforms, ensuring consistent reinforcement of the initiative across the netball community. Associations, leagues, and clubs will also receive information packs to help raise awareness and share the details of the initiative with participants and spectators.

Q: Will this initiative create the perception that umpires over 18 are less protected?

Netball Victoria's broader strategy emphasises zero tolerance for poor behaviour towards all umpires, regardless of age. The 2025 Affiliation Agreement now requires a dedicated Complaints Officer to handle any concerns appropriately. Phase two of the initiative will focus on improving the skills of court supervisors and educating the community about acceptable behaviours, ensuring that all umpires are treated with respect.

Further information

Q: Where can I find more information and resources on child safeguarding?

Visit the [Netball Victoria Child Safeguarding Resource Hub](#) for detailed guidelines and support materials.

Q: Where can I read the Netball Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy?

Netball Victoria and its affiliates are bound by the Netball Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. You can read it [here](#).

Q: Where can I find out more information about the rules of netball?

Visit the [World Netball website](#).

You can purchase a copy of the rule book or take the Rules of Netball exam on [Netball Learning](#)

Q: Who can I contact for further support or questions?

For further support or questions, please contact Netball Victoria Member Services on (03) 9321 2255 or email: memberservices@netballvic.com.au

