

# History of netball

The beginnings of netball are closely linked to the game of basketball, which was introduced in England in 1895 by an American called Dr Tales. He showed students at a physical education college how to play the game. Since they had no written rules, the students decided to adapt some of the skills they had been shown by Dr Tales. They also wanted to play the game outdoors, therefore changes had to be made to suit the conditions.

One of the students, Mrs E. A. Roberts, was responsible for writing the first set of rules for this game for girls. At first the goals were baskets (wastepaper baskets) fixed to poles (broomsticks). When a goal was scored the ball was tipped out of the basket. As the game progressed, the equipment improved. Metal rings replaced baskets. However, it was sometimes difficult to see if the ball had gone through the ring. A net was added to the ring to make it easier to see when a goal was scored. As a result the game became known as netball.



The rules were distributed in 1901. There were obvious differences from the American game. In netball there was an offside position. Players could not bounce the ball. Goal shots were only allowed from within the shooting circle. The court was divided into three sections and certain areas were out of bounds to some players. Compared with basketball, there was less running by players in the game, but the ball travelled back and forth quickly and frequently.

The students who first played netball had to wear long skirts and straw hats. This type of clothing was clearly unsuitable for sport so the players were eventually permitted to wear gym uniforms. But it was not until 1945 that shorts and skirts could be worn. Luckily this did not stop the players from participating in the game.

In 1960 the basketball and netball authorities decided to formulate two distinct sets of rules for the games.

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