

WOLLONGONG TOUCH ASSOCIATION Inc
JUNIOR POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

All ages and ability levels throughout Australia now play Touch. The sport has progressed from a social park pastime to a sport recognised in its own right catering for all ages and abilities.

This publication has been designed to provide guidance for teaching Touch to children from the age of 5 years. It provides an outline of activities for teachers of Touch to consider when training, assisting, supervising or just caring for children who participate in Touch. It is a guide only and consideration should be given to the needs and abilities of the participants.

The document is a medium to raise the standard of Touch as well as to provide an enjoyable, stimulating and safe environment for the participants in the sport. It is designed to enhance the environment of participants and provide an enjoyable experience in the sport of Touch.

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PURPOSE

The Junior policy has been written to ensure the provision of opportunity for all young Australians to develop and enhance their lives through the sport of Touch.

The guidelines have been developed by the New South Wales Touch Association (WTA) to provide a setting for junior touch clubs, affiliated associations and other groups responsible for the development, organisation and conduct of junior touch. It also includes guidelines for coordinated and complementary approach to touch in schools and the community.

OBJECTIVE

The WTA Junior policy has been developed in line with the Australian Sports Commission's approach to junior sports delivery.

The objective of the policy is to ensure that positive, enjoyable and safe activities are provided for children in the sport of Touch.

To achieve this, the following objectives have been identified to:

- ◆ Provide enjoyable experiences for all children so as to encourage lifelong participation.
- ◆ Provide supportive environments for participation through the development of skills and good sporting behaviour.
- ◆ Provide the safest possible environment for the conduct of junior touch.
- ◆ Provide equal opportunities for children regardless of their gender, race, ability, cultural background, religion, geographic location, age etc.
- ◆ Encourage and actively cater for the development of talented children.
- ◆ Encourage, cater for and provide pathways for children to develop skills in refereeing, coaching, selecting, managing and administration.
- ◆ Provide a consistent and coordinated approach to all touch programs in both the school and the community.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

Rationale

This policy is premised on the principle of social justice and the belief that sport, when presented and organised properly, is an important educational and developmental area that offers benefits to both the individual and to the Australian society.

All schools, clubs, affiliated associations, and various community groups providing touch programs for children should ensure that there is equal access to qualified & accredited coaches, referees, teachers, safe facilities, services, resources and an equally wide choice of competitions and related activities to encourage participation in Touch.

All young Australians must be given the best opportunity to develop their physical potential and fitness, and to develop interests in sport. These opportunities are provided in the following ways:

- ◆ Promotion of touch should be actively pursued for both boys and girls.
- ◆ Access to facilities, equipment, qualified & accredited coaches & referees, sponsorship, media coverage etc. should be available for both boys and girls.
- ◆ Equal opportunity for involvement and maximum participation, to meet children's needs are to be ensured regardless of gender, race, age, geographic location, cultural background, religion or ability.
- ◆ Schools, clubs and various community groups are encouraged to develop and integrate strategies for children with a disability into their programs.
- ◆ Racial and religious customs must be taken into consideration so as not to deny access to programs. For example, uniform codes may need to be relaxed to allow female Muslim children to participate in long skirts, stockings, and scarves.
- ◆ At all times efforts must be made to resolve any conflict in a "fair and reasonable way" and so not to preclude any child from participating.

Mixed Gender Participation

Physical differences between girls and boys under the age of 12 years are generally considered irrelevant to sporting ability. However, socialisation may - and often does - prevent girls developing sporting competencies equal to those of boys.

Current evidence from research undertaken by the Australian Sports Commission suggests that skill development in mixed groups is generally appropriate, but that competition should remain single-gender until it can be shown that girls will not be disadvantaged in mixed gender competitions. This means that special measures may be necessary for some time to assist girls to increase their sporting skills.

Touch Associations are strongly encouraged to adopt a single gender competition philosophy until such time as there is substantial research evidence to suggest a

review. The provision of single-gender competitions is the best way at present to encourage maximum participation and guarantee all children a “fair go”.

For children (approximately 5 - 7 years), mixed gender activities are appropriate. At all ages, mixed gender sports participation may be appropriate in an informal or social situation.

DEVELOPMENT MODEL - ESSENTIALS FOR TOUCH

All young participants should be able to play touch at a level appropriate to their interest and ability.

The Junior Touch Model provides a logical progression of experiences that will assist children to develop fitness, skills, knowledge and positive attitudes through social interaction. It will also provide satisfaction from developing skilled performances in individual and group activities.

The Junior Touch Development Model is based on the principle that there is:

- ◆ An emphasis on enjoyment and fun.
- ◆ Development of suitable standards of behaviour. In regard to sportsmanship, respect for other players (see attached codes of conduct).
- ◆ A safe and challenging environment.
- ◆ Rewards in competition for participation, individual achievement and improvement.
- ◆ Identifiable stages of development - progressing from general physical activities to specific skills.
- ◆ An opportunity to develop self-confidence as well as cooperative skills.
- ◆ An opportunity for children with differences in ability to acquire skills and move through the various stages of development.
- ◆ A progression of competitive experiences appropriate to the age and development of the individual.
- ◆ No expectation of adult standards. Sport involves competition, however junior touch competitions should differ from that experienced by adults and be free from undue adult pressures and demands. The junior competitions should be modified to suit the abilities of the participant.
- ◆ Use of modified rules and equipment so that the levels of skill and stamina required are appropriate to the development of children, which will enable skill development in a safe, rewarding and enjoyable environment.
- ◆ Coaching conducted by personnel who have been accredited under the Australian Coaching Council's National Coaching Accreditation Scheme. This should be in Orientation, Level 1 or 2, or an appropriate physical education qualification.

- ◆ Consistent rules used in schools and the community to be comparable.

GENERAL COMPETITION

Competition is an intrinsic part of sport that involves measuring performance against an opponent, oneself or the environment. Competition provides stimulation and challenge as well as the opportunity to apply, test and further develop skills in a game situation. Properly managed, competition should be seen as a healthy and desirable part of Touch.

Within Australian society, competition is closely associated with success and failure. Junior Touch participants should be taught that “winning” and “losing” are merely results of a sporting competition.

There should not be an over emphasis on winning in junior touch as this can lead to dissatisfaction with touch in general.

All junior touch participants should be encouraged to achieve, do their best, and develop their full sporting potential. The pursuit of excellence is as desirable in junior touch as in other forms of endeavour. A challenging competition is therefore an important element of this development process.

The emphasis in junior touch competition should be on the quality of the experience and its appropriateness to the age and ability of the participants. Participants should be given opportunities to succeed and do their best through competition.

In keeping with a “sport for all” philosophy, school and community organisations should make adequate provision for appropriate levels of competition for junior touch participants in stages 2-4 (see Junior Touch Development Model). They should cater for all levels of ability, ensuring a satisfying experience for all participants.

AGE QUALIFICATION

For age level, the ages indicated are to be taken as at 31st December of that year.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPETITION

Modified Games

The WTA has adopted a modified version of Touch to:

- ◆ Provide equity of opportunity to participate.
- ◆ Encourage optimum skill development and understanding of the game of touch.
- ◆ Promote an enjoyable and safe environment.
- ◆ Assist players in the transition from junior touch to the adult game.

These modified games take into account the participants level of maturity and physical ability so that junior touch players can develop skills in a safe, rewarding, and enjoyable environment.

JUNIOR PROGRAMS

TINY TOUCH

Tiny Touch is a fun program for 5 - 7 year olds.

The strong desire for general play and physical activity during these years lays the foundation for future involvement.

Tiny Touch involves a variety of small structured activities, which involve basic skill development. It may be appropriate for these skills to be practiced in a game situation that is appropriate to the age and ability of the group.

Tiny Touch was developed to provide young touch players with an enjoyable introduction to the basic skills required for touch (eg. catching, passing, running with the ball, various agility activities etc), as well as social skills and positive attitudes.

- ◆ **The emphasis is on enjoyment and participation.**
- ◆ **There are no expectations of adult standards.**
- ◆ **Children join the program as individuals.**
- ◆ **Structured competition is not considered an integral component of the instruction, however games may be introduced to practice the skills.**
- ◆ **No scores are kept or winners declared when participating in games.**
- ◆ **Rewards are for participation, individual achievement and improvement.**

Tiny Touch is a program for children that will have a positive influence on their level of participation and the improvement of skills.

TINY TOUCH

Age group:	5 to 7 years
Players recommended:	Groups of 4-5 (all participants to be involved in all roles)
Equipment:	Junior touch ball (size 4)
Area:	No specific area required
Length of Game:	If played, games should be 2 halves of 10 minutes each way with a break of 3 minutes at half time

GAME PLAY AND RULES

Teams can be mixed or single gender.

This program involves a variety of small structured activities and mini games and has been developed to provide young touch players with an enjoyable introduction to the basic skills of the game.

If games are played the standard ATA rules are used with the following variations:

1. There will be a change of possession instead of tap penalties for infringements.
2. In the case where a player unintentionally throws a forward pass, or passes after they are touched, then play should be recalled to the place of infringement and a touch counted. The player then performs a rollball.
3. The acting half cannot run with the ball and they must pass it to another player before they can join in further play (stand and pass).
4. The defending team cannot move until the first receiver has caught the ball.
5. For minor infringements the referee may allow a replay of the action.
eg. Rollball infringements.

NOTE: In cases where play is recalled or replayed for the team in possession, the referee should hold the ball and explain the ruling before allowing the play to recommence.

NOTE:

1. Referees are to apply rules with due regard to the age level and ability of players.
2. Actions against the nature and spirit of the game should be dealt with.
3. No penalties are to be awarded (change of possession when required).
4. Referees and coaches are encouraged to reinforce the codes of conduct/behaviour.
5. Coaches may coach on the field at least 5 metres behind the team.
6. Coaching Level recommended – Level 1.

MINI TOUCH

Mini Touch is an introduction to the sport for 8 to 10 year olds.

It is not designed to replace junior competition but rather to supplement existing junior programs.

PHILOSOPHY OF MINI TOUCH

Mini Touch has been developed to provide children with a positive introduction to the sport of Touch. The game encourages children to play in a cooperative way, to learn ball and movement skills without the pressures of competitively organised sport.

The adult rules and game structure of Touch is inappropriate for children. Mini Touch considers the age, maturity and skill levels of the players.

The rules and equipment have been designed to align the game with the psychological and physical capabilities of children should enjoy the game and have fun as they learn.

Mini Touch aims to:

- ◆ **Provide all children with the opportunity to participate and experience a feeling of success from their participation.**
- ◆ **Reduce the emphasis on “win-at-all-costs” and promote enjoyment, skill development and good competition through participation in sport.**
- ◆ **Promote the principles of good sporting behaviour.**
- ◆ **Improve the quality of sports instruction available to junior touch participants.**

Mini Touch enables children to play in an environment where the emphasis is on pleasure of participation, the joy of being part of a group, and sharing experiences with others - rather than winning, or being the best in the team.

Mini Touch is an enjoyable game for children that will have a positive influence on their level of participation and in turn, foster an improvement in skills and techniques.

MINI TOUCH RULES

The recommended age for playing mini touch is 8-10 years. It is important however that chronological age is not used as the sole determining factor. There may be older children who are unable to cope with the physical and technical demands of competitive touch. Social maturity must also be considered, as many children cannot cope with the demand for cooperation in team games. Alternatively, provision must be made for the early developer.

Variations to standard ATA rules are:

1. The game is played across a normal sized touch field, therefore being 35m x 25m.
2. A junior touch ball is to be used.
3. Two halves of 10 minutes, with a 3-minute break at half time.
4. A team of 5 players on the field, with up to 3 substitutes (all players to play every position).
5. All players to be given equal opportunity to participate.
6. Participants in the competition to receive a certificate or participation award.
7. There will be a change in possession instead of tap penalties for infringements.
8. In the case where a player unintentionally throws a forward pass, or passes after they are touched, then play should be recalled to the place of infringement and a touch counted. The player then performs a rollball.
9. The defending team cannot move until the first receiver has caught the ball.
10. For minor infringements the referee may allow a replay of the action. eg. Rollball infringements.
11. In cases where play is recalled or replayed for the team in possession, the referee should hold the ball and explain the ruling before allowing play to recommence.

REFEREES

To ensure participants enjoy the experience, referees are to:

- ◆ Use simple language and explain decisions.
- ◆ Adopt an encouraging and pleasant manner at all times to ensure an open and free-flowing game. No penalties are to be awarded.
- ◆ Apply rules with due regard to the age and level of ability of the players. Deliberate and other actions against the nature and spirit of the game should be dealt with.
- ◆ Are encouraged to reinforce the WTA and AUSSIE SPORT codes of conduct/behaviour.

COACHES

To assist in the development of skills and behaviour, coaches:

- ◆ May coach on the field at least 5 metres behind the team.
- ◆ Are encouraged to reinforce the WTA and AUSSIE SPORT codes of conduct/behaviour.

MINI TOUCH

Age group:	8 to 10 years
Players recommended:	A team of 5 players on the field, with up to 3 substitutes (all players to play every position).
Equipment:	1 junior touch ball (size 4)
Area:	25m x 35m (half touch field)
Length of Game:	2 halves of 15 minutes each with a break of 5 minutes at half time

GAME PLAY AND RULES

Where possible teams should be single gender.

Standard ATA rules with the following variations:

1. There will be a change of possession instead of tap penalties for infringements.
2. In the case where a player unintentionally throws a forward pass, or passes after they are touched, then play should be recalled to the place of infringement and a touch counted. The player then performs a rollball.
3. The acting half cannot run with the ball and they must pass it to another player before they can join in further play (stand and pass).
4. The defending team cannot move until the first receiver has caught the ball.
5. For minor infringements the referee may allow a replay of the action. eg. Rollball infringements.

NOTE: In cases where play is recalled or replayed for the team in possession, the referee should hold the ball and explain the ruling before allowing the play to recommence.

NOTE:

1. Referees are to apply rules with due regard to the age level and ability of players.
2. Deliberate and other actions against the nature and spirit of the game should be dealt with.
3. No penalties are to be awarded (change of possession when required).
4. Referees and coaches are encouraged to reinforce the codes of conduct/behaviour.
5. Coaches may coach on the field at least 5 metres behind the team.
6. Coaching Level recommended - Orientation

Awarding of Points

- ◆ The recognition of individual domination and emphasis on winning, team rankings and the conduct of finals are considered inappropriate to the promotion of individual skills and development at the formative levels.

- ◆ With consideration for local circumstances, the following can be used as a guide for integration into the adult game:
 - ⇒ No competition points to be recorded.
 - ⇒ No final series.
 - ⇒ No recording or publication of ladders.
 - ⇒ No recording or publication of match results.
 - ⇒ Names published should be termed in an encouraging manner.
 - ⇒ Special Carnival Days may be held at times during the season.

TOUCH

Touch for children over 11 years of age caters for individuals who are physically and mentally able to play according to all ATA playing rules.

It is designed to be the next logical step in participation in junior competition and should compliment existing programs.

PHILOSOPHY OF TOUCH

The sport of Touch should provide children with a positive sporting experience. Competition encourages children to implement the skills learned in Tiny and Mini Touch in an organised sporting context.

The ATA playing rules and game structure is appropriate for children. However, care should be taken to ensure that the age, maturity and skill level of the players is considered.

The rules and equipment have been designed to align the game with the psychological and physical capabilities of individuals. Children, while enjoying the immediate game and having fun as they learn, are being prepared for adult competition.

Touch aims to:

- ◆ **Provide an opportunity for children to further develop skills gained in the early development stages of involvement in the sport.**
- ◆ **Experience a feeling of success from their participation.**
- ◆ **Promote the enjoyment of good competition through participation in sport.**
- ◆ **Promote the principles of good sporting behaviour.**

Touch should be an enjoyable game for children and have a positive influence on their participation. This in turn will encourage an improvement in skills and techniques.

TOUCH RULES

The standard ATA playing rules should be used for competition. However, the chronological age should not be used as the sole determining factor in the applying the playing rules. There will be some children who are unable to cope with the

physical, technical and tactical demands of competitive touch. Social maturity must also be considered, as some children are unable to cope with the demand of cooperation in team games. Consideration should also be provided for the early developer.

REFEREES

To ensure participants enjoy the experience, referees are to:

- ◆ Use simple language and explain decisions.
- ◆ Adopt an encouraging manner at all times to ensure an open and free-flowing game.
- ◆ Apply rules with due regard to the age and level of ability of the players. Deliberate and other actions against the nature and spirit of the game should be dealt with.
- ◆ Encourage reinforcement of the WTA and AUSSIE SPORT codes of conduct/behaviour.

COACHES

To assist in the development of skills and behaviour, coaches should encourage and reinforce the WTA Coaching Code of Behaviour as well as the AUSSIE SPORT codes of conduct/behaviour.

TOUCH

Age Group:	Over 11 years
Players:	6 a side with a maximum of 6 substitutes
Equipment:	1 touch ball
Area:	70 metres x 50 metres
Length of Game:	2 halves of 20 minutes each way with a break of 5 minutes at half time

GAME PLAY AND BASIC RULES

Where possible teams should be single gender.

Standard ATA Playing rules with the following variations:

1. For 'minor' infringements the referee should allow a replay of the action.
Examples include: - not releasing the ball for a tap;
- not performing the rollball correctly, particularly at a change of possession.
These may be repeated without a change of possession. (This should be at the discretion of the referee).
2. Depending on the skill level of participants, the referee may play mini-touch or touch rules.
3. Consider number of players on the field as appropriate.

Note: Coaches and referees are encouraged to reinforce the WTA and AUSSIE SPORT codes of conduct/behaviour.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LINKS

Education organisations encompass primary and secondary schools, teacher training institutions, education centres (State, Catholic, Independent) and professional associations.

Community organisations include clubs, associations, regions, State Touch Associations, National Touch League Permit holders, Departments of Sport and Local Governments and Community Agencies.

GENERAL

Close links must be established between schools and community Touch organisations to ensure a systematic and coordinated delivery of junior touch. These links will reduce wastage and inefficiencies caused by duplication and under-utilisation of resources, while providing a consistent and complementary approach to the provision of junior touch. Close links will also provide for a smooth transition for participants between school and community sporting competitions.

DUPLICATION

Whilst it is recognised that duplication can result in more opportunities for participants, generally there are negative effects of this. School and community sporting groups offer competition for similar age groups. Duplication can lead to over training, “burn out” and unnecessary competing demands on children. It also leads to excessive burdens on parents, coaches, officials, community organisations and schools.

Establishing mechanisms that will ensure ongoing communication and consultation between school and community organisations can reduce the duplication of junior touch activities.

Some strategies to reduce duplication in the provision of junior touch include:

- ◆ Coordinated scheduling of school and community competitions at all levels.
- ◆ Junior development programs that incorporate both school and community based components.
- ◆ Promotion of programs to encourage participation co-ordinated by both clubs and schools eg Sport Education in Physical Education Program (SEPEP).

CONSISTENCY

Inconsistencies in the provision of Junior Touch by schools and community groups can lead to confusion for the participants.

Examples of inconsistencies include:

- ◆ The manner for determining a junior competitor age, eg. age at date of competition, age at start of calendar year, age at start of school year, etc.
- ◆ The age groupings for competition, eg. under 12, under 14. School and community competitions in each sport should use the same age grouping.
- ◆ The rules and conduct of competition, eg. size of playing area, duration of game, etc.
- ◆ The number of days touch competition is held during the week, eg school, interstate & local competitions.

SHARED RESOURCES

Where possible school and community groups should implement measures to share the resources used in the delivery of junior touch. Shared resources could include human (coaches, referees, administrators, officials), facilities and equipment. This would help avoid unnecessary extra costs and inconvenience for the participants, and lead to a more efficient and effective junior touch delivery system.

COACH / TEACHER TRAINING

Quality touch education is dependent on quality accredited coaches and teachers. All junior touch coaches and teachers should have the qualifications/training necessary to provide excellent learning experiences for children.

Both education and community sporting organisations have roles in such training.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

GENERAL

An important objective of the Junior Touch Policy is the provision of safe environments for junior touch activities.

Accordingly, those involved in the conduct of junior touch need to:

- ◆ Take into account any long or short term medical condition participants may have.
- ◆ Ensure that junior touch fields and equipment are appropriate and safe.
- ◆ Take into account the ways in which the physical and emotional maturity of a child differs from that of an adult.
- ◆ Ensure that participants are properly prepared for their sporting involvement, especially through quality teaching and coaching.
- ◆ Ensure that coaches/teachers have adequate first aid knowledge.

Further information on safety in sport is available from Sports Medicine Australia or their respective state office.

PHYSIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Warm up and cool down exercises should accompany all sporting activities. Repetitive training techniques should be avoided, and endurance activities (eg. long distance running) restricted, so that developing bones, joints and muscles are not injured. Children should play in a variety of positions and not over train in particular skills.

i) Body Temperature Regulations

Compared with adults, children have a larger skin surface area to body mass ratio, and their sweat glands are immature, making them more susceptible to heat loss or heat gain. Touch sessions should not, therefore, be of long duration (over 30 minutes) in conditions of extreme temperature (over 30 degrees) and humidity (over 50%).

ii) Fluid Replacement

Children do not instinctively drink enough fluids to replace the amount they lose during activity. Water is essential to fluid replacement. Regular fluid intake before and during training and competition is also an important component of a nutrition program and should also be encouraged.

iii) Nutrition

The nutritional needs of junior sport participants are affected by their level of activity.

A balanced diet that provides them with all the essential elements should be encouraged.

iv) Weight Training

Before adolescence, weight training does little to increase muscle size or strength; time and effort may be better spent on lifting technique or skill development. At any level, weight training should only be undertaken with the supervision of a qualified instructor.

v) Stress

Whether children find playing touch stressful depends on the attitudes of parents, coaches, referees, officials and supporters. Adults should not set unrealistic goals but instead should offer support and encouragement.

vi) Drugs and Sport

The drugs most commonly used by (mostly older) children are alcohol and tobacco. Their use affects general health and well-being and sports performance.

Less common but still of concern is the use of performance-enhancing drugs, which some children may use in response to pressures to 'win at all costs'. The WTA anti-doping policy states that doping is forbidden. The WTA condemns the use of performance enhancing substances in sport as both dangerous to health and contrary to the ethics of sport.

Everyone involved in junior touch can help children to develop appropriate attitudes by discussing the issue with them, emphasising participation rather than outcome, and setting a good example. It should be stressed that good training practices and a healthy lifestyle are the factors that most contribute to enhanced sport performance.

vii) Sun Exposure

Organisers of Touch competitions and events have a responsibility to protect junior participants to the greatest extent practicable, from the dangers of exposure to the sun.

Participants should be encouraged or obligated to wear hats, protective clothing such as long sleeves and apply 15+ sunscreen on exposed skin and wear.

Touch organisers should also maximise the provision of shaded areas at venues and events.

viii) Hot and / or Humid Conditions

Coaches should be aware that children are a high-risk group for developing heat illness due to their poorly developed ability to sweat and cool the body. This may result in over heating which is a precursor to heat illness.

Children with the following characteristics may be more susceptible to heat illness in hot conditions because they are less efficient in removing body heat to cool the body:

- ◆ heavy / solid builds;
- ◆ high levels of body fat.

When assessing the environmental conditions both the temperature and the humidity need to be considered. The humidity is particularly important as the higher the humidity of the air the less effective sweating is in cooling the body.

In hot or humid conditions:

- ◆ Children should be watched closely for signs of heat illness;
- ◆ A non-oil based sunscreen should be used where appropriate, as oil based sunscreens can block the skins pores and affect the sweating mechanism;
- ◆ Appropriate clothing including hats should be worn at all times where possible;
- ◆ Clothing should be:
 - Light weight;
 - Light coloured;
 - Loose fitting;
 - Made of natural fibre, eg. cotton or fabrics specifically manufactured for hot conditions such as CoolMax or Dri-Fit; and
 - Have adequate ventilation.
- ◆ Adequate fluid should be consumed before, during and after the game to prevent dehydration - a flavoured solution may be more palatable to children and therefore more likely to be used.

The above has been reprinted with kind permission from Sports Medicine Australia's *Safety Guidelines for Children in Sport and Recreation*.

Heat Illness

All children should be continually monitored for signs of heat illness when exercising in hot or humid conditions. If there is any suspicion of heat illness, stop the child from participating in the activity and seek medical advice.

In the early stages of heat illness the child may present with any of the following:

- ⇒ tiredness;
- ⇒ weakness;
- ⇒ headache;
- ⇒ hot;
- ⇒ cramps;
- ⇒ nausea;
- ⇒ flushed skin;
- ⇒ fainting;
- ⇒ excessive sweating.

If any of the above indicators are present:

- ⇒ remove the child from the field/event;
- ⇒ lay the child down in a cool place;
- ⇒ give plenty of cool water;
- ⇒ cool the child (reduce the body temperature) by placing wet towels over them or sponging the body with cool water.

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ix) Exposure to Cold Conditions

Children are also susceptible to illness in cold climates, in particular thin/lean children because they have a greater body surface to mass ratio from which to lose heat. Children also have a less developed perception of when they are cold and therefore may continue to exercise when they should actually stop. Coaches should pay particular attention to these factors when children are playing water sports or are subject to wet conditions, as the water will enhance the loss of body heat.

In wet or cold conditions:

- ◆ Avoid standing exposed for long periods.
- ◆ Wet clothing should be changed as soon as practicable.
- ◆ Wear appropriate clothing.
 - ⇒ dress in layers to trap the heat and prevent heat loss;
 - ⇒ add or remove layers of clothing as necessary according to exercise level/conditions;
 - ⇒ jackets with a hood may be worn or removed according to exercise level/conditions;
 - ⇒ clothes with press clips or drawstrings (eg. waist, arms, neck, etc) so they can be loosened or tightened as necessary. A drawstring at the neck is not recommended due to the potential risk of choking if the string gets caught on equipment;
 - ⇒ hat and gloves to reduce the amount of heat loss.

Do not train or play outdoors during a thunderstorm, as there is potential for being struck by lightning.

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MEDICAL CONSIDERATION

Some children have medical conditions that may affect their participation in physical activity. Particular care should be taken in the case of long-term conditions (eg. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and heart or lung disease). Coaches/teachers should be aware of each child's specific needs and also know how to deal with an emergency.

Medical opinion should be sought when the fitness or performance of any junior touch participant is questionable, and when recovery from illness or injury is in doubt.

FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

The following measures should be adopted to reduce the risk of field or equipment related injury during touch activities:

- ◆ Maintain field and equipment in safe condition;

- ◆ Properly supervise all participants during sessions;
- ◆ Modify equipment, rules and field dimensions (as appropriate); and
- ◆ Cancel matches or training where inspection of playing surfaces and equipment shows they are unsuitable or unsafe for play.

CODES OF CONDUCT

GENERAL

Responsibility for junior touch is shared by:

1. Coaches and teachers
2. School and community organisations
3. Parents/guardians/spectators
4. Referees
5. Administrators and officials
6. Media
7. Government at all levels
8. Players

The following Codes of Conduct have been reproduced with permission of the Australian Sports Commission.

COACHES AND TEACHERS

- ◆ Be reasonable in your demands on young players' time, energy, and enthusiasm.
- ◆ Avoid over-playing the talented players. The 'just average' players need and deserve equal time.
- ◆ Remember that children participate for fun and enjoyment.
- ◆ Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age, ability & skill of the players.
- ◆ Consider the maturity level of the participants, when scheduling and determining the length of practice times and competition.
- ◆ Display respect for the ability of opponents as well as for the judgment of officials and opposing coaches.
- ◆ Show concern and caution toward sick and injured players. Follow the advice of a physician when determining when an injured player is ready to recommence training or competition.
- ◆ Keep yourself informed of sound coaching principles and the principles of growth and development of children.
- ◆ Create opportunities to teach appropriate sports behaviour as well as basic skills.
- ◆ Ensure that skill learning and the development of appropriate sports behaviour have priority over highly structured competitions for young children.
- ◆ Help children understand that playing fairly and by the rules is their responsibility
- ◆ Provide equal encouragement for all children regardless of gender, ability, cultural background or religion to participate, acquire skills, and develop confidence.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND SPECTATORS

- ◆ Encourage children to participate, if they are interested, do not force them.
- ◆ Encourage children to always participate according to the rules.
- ◆ Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a game.
- ◆ Remember that children learn best from example. Applaud good play by all individuals and teams.
- ◆ Respect official's decisions and teach participants to do likewise. Use appropriate channels to communicate through the appropriate channels rather than questioning the official in public.

- ◆ Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities.
- ◆ Recognise the value and importance of volunteer coaches, officials and administrators.
- ◆ Remember that children play organised sports for fun. They are not playing for the entertainment of the spectators only, nor are they miniature professionals.
- ◆ Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by spectators, coaches, referees or players.
- ◆ Encourage players to follow the rules and the referee's decisions.
- ◆ Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language, harassing players, coaches or officials.

ADMINISTRATORS AND OFFICIALS

- ◆ Ensure that equal opportunities for participation in sports are made available to all children regardless of gender, ability, cultural background or religion children.
- ◆ Ensure that rules, equipment, length of games and training schedules take into consideration the age, ability and maturity level of participating children.
- ◆ Ensure that qualified and competent coaches and referees capable of developing appropriate sports behaviour and skill technique provide adequate supervision.
- ◆ Remember that children participate for enjoyment. Do not over emphasise rewards.
- ◆ Provide clinics aimed at improving the standards of coaching and officiating, with emphasis on the development of appropriate behaviour and skill technique.
- ◆ Ensure that parents, coaches, sponsors, physicians, and participants understand their responsibilities regarding fair play.
- ◆ Modify rules and regulations to match the maturity & skill level of children and their needs.
- ◆ Condemn unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all opponents.
- ◆ Publicly encourage all rule changes, which will reinforce the principles of participation for fun and enjoyment.
- ◆ Ensure that your behaviour is consistent with the principles of good sporting behaviour.
- ◆ Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed of sound administration principles and the principles of growth and development of children.

SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY TOUCH ASSOCIATIONS

- ◆ Provide appropriate levels of activity /competition for the various age groups.
- ◆ Ensure that the rules, equipment, length of games suit the age, ability and maturity levels of participants.
- ◆ Foster a "sport for all" philosophy, including an awareness of groups with special needs.
- ◆ Remember that children participate for enjoyment. Down play the importance of rewards.
- ◆ Ensure that **all** involved in junior touch emphasise fair play, not "winning at all costs".
- ◆ Provide a supportive environment for coaches and teachers of touch. Ensure that qualified coaches and referees provide adequate supervision.
- ◆ Encourage quality coaching for juniors through Orientation to Coaching Courses and the adoption and promotion of the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS).

- ◆ Liaise with education organisation to develop cooperative refresher/in-service touch education/accreditation courses for teachers.
- ◆ Where possible provide access to accredited coaching and refereeing resources and assistance.
- ◆ Encourage coaches to be appropriate role models for their young players.
- ◆ Encourage more coaching role models from specific target groups (Indigenous, other cultures etc).
- ◆ Provide regular updates on rule changes, training methods and safety issues.
- ◆ Establish links between schools and community Touch Associations, both during and outside working hours.
- ◆ Encourage the use of fields and facilities, both during and outside school and working hours.
- ◆ Where possible loan sporting equipment to encourage participation in touch.
- ◆ Provide a consistent and coordinated approach to all touch programs.
- ◆ Provide for, and actively support, touch as a component of a physical education & sport curriculum in all schools.

REFEREES

Referees have an important influence on children's enjoyment of touch and their continued participation.

When officiating at junior touch activities, referees should:

- ◆ Use simple language.
- ◆ Be encouraged to care about children's enjoyment of touch and their continued participation.
- ◆ Be consistent, courteous and helpful to all participants.
- ◆ Be a model of good sports behaviour for children.
- ◆ Keep informed about sound refereeing principles that take into account children's growth, development, maturity and skill level.
- ◆ Adopt rule changes that reinforce the principle of participation for fun and enjoyment, applying modified rules and regulations as appropriate.
- ◆ Use common sense to ensure that the strict application of rules and the over-calling of violations do not lose the spirit of the game.
- ◆ Discourage unsporting behaviour and promote respect for opponents.

MEDIA

The media plays a significant part in the shaping of attitudes.

To be a positive influence, the media should:

- ◆ Provide coverage of junior competitive and non-competitive touch as well as reporting adult touch.
- ◆ Be aware of the difference between adult touch programs and junior touch programs.
- ◆ Place in perspective the isolated incidents of inappropriate or unsporting behaviour rather than make such incidents the "highlight" of the event.
- ◆ Focus upon fair play and the honest effort of young participants.
- ◆ Do not place unfair expectations upon children. They are not miniature professionals.

- ◆ Identify and report on the issues of children participating in touch.
- ◆ Recognise the sporting achievements of all children.
- ◆ Avoid reinforcing stereotypical views on the involvement of boys and girls in particular sports.
- ◆ Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.

GOVERNMENTS

All levels of government (local through to federal) have a responsibility to ensure that a range of sporting opportunities are available to all young Australians.

Governments should:

- ◆ Be committed to the promotion of junior sport for the benefits it offers individuals and Australian society.
- ◆ Provide support and encouragement to schools and community organisations to improve their delivery of junior touch.
- ◆ Conduct or financially support only those programs that encourage participation in sport by all young Australians and provide equality of sporting opportunity.
- ◆ Support and encourage talented young sports people.
- ◆ Provide for a range of appropriate touch facilities in every community.
- ◆ Ensure that junior touch is delivered in the safest possible manner.
- ◆ Ensure that optimum cooperation occurs between all levels of government in the delivery of junior touch.

PLAYERS

- ◆ Play for the “fun of it” and not just to please parents and coaches.
- ◆ Play by the rules.
- ◆ Do not argue with an official. If you disagree, your captain, coach or manager should approach the official during an appropriate break or after the game.
- ◆ Control your temper. Verbal abuse of referees or other players, and deliberately fouling or provoking an opponent is not acceptable.
- ◆ Work equally hard for yourself and your team. Your teams’ performance will benefit, and so will you.
- ◆ Be a good sport. Cheer all good plays whether they are by your team or the other team.
- ◆ Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of another player.
- ◆ Cooperate with your coach, team mates and opponents. Without them there would be no game.
- ◆ If you cause an opponent to be injured, find out if they are badly hurt and help them where possible.
- ◆ Thank opponents for playing and referees for officiating the game.

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QUALITY TOUCH DELIVERY

If young touch players find their involvement enjoyable and fulfilling they are more likely to continue into their adult lives and the chance of lifelong participation is greatly increased.

All those involved in junior touch - players, coaches, teachers, referees, administrators, parents, school and community organisations, media and all levels of government, have an important role to play.

Individually, and as a group they provide the environment in which junior touch is played.

End