

INVASION GAMES

Handball and Netball

KEY RULES

Game Basics: Invasion games are designed to develop teamwork, communication, and decision-making. Players attack to score and defend to stop the other team. The key to success is working together, using space effectively, and reacting quickly to changes in play. In both Handball and Netball, the focus is on movement, support, and fair play rather than just winning.

Handball: Played between two teams aiming to score by throwing the ball into the opponent's goal. Players can pass, catch, dribble, and shoot, but they are only allowed to take three steps while holding the ball and must pass or shoot within three seconds. Dribbling is allowed, but once a player stops dribbling, they must pass or shoot. A goal is scored when the ball is thrown into the net, and the game restarts with a throw-off from the centre. Defending is about positioning, intercepting, and blocking shots safely, not physical contact. Players use their arms to block passing lanes while staying balanced and controlled.

Handball encourages fast passing, quick movement, and teamwork to create shooting opportunities. Games usually begin with a centre pass, and substitutions can be made regularly to ensure all children take part.

Netball: Played between two teams aiming to score by throwing the ball through the opponent's hoop. Players cannot dribble, run with the ball, or bounce it. Once a player receives the ball, they must stop and pass or shoot within three seconds. Each player has a specific position and is only allowed to move in certain areas of the court. A goal is scored when the ball is successfully thrown through the hoop by the shooting players. The game restarts with a centre pass taken alternately by each team after every goal. When the ball goes out of court, play restarts with a throw-in. Defending in netball is about marking tightly, intercepting passes, and using quick footwork. Defenders must stay at least three feet (one metre) away from the player with the ball when contesting possession. Netball develops accuracy, awareness, and teamwork as players must pass quickly, move into space, and support teammates within their positional roles.

Teamwork and Tactics: Both Handball and Netball rely on working together. Children learn to move off the ball, call for passes, and time their runs effectively. Defending as a unit and attacking with control are key tactical elements. Teams are encouraged to rotate roles where possible so everyone experiences attacking, defending, and supporting play.

Fair Play and Safety: Players must respect opponents, coaches, and officials at all times. Contact or unsporting behaviour is not accepted. Suitable footwear should be worn, tied-back hair and jewellery removed, and correct catching and landing techniques used to reduce injury risk. Players shake hands before and after each game and are reminded that the focus is on enjoyment, respect, and personal improvement rather than winning.

USEFUL LINKS

England Handball Association: englandhandball.com

Scottish Handball Association: scottishhandball.com

Welsh Handball Association: welshhandball.com

Irish Handball Association: gaahandball.ie

England Netball: englandnetball.co.uk

Netball Scotland: netballscotland.com

Welsh Netball: welshnetball.com

Netball Northern Ireland: netballni.org

International Netball Federation: netball.sport

Your School Games Netball: yourschoolgames.com/taking-part/our-sports/netball