

AGE LIMITS FOR THE YOUNGER UMPIRES

As you might be aware England Netball has not previously had any formal age restrictions with regard to umpiring and umpires. The current recommendations have been made regarding the younger age limits for umpires. (However this is being looked at and further changes might be made at a later stage)

1. Minimum age for the England Netball Beginner Award is 12 years
2. Minimum age for C/B/A is 14 years and over.
3. Qualified umpires under 16 years should only be permitted to umpire matches involving player's U16 years of age **or younger**.
4. Umpires aged between 16 and 18 years of age can umpire any match according to the qualification required by leagues but England Netball would recommend that they did not umpire 'senior' matches but Under 18 or younger.

In making these decisions the best interests of the individual have been considered particularly in relation to how the experience will affect both physical and mental development.

There are many positive effects of setting these age limits and they include:

- Recruitment of players into umpiring at a young age
- A greater knowledge and application of the rules
- Potential reached earlier
- Umpires learn to deal with pressure earlier
- Develop a commitment to a team of young players

However there are also possible negative effects:

- Psychological intimidation
- A younger umpire is less likely to be able to demonstrate assertiveness
- The experience might prove to be a negative one leading to a loss in confidence

Therefore England Netball is issuing the following guidance to assist Counties in providing a carefully controlled and monitored environment so that the young umpire involved can develop to the best of his/her ability. It is acknowledged that youngsters mature at different rates both physically and mentally, and therefore the age limits have been set so that young umpires are allowed to develop at a rate appropriate to their age and stage of development.

SOME REMINDERS FOR RECRUITING YOUNG UMPIRES

- The reason for encouraging the youngster to umpire is in his/her best interest
- Every attempt will be made to provide a support/mentor umpire to assist the youngster
- Physical and mental maturity has been considered
- Young umpires should be given positive constructive feedback on their performance.
- A youngster found not to be coping should be provided with guidance.
- The young umpire is encouraged to feel part of a team
- His/her progress is monitored during the season

Reference to all of the above has been done in conjunction with England Netball's Duty of Care policy as outlined in the 'Duty of Care' Manual for Netball Clubs and Associations