



**JUNIOR TOUCH**  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

# Junior Touch Championships EXEMPTION GUIDANCE POLICY

In our World, everyone has the right to be safe

# Introduction

A clear and transparent Exemption Guidance will allow any National Touch Association to apply for a player exemption for the purposes of the Junior Touch Championships. It provides four categories or pathways for NTAs.

In order to be granted an exemption, an NTA must satisfy a number of tests. These tests have been set out by the JTC Trust to provide a transparent and easy to use exemption guide.

There is no doubt that exemptions by their very nature are somewhat subjective. Each case is examined by the JTC Trust to understand whether the exemption would have a disproportionate impact on competing nations (i.e. create an unfair competitive advantage).

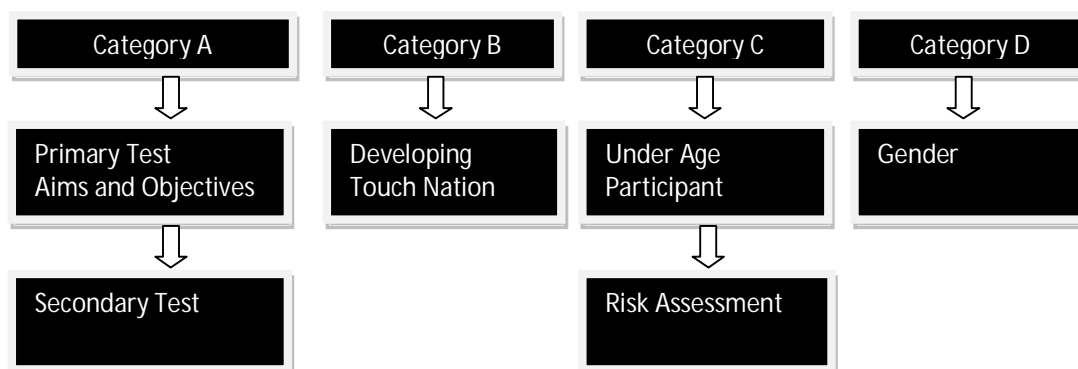
Nevertheless, the JTC Trust aims to provide a set of guidelines enabling NTAs to have access to a consistent and transparent policy for which these decisions are based upon.

The JTC Trust offers four routes towards a player exemption.

1. Category A: Aims and Objectives
2. Category B: Developing Touch Nation Status
3. Category C: Underage Player
4. Category D: Gender

Care should be taken to ensure you apply using the pathway that best suits your NTA, as an NTA cannot apply in more than one category in the same tournament year.

The JTC Trust will meet to discuss exemptions as they are received, up to 5 weeks prior to the tournament. Exemptions are not considered after this date.



NTAs are advised that this policy provides guidance, exemption forms and risk assessment templates.

# Category A: Aims and Objectives

## Primary Test

An NTA may apply for an exemption via Pathway A if they believe that the Aims and Objectives of the JTC Trust would be compromised without the exemption. An NTA will need to provide evidence of this (this is usually in the form of a statement).

## Secondary Test

If the exemption passes the primary test, the exemption request will then need to pass the secondary set of tests.

1. Has the NTA and squad previously been granted an exemption?
2. Has the player previously been granted an exemption?
3. Has the NTA previously applied for an exemption via Pathway B?

## How to Apply

An NTA may apply for a Category A exemption if they believe that without an exemption, that the Aims and Objectives of the JTC Trust would be compromised. An NTA must provide a written statement on how an exemption would fulfil the Aims and Objectives of the JTC Trust.

It is recommended that an NTA submits this statement as a PDF by email, provided that the PDF document bears the scanned signature of at least one board member in addition to the squad manager.

The document should be dated and signed. It should set out either:

1. How the Aims and Objectives of the JTC Trust would be fulfilled with the exemption, or
2. How the Aims and Objectives of the JTC would be compromised without the exemption.

As a guide, the document should generally not exceed 300 words. If approved, the NTA will accept accountability for the exemption.

Once the exemption has received preliminary approval, competing NTAs will be notified. They each have the opportunity to object to the exemption, but an objection must carry with it merit (e.g. excessive risk)

## Examples of an Exemption

Here are some examples of what the JTC Trust would consider a successful exemption application.

1. The promotion of participation in the sport of Touch. A player who is not currently living within your NTA and may or may not attend squad training regularly, but does not have other regular opportunities for participation.
2. Support the growth of Touch. A player who is several months over age and hence does not meet the exact age criteria. Without their involvement, it would severely compromise the participation of the entire squad.

## Unavailable Exemptions

No exemptions are to be made related to increasing the squad size, i.e. NTAs may name up to 16 players in a squad, of which 14 can be named to play in any given game.

## Implications of an Exemption

An NTA must think carefully about making an exemption, as the secondary tests do not usually allow for reoccurring exemptions. Depending on the number of exemptions or the case details, the NTA or squad may be restricted to ranking games (depending for example upon the estimated disadvantage to competing NTAs).

# Category B: Developing Touch Nation

## Introduction

It is recognised that some nations are more established than others and as such it is deemed necessary that a participation opportunity for developing nations is presented.

1. The DTN Status will last for the duration of one JTC tournament only.
2. NTAs wishing to apply for DTN Status for subsequent JTCs will need to complete the application process again.
3. DTN Status is for the purposes of the Junior Touch Championships only and will not have any bearing on FIT rankings or for international open or age grade teams.

NTAs that apply for DTN Status are doing so on behalf of all teams that a NTA registers for inclusion. However it should be noted here that a DTN would not normally be able to field more than one team, and by doing so may compromise their DTN status. Care must be taken to ensure that DTN is the correct pathway for your NTA.

## How to Apply

Written applications can be made to the JTC Trust who will review the application and either accept or reject it. Written confirmation and feedback will be given within 5 days of the Trust meeting. The JTC Trust will usually meet once a week as and when required.

NTAs wishing to apply for DTN Status should contact the JTC Trust at the earliest possible juncture to discuss their application.

It is recommended that an NTA submits this statement as a PDF by email, provided that the PDF document bears the scanned signature of at least one board member in addition to the squad manager.

## Application Process Stage 1

- 1) Complete a written preliminary statement
- 2) JTC Trust reviews preliminary statement.
- 3) JTC Trust accepts / rejects the application and sends written confirmation to the applying NTA and those NTAs who have expressed interest in that division. A competing NTA has 10 days to object (any objection must carry merit).

## Application Process Stage 2

- 4) If the JTC Trust accepts the preliminary statement and no objection has been received, your NTA will be asked to provide written statement on development / participation plans post JTC. This plan outlines your NTAs 12 month strategy on how it intends to strengthen its player and referee base. A successful strategy will ensure that your NTA will not need to apply in this category in the following year.
- 5) The JTC Trust will then accept / reject the application based on the plan content.

## Available Exemptions

1. 15 division
  - a. 2 players are permitted to be aged 15 on 31/12.
  - b. JTC Trust will not permit players aged 17 on 31/17 or above under any circumstances
2. 18 Division
  - a. 2 players are permitted to be aged 19 years on 31/12.
  - b. JTC will not permit players aged 20 on 31/12 or above under any circumstances

## Unavailable Exemptions

No exemptions are to be made related to increasing the squad size, i.e. NTAs may name up to 16 players in a squad, of which 14 can be named to play in any given game.

No exemptions are to be made in regarding the ratio in a mixed squad. The clarification on gender is not considered a compromise to this ratio.

## Implications of an Exemption

NTAs that have successfully applied for Developing Touch Nation (DTN) status are subject to the following conditions:

1. The exemption will be advertised to competing NTAs, such that all NTAs are aware of the risk of an overage player participating. A competing NTA has the right to object to the JTC Trust. The objection must be with merit.
2. NTAs are able to apply for Developing Touch Nation status exemption for up to 2 players only.
3. The NTA must have a development / participation plan in place at Stage 2.
4. NTAs with DTN status are:
  - a. Able to play in all pool / preliminary games
  - b. Ineligible to progress to either semi-final or final games
    - i. In the case of 4 teams in a division, the DTN will be automatically ranked 4<sup>th</sup>.
    - ii. In the case of 2 DTNs within the same division, both will participate in the lowest ranking game available.
5. Able to play in ranking games, i.e. to determine the ranking of teams not involved in the semi-finals.
6. Unable to become overall winners of the JTC.

# Category C: Under Age Player

## Introduction

In contrast to the open categories at other international events, each JTC category eligibility is based on an upper age limit. In order to participate in either division, players must meet the following conditions.

### 18 Division Eligibility

1. The age criteria date will be 31/12 in the year prior to the tournament, meaning participants must not have turned 18 until 01/01 in the year of the tournament.
2. The lower age is set at 16, meaning that a participant must already be 16 at 31/12 in the year prior to the tournament. Anyone younger than 16 and participating in the 18 division must be cleared to play by the National Touch Association.

### 15 Division Eligibility

1. The age criteria date will be 31/12 in the year prior to the tournament, meaning participants must not have turned 15 until 01/01 in the year of the tournament.
2. The lower age is set at 13, meaning that a participant must already be 13 at 31/12 in the year prior to the tournament. Anyone younger than 13 and participating in the 15 division must be cleared to play by the National Touch Association.

[NTAs should be aware that it is not currently a short term goal of introducing a third younger division.]

NTAs will notice that the JTC Trust has set a lower age limit. This reflects the JTC Trusts acceptance or exposure to risk. It has been determined with the assistance and guidance of professionals who work with young people.

Young people develop mentally, physically, socially and emotionally at very different rates. The JTC accepts the small calculated

risks in the variation of these aspects within the ranges listed above. Below these ranges, the JTC is not in a workable position to make tournament wide decisions.

Parents, squad managers and players must be aware that although the sport is minimal contact, the difference in mental, physical, social and emotional maturity outside the age range may expose individuals to unnecessary risk. Risk may occur in any or all of these aspects.

The organising committee has reasonably assessed this risk distribution during minimal contact events for participants. However as the sample minimum age in each category decreases, it is unreasonable for NTAs to expect the organising committee to adequately and acceptably assess this risk on a collective basis.

As the NTAs and squad selectors themselves are best placed and informed to assess this risk on a case by case basis, it is therefore their responsibility to ensure that they are satisfied that a younger participant competing in a (for example) 15 and 18 age group tournament poses little risk to themselves and others.

Therefore while participants may be younger than the range set above, selectors and participating NTAs must assume responsibility for the participants' exposure to contact hazards through the submission of a Category C exemption. An exemption for a younger player will always be granted on this matter providing the submission carries with it full responsibility for the participant competing.

## How to Apply

An NTA must carry out or risk assessment for any underage player in either category. You may use your own internal NTA risk assessment form depending upon your NTAs risk appetite (i.e. how much risk your NTA is willing to accept). The JTC Trust has included a template for your use.

## What to Consider

An NTA must consider the two elements that make up a risk event: probability and consequence. For example, the consequence of falling backwards after a Touch could be quite severe – this could result in head injuries. However, the likelihood given the players correct technique is quite low. Combining the probability with the consequence may mean that the risk might be acceptable to your NTA. You must have this written down and calculated to show duty of care. Further discussions may need to take place with parents / guardians.

Developing an underage player's Touch / roll ball technique and skill can have significant positive benefits and may greatly reduce the risk to a more acceptable level.

### Physical Risk

You should determine the risk of the underage player in a physical event (i.e. a Touch). While the Federation rules will not tolerate heavy touches, there remains an element of competition at each Touch.

### Social Risk

Social risks may not be immediately obvious, so you will need to keep a close eye on how well the player interacts with older people within the squad. While the JTC Trust encourages participation, this should not be at the detriment of their team inclusion. This may have long term impacts on self-esteem.

### Emotional Risk

Considering the emotional side of things is critical to their enjoyment, after all the tournament is competitive. There will be winners and losers, so you should think about how well an underage player will cope.

### Mental Risk

Your NTA should consider how mentally prepared an underage player is. You should determine how likely they are to deal with training and commitment. Consider also how well a player will be able to develop, given the pressure that it puts on young people.

# Category D: Gender

## Introduction

The JTC Trust attempts to provide a non-discriminatory tournament, in race, religion and skill level (among others).

Although by the sports very nature, some division is in place (age and gender), the JTC Trust goes to realise the flexibility in these boundaries, particularly gender, and more specifically those participants who embrace a different gender to the one which they were assigned at birth.

## Exemption

A participant who aligns themselves with either a different gender, or neither gender; are eligible for a Category D exemption.

In order to be granted a Category D exemption, an NTA must write to the JTC Trust, and include a signed and dated letter. The statement needs to include details of the player, the squad which he/she is participating in. It must be signed by the NTA President, the parent/guardian and the participant.

To avoid doubt during competition, all competing NTA squad managers within the division, will be notified – in order to avoid any issues that may arise during the tournament.



# Exemption Closing Date

| JTC Year | Tournament Date      | Closing date for exemption application |
|----------|----------------------|--|
| 2016     | 19 to 21 August 2016 | 15 July 2016                           |
| 2017     | 18 to 20 August 2017 | 15 July 2017                           |
| 2018     | tbc                  | tbc                                    |

Exemptions will not be considered after the closing date.

# Guidance on Calculating Risk

This section has been provided to NTAs as guidance only. What your NTA considers to be risks and how it about calculating risk, is your choice. However, in order to aid NTAs, this guidance is provided by the JTC Trust.

## Step 1

Assess the Consequence of each Risk

|         |    |
|---------|----|
| Low     | 4  |
| Medium  | 8  |
| High    | 16 |
| Extreme | 20 |

## Step 2

Assess the Probability of each Risk

|         |      |
|---------|------|
| None    | 0    |
| Low     | 25%  |
| Medium  | 50%  |
| High    | 75%  |
| Extreme | 100% |

You will need to assess the consequence and probability for each of the four risk aspects (if any are identified) – physical, social, mental and emotional. These tables are for guidance only and NTAs are free to develop their own scoring, based on their risk appetite.

## AN EXAMPLE

The consequence of falling backwards in a Touch event is high, so assign it 16 or 20. We'll use 16 for this example. The probability of this occurring is quite low, given the correct and skilled technique the player has been taught with and practices with. Assign the probability of this risk occurring as 25%, given there is still a chance of the event occurring. Now multiply the two to give you a risk event score of 4.

Do the same for the other three aspects. You will now have 4 individual scores, and each risk should be dealt with separately.

Using the Risk score table below, you should be able to evaluate the risk of the underage player participating in each area.

|             |         |             |        |        |         |
|-------------|---------|-------------|--------|--------|---------|
|             |         | Extreme     | High   | Medium | Low     |
| Consequence | Extreme | 8           | 10     | 12     | 16      |
|             | High    | 6           | 8      | 10     | 12      |
|             | Medium  | 4           | 6      | 8      | 10      |
|             | Low     | 1           | 4      | 6      | 8       |
|             |         | Low         | Medium | High   | Extreme |
|             |         | Probability |        |        |         |

An NTA can accept a risk, transfer the risk (to parents for example), reduce the risk (by further skill training) or eliminate the risk (excluding a player).

For completeness, in the above table a score of 1-4 could mean that your NTA is willing to accept the risk having made the assessment, while 6 may require further training, development or consideration by your NTA. A score of 8 to 10 may be referred to the parents for consideration, while a score of 12 to 14 may mean your NTAs acceptance of risk has been exceeded.

A Category C exemption must show that your squad manager and board member has carried out a risk assessment exercise, and that all the information has been assessed adequately. A template is included.



# RISK ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

|                |                            |                 |                 |                    |  |                 |                |
|----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|-----------------|----------------|
| PLAYER         | Hywel Williams             |                 |                 |                    |  |                 |                |
| TEAM           | Uzbekistan Mixed 18        |                 |                 |                    |  |                 |                |
|                | Event                      | Consequence (C) | Probability (P) | Risk Total (P x C) | NTA Action / Control Measure             | NTA Risk Action | Resolved (y/n) |
| Physical Risk  | Falling backwards at Touch | 16              | 25%             | 4                  | No further action                        | Accepted        | Y              |
| Social Risk    | Has difficulty interacting | 16              | 75%             | 12                 | Spoke with parents – which they accepted | Transferred     | Y              |
| Mental Risk    | None identified            |                 |                 |                    |  |                 |                |
| Emotional Risk | None identified            |                 |                 |                    |  |                 |                |

TABLE 3: RISK SCORE

|             |             |     |        |      |         |
|-------------|-------------|-----|--------|------|---------|
| Consequence | Extreme     | 8   | 10     | 12   | 16      |
|             | High        | 6   | 8      | 10   | 12      |
|             | Medium      | 4   | 6      | 8    | 10      |
|             | Low         | 1   | 4      | 6    | 8       |
|             |             | Low | Medium | High | Extreme |
|             | Probability |     |        |      |         |

NTA DETAILS

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| OWNER                   |  |
| DATE                    |  |
| ISSUED                  |  |
| SQUAD MANAGER SIGNATURE |  |
| BOARD MEMBER SIGNATURE  |  |
|                         |  |