



East Grampians
Health Service

MODIFYING SPORT FOR OLDER ADULTS



A Toolkit for implementation
in rural communities



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The aim of this toolkit is to support rural communities in developing modified sport programs for older adults. Drawing on research and practical experience from East Grampians Health Service, it provides practical guidance to help make planning and implementation easier. The toolkit is suitable for community members, health services, sporting clubs, and other organisations interested in offering accessible, enjoyable, and social activity options for older adults. We hope it helps you and your community create opportunities that are fun, safe, and inclusive.

How to use the toolkit

This toolkit takes you through a logical process for developing a modified sport program—from initial planning through to long-term sustainability. You can work through it from start to finish or use individual sections depending on your needs, experience, or the stage of program development.

Each section focuses on one part of the journey. Some users may rely heavily on early planning sections, while others who already run programs may use the toolkit mainly for ideas, checklists, or examples. You do not need to complete every step exactly as written. Instead, use the information, checklists, and examples to support decision-making, strengthen existing activities, and adapt the program to suit your community.

What is modified sport?

Modified sport is any variation to the traditional rules of a sport that makes it more accessible to those who wish to play. Essentially, the traditional rules are adjusted to make it a more fun, engaging, and safer sport to play. There are many examples of modified sport including the well-known modifications for children (Auskick, lowered hoop height in basketball) and older adults (walking basketball, walking netball, walking soccer). Modified sport for older adults can take many forms.

By reducing speed, changing the size of the playing area, or adapting equipment, sport can become more accessible, enjoyable, and safer for older adults to participate in.

Outline of steps involved for modifying your sport

- 01.**
Planning considerations for different settings

This section provides brief guidance for the different groups or organisations that may lead a modified sport program. It helps readers consider the strengths, limitations, and opportunities within their setting before moving into detailed planning.
- 02.**
The feasibility assessment

This step is about understanding whether a modified sport program is realistically achievable in the community. It helps determine interest, available spaces, equipment, and whether enough support exists to make the idea workable.
- 03.**
Designing the program

This step involves shaping what the program might look like once feasibility is confirmed. It focuses on identifying who the program is for, when and where it could run, and how it might align with the needs and preferences of the community.
- 04.**
Modifying sports

This step looks at how the chosen sport can be adjusted to be safer, more enjoyable, and more suitable for older adults. It includes thinking about slowing the pace, changing rules, or adapting equipment so participation is comfortable and inclusive.
- 05.**
Advertising, recruitment, and participant screening

This step covers how people might hear about the program and decide to get involved. It also includes simple processes to help ensure participants feel safe and supported before taking part.
- 06.**
Starting the program

This step outlines what is required for a smooth and positive start to the program. It includes preparing the space, organising equipment, considering safety, and creating a welcoming environment for participants.
- 07.**
Sustainability of the program

This step focuses on what helps the program continue over time. It addresses maintaining participant interest, preventing burnout, and adapting as the community's needs change.
- 08.**
Inclusive coaching and coaching techniques

This step highlights how to ensure all participants feel included, regardless of their ability or confidence. It offers approaches that promote safety, encouragement, and equal involvement.

01

Planning considerations for different settings

Modified sport programs may be led by health services, sporting clubs, recreation centres, or community members.

Each setting may bring different strengths, limitations, and opportunities.

Consider what support, partnerships, facilities, funding, and recruitment pathways are already available in your setting.



Health services

Health services may already have access to staff, clients, and communication channels that can support delivery and recruitment. They may also have internal requirements to work through before commencing a new program, such as risk assessment, marketing approval, finance processes, staffing approval, or equity/gender impact considerations. Partnerships with community organisations may improve feasibility and support longer-term sustainability.

Sporting clubs

Sporting clubs may already have facilities, equipment, volunteers, and local networks that can support a program. Support from local partners, governing bodies, or grants may also assist.

Recreation centres

Recreation centres may have suitable spaces, equipment, and staff to support delivery. Partnerships with health services or community groups may strengthen recruitment and engagement.

Community members

Community members may need to rely more on local partnerships, shared spaces, and community support. Starting small and building the program over time may be a practical approach.

02

The feasibility assessment

Before developing a modified sport program in the community, it is crucial to conduct a thorough feasibility assessment. This process will help gauge community interest, identify available resources, and evaluate the viability of implementing a program tailored to the needs of older adults. This step is important because each rural community will differ in the infrastructure and resources available.

This step will help identify these issues and plan strategies to address foreseeable barriers.

Key considerations

Community interest

- Gauge the interest in the community and gain an understanding of whether older adults want a program.
- Utilise informal conversations, surveys, or host/attend community meetings to gather input and feedback.
- Engage with existing sporting clubs and their members, particularly older adults to gauge interest in modified sport.
- Don't be discouraged by small numbers to start with. If you can successfully recruit a consistent group, word of mouth recruitment and further advertisement will bring more people to the program.

Facilities and equipment

- Assess availability of suitable facilities and equipment for hosting modified sport activities.
- Consider utilising existing community spaces, such as school gyms or local parks.
- Explore options for sourcing affordable or donated equipment.
- A good source for facilities may be existing sporting clubs and recreation centres as well as other locally run council facilities.

Delivering in a shared or external venue

- If your program will run in a venue managed by another organisation (e.g., sporting club, recreation centre, school, council facility, community hall, park booking), confirm requirements early so expectations and responsibilities are clear.
- Use Appendix '[Delivering in a shared or external venue checklist](#)' to guide discussions with the venue/partner (insurance/registration requirements, incident reporting, access, costs, and venue conditions).

Existing sporting clubs

- Reach out to existing sporting clubs within the community to explore potential partnerships.
- Sporting clubs may be able to run or support a program or donate or provide equipment or facilities.
- Sporting clubs may be more willing to support a program if it is governed by a national sporting body that oversees and regulates a sport or activity to ensure it is played fairly, safely, and consistently.

Below are links to some of the national sporting bodies which have modified sport programs, which could be used to gather support from local sporting clubs:

- Walking football resources (Football Australia) <https://playfootball.com.au/walking-football-resources>
- Walking netball resources (Netball Victoria or relevant state or national body) <https://vic.netball.com.au/walking-netball>
- Walking basketball resources (Basketball Victoria or relevant state or national body) <https://www.basketballvictoria.com.au/play/programs/walking-basketball>

Other stakeholder engagement

- Community organisations, education providers (schools and universities), health services and recreational centres may also partner or contribute to your program.
- Reach out to these stakeholders as they may be able to help with resources, recruitment, expertise, or infrastructure to enhance the success of the program.

We have included a template that you may wish to use when first approaching stakeholders. See Appendix '[Template for stakeholder engagement](#)'.

Key considerations (continued)

Community champions

- Identify individuals or groups within the community who are passionate about promoting physical activity and well-being among older adults.
- This could include local council members, trainers at gyms and recreation centres, healthcare professionals (physiotherapists or exercise physiologists), local celebrities, or community members that are passionate about health.
- Champions can play a valuable role in advocating for the program, recruiting participants, and organising ongoing activities.
- The more champions you can recruit early, the more participants you may get when the program commences.

Facilitators

Facilitators will be required to help run the program and do not need to be experts or coaches. Instead, look for someone enthusiastic and reliable. Below are some suggestions for recruiting program facilitators.

- Sporting organisation staff or volunteers.
- Ex-players or coaches that could participate or volunteer.
- Community members with interest in sports
- Participants

Insurance

Ensure that appropriate insurance coverage is in place to protect participants, volunteers, and organisers from potential liabilities associated with the modified sport activities.

- If you are unsure about insurance or liability requirements, seek professional advice. In some settings, participant waivers may also be considered as part of your risk management approach.
- Seek professional advice if you are independently insuring the program or using a waiver.

Registration of participants

- Sporting clubs, sporting bodies and recreational centres may be able to “register” participants which should include insurance coverage. Communicate with potential partners to explore this.

Time to plan and organise program

Allow extra lead-in time when planning a new modified sport program, particularly if it involves health service processes, external venues, shared facilities, or partner organisations.

- Approvals, venue agreements, staffing, marketing, risk management, insurance, and other local requirements can take longer than expected, so plan for delays.

Funding

Grants

Grants may help fund equipment purchases or facility improvements to make your program safer and more accessible. Not all grants will be relevant to every modified sport program, and timing is often important, as grant opportunities open and close throughout the year.

If needed, check relevant websites regularly and ask locally where grants have been successfully accessed in the past.

On the right is a list of government grant websites available at the time this toolkit was developed. Depending on your program, some of these may be relevant. Check websites regularly, as new grants may open throughout the year.

Victoria:

- Sport and Recreation Victoria grants
<https://sport.vic.gov.au/funding>

New South Wales:

- NSW Government Office of Sport grants
<https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/grants>

South Australia:

- Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing grants
<https://www.orsr.sa.gov.au/grants>

Queensland:

- Queensland Government, Sport funding and grants
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/sports/funding>

Western Australia:

- Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation funding
<https://www.cits.wa.gov.au/funding/sport-and-recreation-funding>

Northern Territory:

- Sport and Leisure grants
<https://nt.gov.au/leisure/sport>

Australian Capital Territory:

- ACT Government, Sport and Recreation grants
<https://www.sport.act.gov.au/grants>



Costs

Financial factors with launching and sustaining a modified sport program should be considered.

Costs may include:

- Facilities and equipment. This may be one of the highest expenses of running a program.
- Facilitators or coaches, if there is no volunteer or collaboration.
- Program insurance (see Insurance)
- Participants may be able to contribute \$5-\$10 per session, to help cover some costs.
- Explore creative fundraising strategies, such as community events and sponsorships from local businesses.

Feasibility assessment checklist

Use the below checklist prior to moving to the next section.

Feasibility assessment	Yes	No	N/A
*Is there enough community interest and a suitable participant group for a modified sport program?			
*Are there suitable facilities, organisations or spaces that could host the program at a reasonable cost?			
*Is the required equipment available, or is there funding to help purchase it?			
Are there suitable people available to run or facilitate the program, and what will this cost?			
Are there local organisations or community partners who could support program delivery, promotion, or referrals?			
Are insurance and risk requirements clear and appropriate for the program?			
Note: If you are unsure about insurance or liability requirements, seek professional advice.			
Will the overall cost of the program, including facilitator, equipment, and facility costs, be affordable and sustainable for participants?			
Will the overall cost of the program, including facilitator, equipment, and facility costs, be affordable and sustainable for participants?			

* = if you have answered "No" to any of these questions, you may not have the resources available to successfully implement the program and may need to consider alternative programs.

If no, to any of the feasibility assessment questions, consider some of the following strategies:

Is there suitable community interest for a modified sport program?

- Expand your search to other nearby surrounding towns/locations, if applicable.
- Try free advertisement ([See Advertising, recruitment, and participant screening](#)) to help get word out.
- Word of mouth is a very powerful recruitment method, don't be afraid to start with low numbers.

Are there suitable facilities, organisations or spaces that could host a program at a reasonable cost?

- Facilities do not have to be perfect, if you don't have access to a private facility, consider using the local park or an open space area. As the program becomes more popular, more options may present themselves.
- Backyard style sports are still engaging, physically active, fun and social. Consider a backyard style sport program (e.g. backyard cricket, backyard soccer, etc.)

Is there equipment available or money to help purchase equipment?

- Reduce costs through volunteers and donated equipment
- Consider improvising with equipment, ask participants to attend in certain colours to replace bibs, use different objects (ensure safe) to replace cones.

Are there people who can run and facilitate a program and what will they cost?

- Run informal sessions, you don't always need a delegated facilitator.
- Try alternating facilitators each week from the participants attending



03

Designing the program

Once the feasibility assessment is completed, it's time to decide on your target group and design the program. Utilise the information gained in [‘The feasibility assessment’](#) to understand the specific constraints for the program. For example, don't offer a 1pm session on a Wednesday if the recreation facility already uses the courts at this time.

The following information is intended to guide the design of the modified sport program. However, it is broad in nature and may not be applicable to the resources available in your local area.

Target group

Picking the target group for the modified sport program may help to shape what the program will look like.

However, the more targeted the program becomes the smaller the recruitment pool. Ensure to consider [‘The feasibility assessment’](#) and the information gained to ensure that the program will work and be sustainable.

Below are some suggestions that may be considered when identifying a target group.

- **Age:** E.g., 65+ or 50 - 60-year-olds.
- **Sex:** Male, female or mixed.
- **Abilities:** high physical ability, low physical ability, mixed.
 - If you have enough participants, it may be worth considering splitting higher and lower ability participants.
- **Sport:** specific modified sport (e.g., Football), or alternate.



Resource considerations

Indoor facilities:

- May not be available in all rural areas.
- Programs could be run all year round.
- Protects from variable weather.
- Potentially higher cost for hire.
- May have restricted times and days for participation.

Outdoor facilities:

- May be exposed to variable weather. If used, ensure you have a plan.
- Run program at favourable times of year, avoid extreme heat or cold.
- Playing surface may be unpredictable. Ensure that the sport being played is suitable for the environment.
- Potentially low-cost alternative compared to indoor alternative.
- Potentially greater availability compared to indoor venues.
- Potentially no booking system, so no guaranteed space. Have a backup plan.

Equipment:

- Available equipment will dictate the potential sports played and number of participants.
- Consider the type and quantity of equipment when designing the program.
- Be realistic, but don't be afraid to start with limited resources. This can always be expanded upon.

Times available to use facilities:

- If partnering with a sporting club or recreation facility, establish available times with the facility manager.
- If using public/outdoor facilities, it's important to understand the usage times as well as its utility (e.g. Does it have lighting).

Costs to run the program:

- The cost of running the program should already be known from [‘The feasibility assessment’](#).
- Consider budget or low-cost alternatives to reduce costs if needed.
- Partner with organisations and seek in-kind or discounted support.
- The cost of the program should meet the participant expectations.

Engaging the community

Engaging the community can take place at any time, and participant interests should be considered prior to finalising the design of the modified sport program.

- Using a survey or informal conversations with potential participants may help gather further information about the community's interests.
- It's important to understand the resources available from **'The feasibility assessment'** prior to starting these conversations, as it will influence the potential adjustments to the existing program.

Some example questions can be seen in Appendix

Below is a snapshot of information to be considered prior to finalising the program:

Community sports of interest:

- Understand popular sports in the community. This may be a good starting point, as the number of potential participants will be higher.
- This could include sports that people used to play in the past but can't any longer.
- Our experience suggested that participants enjoyed basketball and netball the most out of five different sports offered, also including soccer, Australian football and cricket.

Time and day of week:

- Dependent on your access to facilities/equipment.
- Consider what works best for most participants.
- Our experience suggests that participants preferred early afternoon times (1-2pm) on either a Tuesday or Wednesday.
- Consider the time of year. Events such as harvest time and other important rural events, summer, and school holidays may prevent participants from attending.

Block vs ongoing programs:

- Consider what works best for staff and participants.
- Blocks (8 – 10-weeks). Allows breaks between terms for participants and facilitators.
 - Facilitators may use this as an opportunity to improve the program or do further recruitment if needed.
- Ongoing programs. Will keep people engaged all year round. May need a greater participant pool for this to be sustainable.
- Our experience suggests that participants preferred blocks (10 weeks, with 2–3-week break) over an ongoing program. This was to align with school terms and caring for children/grandchildren during school holidays.

Coach or facilitator:

- Our experience suggests that most participants are happy with a facilitator that understands the sport (not an expert) and provides a social and engaging environment for all members.
- The coach or facilitator should only participate in the sports when numbers are needed to ensure that all participants are engaged and having fun.
- The facilitator needs to be able to control the session to ensure that all participants are getting a go (if they choose).
- Competitiveness is healthy but fun is also important. The facilitator should try to find a good balance

Duration:

- Our experience suggests that participants did not want to spend over one hour in a session.

Frequency:

- Our experience suggested that most participants only wanted to attend once per week.
- Discuss this with the participants but make sure what is chosen is sustainable.

Common barriers for rural older adults

Older adults in rural areas face unique challenges when it comes to participating in physical activity programs like modified sports. These barriers include logistical, physical, and social obstacles. Understanding and addressing these barriers is key to designing an inclusive and accessible program.

Health concerns and physical limitations

Barrier:

- Many older adults in rural areas have chronic health conditions, joint issues, or physical limitations that make participation in physical activity intimidating or difficult.

Suggestions for management:

- Partner with local healthcare providers (e.g., exercise physiologists, physiotherapists) to provide personalised advice regarding engaging in modified sport.
- Emphasise that participation is based on individual capacity and allow participants to set their own pace.
- Include warm-up and cool-down routines tailored to older adults to prevent injury and build confidence in movement.
- Provide educational materials or sessions on the benefits of physical activity to reassure participants about its safety.
- Ensure that the facilitator knows basic first aid, and how to access help in an emergency.

Cost constraints

Barrier:

- Costs of participation in programs is an identified barrier for rural older adults.

Suggestions for management:

- Seek sponsorships from local businesses or apply for grants to subsidise costs.
- Offer low-cost sessions (e.g., \$5–\$10) or a “pay what you can” model to reduce financial strain.
- Use shared or donated equipment
- Organise community fundraisers or partnerships to gather resources for equipment and facilities.

Travel and accessibility

Barrier:

- Rural communities often have limited public transport options, and older adults may not have access to personal vehicles.

Suggestions for management:

- Select central or easily accessible locations.
- Coordinate carpool systems or community shuttles for participants.
- Bring programs closer to smaller, outlying communities with a rotating schedule.
- Partner with local councils or community organisations to provide transport assistance.



Common barriers for rural older adults (continued)

Social isolation and lack of awareness

Barrier:

- Social isolation and limited outreach may prevent older adults in rural communities from learning about or feeling motivated to participate in programs.

Suggestions for management:

- Promote programs through multiple channels (local papers, social media, community groups) and use simple, engaging messaging.
- Involve local champions, such as respected community members or healthcare professionals, to advocate for the program.
- Organise informal “meet-and-greet” sessions to help potential participants build familiarity and reduce apprehension.
- Emphasise the social aspects of the program in advertisements to attract those seeking connection.

Confidence and self-esteem

Barrier:

- Fear of embarrassment or a lack of confidence in physical ability can deter older adults from joining group activities in a rural setting.

Suggestions for management:

- Foster a non-judgmental, supportive environment where participants feel welcome regardless of ability.
- Train facilitators to encourage and motivate participants while respecting their comfort zones.
- Begin with small, simple activities and gradually increase intensity to build participants’ confidence over time.
- Share testimonials or success stories from previous participants to inspire new members.

Designing the program checklist

Use the below checklist prior to moving to the next section

Designing the program	Yes	No	N/A
Do you have a clear understanding of the resources available and the main constraints that may affect the program?			
Have you engaged with the community and potential participants to understand their needs and preferences?			
Have you considered common barriers that may affect participation for rural older adults?			
Have you considered whether the program format, cost, and location are suitable for the intended participants?			
Have you planned when, where, and how the program will be delivered?			

If no, to any of the below questions, consider some of the following strategies:

Do you have a clear outline of the available resources and constraints for the modified sport program?

- Use [‘The feasibility assessment’](#) and resource constraints to establish a well-informed list.

Have you engaged with the community and potential participants and taken note of preferences?

- Community engagement does not need to be completed. However, it may be easier to recruit for a modified sport program if it meets the needs of the community. It is strongly encouraged to complete some community engagement.

Have you factored in the common barriers for rural older adults

- Review the section, and consider strategies to overcome some of these barriers.



04

Modifying sports

Depending on the facilities/equipment available, some modifications may be easier than others. Our experience suggests that participants in modified sport don't mind having modifications but want the sport to stay close to the traditional spirit of the game. If you have enough participants, you may wish to consider having people with similar physical capabilities play each other to ensure that teams are even.

Once the sport or sports have been chosen, it's time to modify them to better suit the participants. Below, we discuss general considerations when thinking about modifications.

Reduce likelihood of injury

- Reducing pace of game (walking).
- De-clutter the playing area (reduce numbers on field of play).
- Non-contact adaptations (tag or touch).
- Zone areas in the field of play and restrict numbers in each zone.
- Reduce game lengths and increase rest periods.

Making the game more suitable to participants

- Softer or smaller/larger equipment (e.g., balls, bats, etc.).
- Reducing/increasing the size of the playing area.
- Adjusting difficulty (e.g., reduce basketball/netball ring height, bigger goals, more steps between bounces, etc.)

Creating a fun and social environment

- Provide opportunity for socialisation (increased breaks, facilitate teamwork).
- Ensure teams are even to suit physical capabilities.
- Implement a passing limit (everyone on your team needs to touch ball before scoring).
- Ensure a mix between enjoyment and competitiveness.

Further to the general modifications above, example 'session plans' and 'Modified sport playing area dimensions' that we used in a modified sport program are provided.

There are many examples of modified sport, often each sporting code has developed a modified version of the game that could be utilised. Clearinghouse for Sport (visit website: <https://www.ausport.gov.au/clearinghouse>) can be a good source of modified sport ideas. See 'The feasibility assessment' for links to the specific sites for basketball, netball and football.

Specific examples of modifications that we made to five different sports can be seen in Appendix 'Modifications to sports'.

Modifying sports checklist

Use the below checklist prior to moving to the next section.

Modifying sports	Yes	No	N/A
Have you identified which sport or sports could be included in your program?			
Have you considered how the sport can be modified to reduce the risk of injury?			
Have you considered how the sport can be adapted to better suit the needs and abilities of participants?			
Have you considered how to make the program fun, inclusive, and welcoming?			
Have you referred to the examples of sport modifications in this toolkit for further ideas?			



Advertising, recruitment and participant screening

Ongoing advertisement will be necessary for both commencing a program but also for sustainability. Through ongoing advertisement, the program will maintain a flow of new participants, helping keep participants engaged.

Advertising

General tips to consider when starting advertisement:

- Advertise the different reasons for attending (e.g. physical, social, mental health).
- Use different strategies such as promoting a childhood sport, making new friends, improving fitness or socialising.
- Consider wording that highlights the opportunity to return to a sport people may have previously played, watched, or felt connected to, in a safe, modified, and social way.
- Once you have some participants, encourage them to talk to friends and family about the program.
- Utilise as many free methods of advertisement as possible.
- If older adults are not already a common user group in your setting, consider partnering with local health services, community groups, or other programs that already engage older adults to support recruitment.

Below are just some examples of advertisement methods that can be considered:

Local paper:

- An advert in the local paper can be very valuable, however, can also be costly. It is important to pick the most appropriate paper that older adults may view.

Word of mouth:

- Can be a very effective recruitment method.
- Older adults will be more willing to try something new if it comes from a trusted source (friends, family, community groups).

Local champions:

- Local older adults that are currently participating in the program can be very good advocates for the recruitment of new members.
- Celebrities or previous/current well known sporting figures can be very effective in promoting the program. However, this is sometimes not available in rural areas.
- Fitness professionals from either a gym or healthcare setting may encourage participation.
- Local council members that have a passion for health may be able to use their influence to spread word of a new and exciting program.

Community groups:

- Present flyers/brochures to local community groups, for example University of the Third Age (U3A), Neighbourhood Houses, and Returned Services Leagues (RSLs).

Social media:

So many people have access to social media, and utilising this as a free form of advertisement can be very beneficial.

- Use major social media platforms such as, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.
- Use simple posters, video clips, or brochures as they can be very effective.
- If your program is already running, you may even film short clips of the sessions for viewing online (with permission from participants).
- Create a group using Facebook, which can provide updates and act as a recruitment method.
- Cater advertisement for differing age levels, as it could be a child or grandchild that initially sees the advert and passes the information on.
- If you are partnering with a sporting organisation or a recreation centre, encourage them to advertise on their social media also.

Advertising (continued)

Sports clubs and recreation centres:

- Present flyers and posters to sporting clubs potentially targeting older adults at the club that may be looking for an opportunity to return to sport.
- Target your advertisement to the sporting clubs that may closely resemble the sport that is being played in the program.
- Advertise at local sporting games and events to help get the word out.

Local radio:

- Contact the local radio station/s to promote the program
- Radio interviews/ads can be a good way to promote and recruit for the program.

Local council websites:

- The local council can help support promotion of physical activities in the local area.

Local health organisations:

- Connecting with local health organisations such as community centres and gyms may help support and recruit for community-based programs.

Postal flyer:

- Although it can be costly, sending a small flyer out in the post can be a good recruitment source.
- To reduce cost, these can be delivered by facilitators or participants.

Posters:

- Put up posters in any local hot spots such as post-offices, library, community hubs, and sporting clubs, etc.

Offer free trial period:

- Utilise “try before you buy”.
- Participants may not wish to commit to a full program / season until they are sure they enjoy it.
- Consider free trial periods.

Recruitment

- Ensure that the registration process is as easy as possible for participants.
- The more complicated the process, the less likely people will engage.
- Make it simple and easy for people to get involved.
- Everyone expects some paperwork, just don't go overboard.
- Engage with participants regarding the program design as it may lead to a greater sense of belonging and ownership by participants, leading to greater sustainability of the program.

Note: Consider the main barriers discussed in [‘Designing the program’](#) and make sure you are prepared to discuss the benefits of the program and how safety will be managed. Emphasise that all individuals participate to their own capacity and can sit out at any time.

Participant screening

Participant screening is often used to help guide physical activity professionals or facilitators to assess a participant's overall risk to participate in physical activity.

For participants who are concerned about their health, it may be a good idea to have them complete a questionnaire prior to commencing. If partnering with a health organisation they will have policy and procedure regarding commencing physical activity and this should be followed. For community-led programs, consider whether support from a health service, exercise physiologist, physiotherapist, or other suitably trained person is needed to guide participant screening and safety planning.

If not, use the Exercise and Sport Science Australia Adult Pre-Exercise Screen Questionnaire.

<https://essa.org.au/web/Web/Resources/Tools-and-templates/Adult-Pre-Exercise-Screening-System-User-Guide.aspx>

Please note: Physical Activity Readiness – Questionnaires do not prevent against injury or death, instead assess risk of an adverse event from occurring. If participants answer yes to any of the questions, they should seek medical clearance prior to commencing.

Advertising checklist

Use the below checklist prior to moving to the next section.

Advertising checklist	Yes	No	N/A
Have you identified the target audience for your program?			
Have you identified local champions who can help promote the program?			
Have you considered how the sport can be adapted to better suit the needs and abilities of participants?			
Have you selected advertising strategies that are likely to reach your target audience?			

If no, to any of the below questions, consider some of the following strategies:

Have you identified who you want to target your advertising towards?

- This should have been identified by the completion of “Designing the program” section. If still unsure, go back and review the section to refine this further.
- Advertising should not stop. Continue this ongoing to maintain sustainability.

Have you recruited some local champions to help spread the word of the program?

- Start by encouraging current participants to spread the word and act as champions.
- Try to encourage higher profile members of the community to spread the word (e.g., local celebrities, council members, health members).



06

Starting the program

Now recruitment has been completed, it's time to start the program. Throughout the previous steps, the program design should have been finalised and the details of how and when it runs should be locked in. The following outlines some considerations that you may have when commencing the program.

The **'Pre-program checklist'** in the appendices can be used and adapted to help ensure that the program runs smoothly from the start.

Session checklist

Name tags:

- Ensure each participant has a name tag for easy identification and to foster a sense of community.

Session plan:

- Have a detailed session plan ready, outlining the activities, warm-up and cool-down routines, timings and any modifications required.

Playing area dimensions:

- Verify and set up the court dimensions according to the modified sport requirements.

Clear outline of rules:

- Prepare a clear outline of the game rules. Consider distributing these rules to participants before the session, especially if there are significant changes to the standard rules or court dimensions.

Equipment (bibs, balls, cones, etc.):

- Gather and check all necessary equipment, such as bibs, balls, cones, and any other items required for the session.

Coach/facilitator, whistle, any paperwork:

- Ensure the coach or facilitator is briefed and prepared. Have a whistle and any necessary paperwork, such as attendance sheets or health forms, ready and organised.

Emergency procedures (Automated External Defibrillators, first aid kit, etc.):

- Clearly outline emergency procedures, including evacuation routes and meeting points, and communicate these to all participants at the start of the session.
- Ensure the location of any Automated External Defibrillators and first aid kits is clearly noted.

Participant forms and waivers (registrations, waivers, sign-in/out sheets, etc.):

- Ensure that all participants have signed any necessary waivers before starting the program.

Further considerations

Weather contingency plan:

- Have a plan in place for inclement weather if your activities are outdoors. This could include an alternative indoor location or a clear communication plan for cancellations.

Feedback forms:

- Prepare feedback forms to gather participant input after the session, which can help you improve future sessions. Do this every few weeks or at the end of each term.

Hydration:

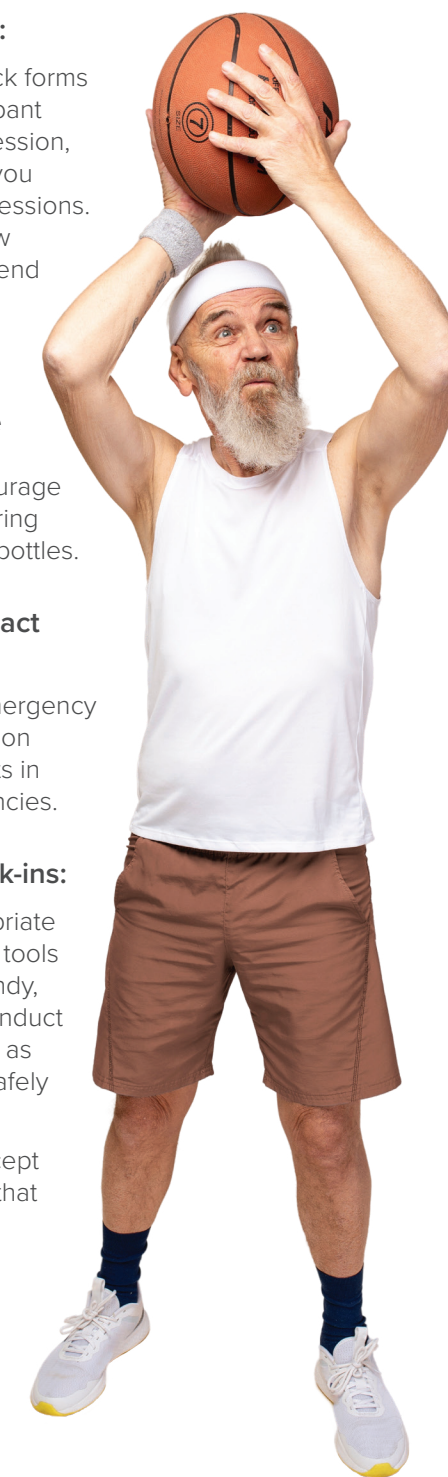
- Ensure there are sufficient water stations or encourage participants to bring their own water bottles.

Emergency contact information:

- Have a list of emergency contact information for all participants in case of emergencies.

Unexpected walk-ins:

- Have the appropriate spare screening tools and/or forms handy, so that you can induct new participants as quickly and as safely as possible.
- If you do not accept 'walk-ins', make that clear in your advertising.



Safety considerations

Safety is paramount when running any sports program. Here are some essential safety tips and considerations:

Environment check:

- Check the playing area is free of hazards such as loose equipment, uneven surfaces, or wet spots.
- Check for adequate lighting and ventilation, especially if the activity is indoors.

Warm-up and cool-down:

- Have a structured warm-up and cool-down routine to prepare participants' bodies for physical activity.
- Warm-ups should include low-moderate intensity movements and stretching.
- Cool-downs should focus on slower movements and gentle stretches.

Equipment:

- Check that all equipment, such as balls, bibs, and cones, are in good condition and suitable for the activity.

Participant check-ins:

- Check in with the participants before each session if possible.
- Adjust the session for participants depending on how they are feeling on the day.
- Encourage participants who may not be able to physically participate that session to stay for the social aspect.

Facilitation considerations

Social yet challenging:

- Creating a balance between social interaction and physical challenge will help to keep participants engaged and motivated.
- It is important to cater for individuals with different program goals, expectations, and physical capabilities.
- If you feel a participant's expectations are beyond the rest of the group, it may be a good idea to try to change focus to a fun and social activity rather than competitive.

This can be challenging to manage, and some hints and tips are discussed in ['inclusive coaching and coaching techniques'](#).

Pair participants appropriately (where possible):

- Match participants of a similar ability level for partner activities. This may also be a good opportunity to challenge or adjust the specific practice to suit the participants' ability levels.

Team-based activities:

- Organise activities that require teamwork and collaboration.
- Design team challenges, or cooperative games that emphasise working together rather than competing against each other. This approach fosters social interaction and makes the activity enjoyable.

Social breaks:

- Social breaks can provide an opportunity for socialisation.
- Good opportunities for social breaks could include between practice drills, quarter or half time, picking teams, etc.

Participant-led activities:

- Allow participants to suggest games or drills and skills in the session.
- This can help increase engagement in the program and give participants a greater sense of ownership.

Fostering social connections

Post-session socialisation:

- This often needs someone to prompt to begin with, but after some time it generally will become a very normal thing to do after the session.
- Facilitators can try to organise social activities after the program to allow participants to continue to socialise.
- This can be as simple as going for a coffee or a walking cool-down outside or even arranging for a quiet place for people to chat for 5-10 minutes after finishing.
- Build connections in the community that may benefit both parties (e.g., café can benefit from a regular group or paying customers, while participants benefit from additional socialising).

Community building:

- Try to create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive.
- This can start as simple as making sure that all participants are greeted on arrival, welcoming new participants and performing introductions.
- Encourage participants to share experiences with others and newcomers.



Starting the program checklist

Use the below checklist prior to moving to the next section.

Starting the program	Yes	No	N/A
Have you completed the pre-program checklist?			
Have you completed the pre-program checklist?			
Do you have a plan in place in case of an emergency?			
Do you have a plan in place if a session needs to be cancelled?			
Have you recently completed any safety checks or assessed the playing environment?			
Have you considered how to encourage social interaction between participants?			
Have you planned for how the session may need to be modified if needed?			
E.g. if participants' physical capabilities are lower than expected			

If no, to any of the below questions, consider some of the following strategies:

Have you prepared a facilitator to run the program?

- Ask participants to volunteer and alternate weeks if available.
- Continue searching after commencing the program for a permanent facilitator, don't give up.
- Approach local coaches of sports clubs, someone might be willing to volunteer more of their time.

Do you have a cancellation contingency plan in place?

- Ensure you have participant contact information in case of late cancellation.
- Make it known to all participants what the process for cancellation is.
- Ask all participants to advise if they cannot make a session, this way you know in advance if you need to cancel a session due to low numbers.

Have you planned for if your session plan needs to be modified?

- Have a variety of session plans available at any session (e.g., different skills drills, games, etc.).
- Have different session plans that may be less or more challenging physically, this way you can be prepared.
- Have a variety of session plans that allow for different numbers of participants.



07

Sustainability of the program

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the modified sports program requires planning and community involvement.

Below are a few tips and suggestions to help maintain the program into the future:

Involve the community from the start:

- Engage community members in planning, developing, and implementing the program to foster a sense of ownership.

Continued collaboration and sponsorship:

- Building strong networks with local stakeholders, organisations, and sponsors is key.
- Ongoing partnerships and sponsorships can provide resources for equipment, alternative venues, or program enhancements.

Be ready to adapt:

- Flexibility is essential for meeting the evolving needs of the community.
- The program may start as one sport (e.g., basketball), but be open to adapting the program to other sports or formats (e.g., volleyball) if interest shifts.
- Regularly gather feedback to ensure the program continues to meet participant expectations.

Affordable and flexible pricing:

- Participants generally expect to pay a reasonable fee, but affordability is essential for continued engagement.
- Consider offering “try before you buy” sessions or discounted passes (e.g., 10-week passes or membership packages) to encourage commitment.

Ongoing recruitment and promotion:

- Constant recruitment and promotion keep participant numbers strong, which is essential for group dynamics and program vitality.

Regular feedback and continuous improvement:

- Regular feedback should be gathered at set intervals, such as at the end of each term (10-weeks).
- Discuss any changes and improvements with participants prior to implementing changes.

Health service led programs:

- In health-service-led programs, Allied Health Assistants, health promotion staff, volunteers, or trained participant helpers may be able to support delivery over time. This may reduce reliance on one facilitator and improve sustainability.

Health service handover to a community partner

In health service-led programs, it may be helpful to plan for shared delivery or eventual handover to another local organisation, such as a sporting club, recreation centre, or community group, to support long-term sustainability.

A staged approach to handover

Stage 1 – Health service-led (set-up phase):

- Health service establishes the program, sets expectations, and runs early sessions while building local interest and identifying potential community leaders.

Stage 2 – Shared delivery (capacity building):

- A community partner begins co-delivering sessions (or supporting delivery) with a gradual increase in responsibility.

Stage 3 – Community-led (handover):

- The community partner leads delivery, with the health service support as needed.

Early planning and documentation for handover

Program basics:

- Session time/location, contact list, and clear roles (who does what).

Session delivery:

- Simple session plan templates and agreed rules/modifications (keep it consistent).

Safety and risk:

- Agreed participant screening approach, emergency plan, and incident reporting process.

Insurance/registration:

- Clarity on whether participants need registration (and who manages it).

Equipment:

- Where it is stored, what is required each session, and a plan for replacement/maintenance.

Use Appendix [‘Shared delivery and handover checklist’](#) to guide planning and confirm readiness before stepping away.

Preventing burnout for facilitators and participants

Facilitator support:

- Recruit local helpers. Participants, community members, or local club members may be able to assist with administrative tasks, allowing the facilitator to focus on coaching.
- Recruit a local helper who may be able to ‘fill in’ for the facilitator. This will help to take some pressure off a lone facilitator. Ensure that the local helper is familiar and confident to run a session and is coached as needed.
- Celebrate successes with appreciation events or program dinners, especially for volunteer facilitators.
- Keep sessions varied to reduce monotony and consider participant-led activities to improve engagement.

Participant support:

- Keep sessions varied with skill-focused practices and different drills to prevent boredom.
- Foster social connections through structured social breaks and optional post-session meetups (e.g., coffee at a local café).
- Be flexible with session plans and open to adjustments based on participant needs and feedback.
- Balance social and competitive elements to cater to different participant preferences.
- Prioritise fun and enjoyment, as these should be the cornerstones of any modified sport program.
- Adjust activities when needed to maintain a positive atmosphere.

Through a thoughtful and adaptable approach, a sustainable program that effectively engages the community and meets the diverse needs of participants can be created. Consistent community involvement, regular feedback, and a focus on fun and inclusivity will help ensure the program thrives well into the future.

Program sustainability checklist

Use the below checklist prior to moving to the next section.

Program Sustainability	Yes	No	N/A
Have you developed a sustainability plan for your program?			
Have you identified strategies to support ongoing participation and reduce burnout for participants and facilitators?			
Have you considered what is needed to maintain the program over time, such as staffing, funding, facilities, and community support?			

If no, to any of the below questions, consider some of the following strategies:

Have you developed a sustainability plan for your program?

- If you have not planned for further recruitment/ advertisement, it is highly suggested to do so.
- Try informal conversations with participants, you may get extra details about issues or complaints that need to be addressed.
- Ensure contingency plans are in place. Don't keep cancelling sessions, as this will affect the motivation of participants and facilitators to continue.

Have you developed strategies to minimise burnout for participants and facilitators?

- Continuous open communication is required with all parties.
- Ensure that all voices are heard within the group and any issues or concerns are acknowledged.
- Work with those within the group to discuss solutions. Participants and facilitators usually have some good and practical advice that could prove beneficial.
- Don't be afraid to pivot from your plans, be prepared to modify and adapt the program rather than stay rigid to a session.



08

Inclusive coaching and coaching techniques

There are several barriers that can prevent an individual from participating and being included in sport: time, cost, access, enjoyment, self-esteem, risk awareness, environment, and delivery.

Inclusive sport coaching is about finding a way to include all participants at the session in that moment.



Below is a list of qualities that an inclusive coach should possess.

Patience:

- Recognise that participants will take longer to develop skill or make progress.

Respect:

- Acknowledge the differences between participants and treat everyone as individuals.

Adaptability:

- Have a flexible approach to coaching and communication that recognises differences between participants.

Organisation:

- Planning and preparing is important.

Safe practices:

- Ensure that every session is carried out with the safety of the participant in mind.

Knowledge:

- Utilise knowledge of training activities and how to modify them to maximise the potential of every participant.

To expand upon the 'knowledge' quality, it can be helpful to use the TREE (Teaching, Rules, Equipment and Environment) acronym.

Teaching (coaching and facilitation style)

Think about what the participant "can do" not what they "can't do"

- Ensure the planned activities create success. Participants will get disengaged quickly if they cannot complete the activity successfully.
- Set the activities to suit the abilities, not the age of the participants
- Repeating activities each week can be beneficial to learning and provide a sense of accomplishment when achieved. Introducing new sets of activities each week can be overwhelming
- Use specific instructions so participants know exactly what to do. For example:
 - Stand on a green dot
 - Stand with your toes touching the white line
- Be positioned so you can see all the participants. The facilitator position is important as participants may not verbally communicate their needs and seek face contact for reassurance or guidance. Equally, they will process a lot of information through non-verbal means such as demonstrations, hand gestures, facial expressions.
- Provide demonstrations of activities and ask questions to check for understanding.

Rules

- Change the rules to enable success. For example: a zone defense in walking basketball may facilitate better ball movement, getting more participants involved.
- Change the rules to increase safety. For example: a foul in walking basketball can be called if a greater than “one arm’s length” zone is violated when playing defense.

Equipment

- To support specific communication, use visual aids such as colored dots for participants to stand on, arrows to show the direction they need to run, and foot shapes to show where they need to step/hop/jump etc.
- Provide participants with a choice of equipment to suit their ability and needs. For example, different weights, sizes, and textures of equipment.
- Use flat markers/dots instead of cones – cones can be a tripping hazard.

Environment

- Where possible, minimise distractions such as background noise.
- Ensure there is enough space between participants so they can move freely without hitting another participant.
- When implementing a session to run indoors ensure the flooring is slip free and the participants are wearing appropriate footwear.

Inclusive coaching resources

- Sport Integrity Australia – Inclusive sport resources https://www.ausport.gov.au/integrity_in_sport/inclusive-sport
- Sport Inclusion Australia <https://sportinclusionaustralia.org.au>



Final words

This toolkit is designed to empower rural communities to take the first step toward fostering health, inclusion, and social connection through modified sport. By leveraging local resources, involving community members, and addressing specific barriers faced by rural older adults, you have the potential to create a sustainable and impactful program.

Modified sports provide an opportunity to reconnect with physical activity in a fun and engaging way, tailored to individual abilities and community needs. As you begin this journey, know that every effort contributes to building healthier, more connected communities.

We encourage you to adapt this toolkit to suit your unique community and welcome any feedback or success stories to help others embark on similar journeys.

Together, we can ensure that everyone, regardless of age or location, has the opportunity to stay active, healthy, and socially connected.

Appendices



Delivering in a shared or external venue checklist

Use this checklist if your program is delivered in a venue managed by another organisation
For general program set-up and safety checks, also complete the **'Pre-program checklist'**.

Considerations for shared or external delivery		
Have you completed the following in preparation for delivering in a shared or external venue?	Yes	No
1. Organised the venue booking for the program (dates, times, costs, cancellation conditions)		
2. Confirmed access arrangements / E.g. keys, swipe code, opening times, after-hours expectations		
3. Confirmed set-up and pack-up expectations (including time allowed)		
4. Confirmed any storage requirements for equipment (if applicable)		
5. Confirmed venue rules and conditions / E.g. footwear, equipment restrictions, floor protection, lighting/heating/cooling		
Insurance and participant coverage		
6. Confirmed public liability insurance arrangements (who holds it and what is covered)		
7. Confirmed whether participant registration is required for insurance coverage		
8. Confirmed facilitator/volunteer coverage arrangements (if applicable)		
Incident reporting and responsibilities		
9. Confirmed incident reporting process (venue and self)		
10. Confirmed responsibilities for documentation and follow-up (including escalation pathway)		
11. Venue/partner contact person nominated and contact details available		



Shared delivery and handover checklist

Shared delivery and handover checklist		
Have you completed the following to support shared delivery or handover of the program?	Yes	No
1. Agreed a realistic timeframe for shared delivery and/or handover		
2. Confirmed current roles and responsibilities (who leads sessions, who supports, who manages attendance/communication)		
3. Handover of program communication methods (participants, facilities manager, cancellations)		
4. Provided session plans/templates and agreed modifications/rules		
5. Confirmed any participant screening methods		
6. Provided any insurance arrangements and requirements for participant registration		
7. Handover of equipment and storage and any cost associated with these		
8. Handover of outstanding venue bookings and booking process		
9. Shared contact lists provided (partner contact, venue contact, participants)		

Pre-program checklist

Pre-program checklist		
Have you completed the following in preparation for your program?	Yes	No
1. Name tags for participants		
2. Organised the venue for the program		
3. Purchased and organised any necessary equipment you need for the program. E.g. Bibs, balls, cones, bats, goals, etc.		
4. Easily accessible session plans		
5. Playing area dimensions are available and easy to apply		
6. A clear outline of the modified sport rules is available		
7. Distributed modified sport rules to participants in advance (if applicable)		
8. Briefed and/or trained a facilitator for the program		
9. A whistle ready to assist with facilitation		
10. Any paperwork required on the day easily accessible E.g. registration forms, PAR-Q, waivers, sign-in/out sheets, etc.		
11. Cancellation plan or weather contingency plans		
12. Prepared for unexpected walk-ins and any necessary paperwork required.		

Safety considerations		
13. Completed a safety check of the playing area.		
14. Collated participant emergency contact information		
15. Planned for an adequate warm-up and cooldown		
16. Assessed any playing equipment for general wear and tear and suitability for play.		
17. Familiarised with any emergency procedures E.g. Automatic External Defibrillators (AED), first aid kits, nearest telephone, etc.		



Template for stakeholder engagement

[Insert Date]
[Insert Recipient Name/Organisation Name]
[Insert Address or Email Address]

Dear [Recipient's Name/Organisation Name],

I'm reaching out to explore a collaboration with your organisation for a modified sport program for older adults in our rural community. Modified sport promotes health, social connection, and inclusivity for older adults through fun, adapted physical activities that address the unique challenges faced by older adults in rural areas.

How your organisation can support a modified sport program:

Provide a brief introduction on how their business/organisation can support the program:
Add or remove any of the below dot points so that it is specific to the request.

- **Facilities and equipment:** Providing access to suitable spaces or lending/donating equipment.
- **Sponsorship:** Financial support to cover costs such as equipment, promotion, or participant subsidies.
- **Collaboration:** Partnering in program delivery or co-hosting sessions.
- **Promotion:** Helping to spread the word through your networks.

Benefits of collaboration

- Add or remove any of the below dot points so that it is specific to the requests above
- **Support community health:** Enhance physical and mental well-being for older adults.
 - **Increase visibility:** Showcase your commitment to rural health and inclusivity.
 - **Strengthen community ties:** Build connections with local residents and organisations.

Why it matters

Older adults in rural areas often face barriers such as limited activity options, social isolation, and accessibility challenges. Your support can help create a sustainable, impactful program that improves lives and strengthens our community.

I'd like to discuss this further and explore how we can collaborate. Please let me know your availability for a quick meeting or call.

Warm regards,

[Your Name]
[Your Title/Role]
[Your Contact Information]
[Your Organisation Name]

Community engagement questions

This template is designed to help engage community members and gather feedback when designing the modified sport program.

Use these questions to guide any surveys, focus groups, or informal discussions.

Instructions for use:

1. Customise these questions to suit the local community.
2. Distribute the questions via online surveys, paper questionnaires, or in-person discussions. If using online recruitment methods, distribution could be completed when participants first get in contact.
3. Use the feedback to help design a program.

Note: Be mindful that it is unlikely that you will be able to create a perfect program for everyone. Instead use the available information to help engage as many participants as possible.

Potential questions:

Community interests:

1. What types of sports or physical activities have you enjoyed in the past?
2. Are you currently participating in any physical activity programs? If not, what are the main reasons?
3. What benefits would you like to gain from participating (e.g., fitness, fun, social connection)?
4. Which sports or activities would you like to see included in the program? Remember that most sports can be modified so that they are safe and enjoyable.
 - **Examples:** basketball, netball, cricket, soccer, football, hockey, etc.

Program preferences:

5. What days and times would be most convenient for you to attend sessions?
6. How often would you like to attend a modified sport program each week?
7. Do you prefer indoor or outdoor activities? Why?
8. Would you prefer the program to run continuously or in short blocks (e.g., 6–10 weeks)?

Barriers to participation:

9. What challenges might prevent you from participating in this program?
 - **Examples:** Cost, transportation, health concerns, lack of time, etc.
10. What support would make it easier for you to join (e.g., transport assistance, low-cost fees, flexible scheduling, consult with a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist)?
11. Do you feel confident participating in physical activity? If not, what concerns do you have?

Social and community:

12. How important is the social aspect of the program to you (e.g., meeting new people, spending time with friends)?
13. Would you be interested in post-session social activities, such as coffee meetups?

Involvement in program:

14. Would you like to be involved in planning or facilitating the program?
15. Are there any specific skills or resources you could contribute (e.g., coaching, equipment, sponsorship connections)?
16. Do you know of others in the community who might be interested in participating or helping with the program?



Modifications to sports

The modifications suggested below were applicable to an indoor venue that had markings for both a basketball court and netball court. When it comes to modifying your sport, it is about identifying the individual needs of the participants and modifying according to those needs.

The modifications below are examples only and should be adapted to suit your participants and setting. They do not prescribe what must be done for a program to be successful.

Sport	Modifications	
Basketball	- Walking to capacity - Double dribble allowed - Increased steps between bounces - Lowered hoop height - Reduced quarter length (increased rest)	- Non-contact defending - Minimal contact whilst rebounding - Smaller size ball - Zone defending (improves spacing)
Australian Football	- Played on an indoor basketball court - Walking to capacity - No tackling, touch rules - No kicking from ground - No behinds, only 6-point goals	6 participants a side (2 in each zone) - Kick out from goal - No punching ball - Smaller/softer ball - Reduced quarter length (increased rest)
Netball	- Played on an indoor basketball court - Reduced quarter length (increased rest) - Increased steps when catching	- Extra time to distribute ball - Mandatory change of position during rests
Soccer	- Played on an indoor basketball court - Walking to capacity 5 participants a side	- Outfield players cannot enter goalkeeper area - Softer ball - Indoor (futsal) goals used
Cricket	- Played on an indoor basketball court - Walking to capacity - Shorter bowling pitch 2-step bowling or underarm - Soft ball 1-hand, 1-bounce rule	- Zoned scoring (if ball hits side net or back wall of basketball court = automatic points) - Walk between wickets at least every second ball. - Batting in pairs, 4-overs each pair - Out = 5 run deduction - Lighter bat



Session plans

It should be noted that the following session plans are taken from the modified sport program at East Grampians Health Service. This program was conducted in partnership with the local recreation centre and therefore, the session plans were designed for indoor use, utilising a basketball court.

As the following session plans were specific to our program and participants, they are provided for demonstration purposes only.

The safety considerations mentioned in the session plans were brief reminders of the broader safety considerations used when adapting the rules and modifications of each sport.

For individual sport modifications, see Appendix [‘Modifications to sports’](#)

See following pages for an example session plan of five different sports



Basketball

Session objective:
To enhance physical, social and mental health, whilst making it fun, safe and appropriately challenging.

Running time	Activity	Safety and organisational consideration
0-5min	Walk and talk	Dribble or just walk around the perimeter of basketball court(s) and socialise
5 – 10min	Modified dynamic stretch - Backwards walk - Lateral walk - Forwards lunge - Up on toes walk with arms over head - Fast walk	If numbers are large, use the side-line and go across the width of the court. Safety considerations - Look for facial expressions while lunging if it looks like it is hurting provide cues to correct technique or modify appropriately. E.g. shallow lunges, squat - Confidence – Be positive and supportive.
10-15min	Water break/ organisation into groups	While having a water break, divide participants into two groups.
15-20min	Skills practice Option 1 - As a team - number of lay-ups made in 1 minute. - Right, left and middle	With the groups at their respective baskets, provide each group with a series of 1-minute challenges. Safety and objective considerations - Goal is to get participants' active– start at ½ court line. Participants must dribble the basketball in and out of cones, whilst approaching the ring to perform a layup. After participants take their lay-up, they dribble or walk/jog back to the ½ court line before going again. - When the person in front gets inside the three-point line, the next person takes their turn. - Use the scoreboard to keep track of the time and have teams call out the number of baskets made. - For this activity if a person wants to and is capable, they can run and jump.
20-30min	Small sided games (SSG) Rationale: SSG's present a greater agility stimulus which poses more cognitive decision making and changes of direction which enhances falls prevention	Keep the participants at their hoops and divide into two groups (give ½ of the group a bib) - For example, 3v3 at each hoop. Safety considerations - Work with the new participants to help them understand. Use the experienced participants to help the others. - Defenders should keep 1 arm's length away from the person they are guarding - Less confident participants should stay around perimeter and avoid going under the basket.
30-55min	Full court game: 5 v 5 4 x 4min quarters with 1 minute break in between	Organise teams and ensure that teams are even considering physical abilities and confidence. If possible, play two separate games and split high and low physical capabilities. Safety considerations - Similar to small-sided games. - Some of the more confident participants may be more competitive so cue them to stay one arm's length away when defending and minimal body contact. - If a ball rolls away let it go – avoid participants walking above their capabilities to try and get the ball and experience a fall.
55-60min	Cool down	Sub maximal walking and Low intensity stretches.

Australian Football

Session objective:
To enhance physical, social and mental health, whilst making it fun, safe and appropriately challenging.

Running time	Activity	Safety and organisational consideration
0-5min	Walk and talk	Walk around the perimeter of basketball court(s) and socialise. Can have a footy in hand.
5 – 10min	Modified dynamic stretch - Backwards walk - Lateral walk - Forwards lunge - Up on toes walk with arms over head - Fast walk	If numbers are large, use the side-line and go across the width of the court. Safety considerations - Look for facial expressions while lunging if it looks like it is hurting provide cues to correct technique or modify appropriately. E.g. shallow lunges, squat - Confidence – Be positive and supportive.
10-15min	Water break/ organisation into groups	While having a water break, divide participants into pairs.
15-20min	Football skills practice - Practice handballing to each other. - Practice small kicks to each other. Demonstrate skills as required.	Line participants up on a sideline of the basketball court, have their partner standing ~5 away and practice skills. Encourage participants to move back one step every time a successful pass is completed. Safety and objective considerations - Goal is to get participants practicing game related skills and learning how to play game. - Participants can choose to move closer or further away to challenge themselves accordingly. - Participants will be encouraged to challenge themselves and try different variations in skills.
20-30min	Small sided games (SSG) Rationale: SSG's present a greater agility stimulus which poses more cognitive decision making and changes of direction which enhances falls prevention	Depending on numbers, divide participants into 2 or 4 groups. Approximately 4 participants per team. Each team dedicated an end-zone on a 10 x 10m grid, end zones 2m long on each edge. The idea is for each team to move around the grid handballing to each other to get the ball to the end zone. Players need to distribute the ball after 5 seconds. No walking with the ball. Opposition players should try to intercept the ball, rather than steal. Safety considerations - Defenders should keep 1 arm's length away from the person they are guarding - No tackling, opposition players can intercept handballs or pick up loose balls to regain possession. - First player to a loose ball gains control, no contesting loose balls.
30-55min	Full sized game: 5 v 5 if using single basketball court 7 v 7 if using double basketball court 4 x 4min quarters with 1 minute break in between	Organise teams based upon the individual's level of confidence and movement capabilities – Ensure teams are distributed as evenly as possible to ensure fun and social environment. Safety considerations - Similar to small-sided games. - Some of the more confident participants may be more competitive so cue them to stay one arm's length away when defending and minimal body contact. - If a ball rolls away let it go – avoid participants walking above their capabilities to try and get the ball and experience a fall.
55-60min	Cool down	Sub maximal walking and Low intensity stretches



Cricket

Session objective:
To enhance physical, social and mental health, whilst making it fun, safe and appropriately challenging.

Running time	Activity	Safety and organisational consideration
0-5min	Walk and talk	Walk around the perimeter of basketball court(s) and socialise.
5 – 10min	Modified dynamic stretch - Backwards walk - Lateral walk - Forwards lunge - Up on toes walk with arms over head - Fast walk	If numbers are large, use the side-line and go across the width of the court. Safety considerations - Look for facial expressions while lunging if it looks like it is hurting provide cues to correct technique or modify appropriately. E.g. shallow lunges, squat - Confidence – Be positive and supportive.
10-15min	Water break/ organisation into groups	While having a water break, divide participants into pairs or more if needed.
15-30min	Cricket skills practice - Participants to practice throwing ball to each other. - Practice bowling action. Participants can choose to do over or under arm bowls. - Alternate bats around groups so that participants can practice hitting ball lightl Demonstrate skills as required.	Line participants up on a sideline of the basketball court, have their partner standing ~5-10m away and practice skills. Encourage participants to move back one step every time a successful throw and catch is completed. Safety and objective considerations - Goal is to get participants practicing game related skills and learning how to play game. - Participants can choose to move closer or further away to challenge themselves accordingly. - Participants will be encouraged to challenge themselves and try different variations in skills. - Ensure participants are spread out far enough as to not accidentally hit other players when practicing batting skills. Have batters go on other side of net?
30-55min	Full sized game: 6 v 6 for traditional. However, modify accordingly for extra players. Can have extra in outfield and batting team but allow for time. Can play multiple innings if time permits.	Organise teams based upon the individual’s level of confidence and movement capabilities – Ensure teams are distributed as evenly as possible to ensure fun and social environment. Safety considerations - Ball is deemed a “dead ball” if hit into an area inappropriate for play. Runs are decided by the facilitator as per where the ball is called dead. - If a ball rolls away too fast, let it go – avoid participants walking above their capabilities to try and get the ball and experience a fall. - Batting pair do not have to walk between wickets if ball is deemed a “dead ball”. However, if goes to outfield, batters must walk for every 2nd consecutive ball to outfield. - Participants cannot field within the 10m bowling pitch closest to facing batter. If ball does not exit this area, participants can enter after ball has been hit. This will allow participants increased time to respond to ball
55-60min	Cool down	Sub maximal walking and Low intensity stretches.

Netball

Session objective:
To enhance physical, social and mental health, whilst making it fun, safe and appropriately challenging.

Running time	Activity	Safety and organisational consideration
0-5min	Walk and talk	Walk around the perimeter of netball court(s) and socialise
5 – 10min	Modified dynamic stretch - Backwards walk - Lateral walk - Forwards lunge - Up on toes walk with arms over head - Fast walk	If numbers are large, use the side-line and go across the width of the court. Safety considerations - Look for facial expressions while lunging if it looks like it is hurting provide cues to correct technique or modify appropriately. E.g. shallow lunges, squat - Confidence – Be positive and supportive.
10-15min	Water break/ organisation into groups	While having a water break, divide participants into four groups.
15-20min	Skills practice Option 1 - Practice the different type of passes to each other (overhead, shoulder, bounce and chest) - Practice shooting at goals Demonstrate skills as required	With the groups at their respective baskets, provide each group with a series of 1 minute challenges. Safety and objective considerations - Goal is to get participants practicing game related skills and learning how to play the game - Participants will be encouraged to challenge themselves and try different variations in skills.
20-30min	Small sided games (SSG)– Rationale: SSG’s present a greater agility stimulus which poses more cognitive decision making and changes of direction which enhances falls prevention	Divide into two groups (give ½ of the group a bib) - For example, 3v3 within the half or third of the court Safety considerations - Work with the new participants to help them understand. Use the experienced participants to help the others. - Defenders should keep 1m length away from the person they are guarding - Less confident participants should avoid standing under the ring to minimise the risk of getting hit in the head
30-55min	Full court game: 7 v 7 (if have the numbers) 4 x 4min quarters with 1 minute break in between	Organise teams based upon the individual’s level of confidence and movement capabilities – Less confident participants and movers will play their game on one court with the more confident on the other (if adequate numbers). Safety considerations - Similar to small-sided games. - Some of the more confident participants may be more competitive so cue them to stay the 1m length away when defending and minimal body contact (body contact should be avoided at all costs). - If a ball rolls away let it go – avoid participants walking above their capabilities to try and get the ball and experience a fall.
55-60min	Cool down	Sub maximal walking and Low intensity stretches.



Soccer

Session objective:
To enhance physical, social and mental health, whilst making it fun, safe and appropriately challenging.

Running time	Activity	Safety and organisational consideration
0-5min	Walk and talk	Walk around the perimeter of basketball court(s) and socialise. Can walk around dribbling the ball, just ensure not too congested.
5 – 10min	Modified dynamic stretch • Backwards walk • Lateral walk • Forwards lunge • Up on toes walk with arms over head • Fast walk	If numbers are large, use the side-line and go across the width of the court. Safety considerations • Look for facial expressions while lunging if it looks like it is hurting provide cues to correct technique or modify appropriately. E.g. shallow lunges, squat • Confidence – Be positive and supportive.
10-15min	Water break/ organisation into groups	While having a water break, divide participants into pairs or 3's depending on numbers and equipment.
15-20min	Soccer skills practice • Practice side foot passing • Practice dribbling balls in and out of cones. Demonstrate skills as required.	Line participants up on a sideline of the basketball court, have their partner standing ~5m away and practice skills. Encourage participants to move back one step every time a successful pass is completed. Set up cones ~1m apart in a straight line. Have participants dribble in and out of the cones and return to back of line. Speed determined by individuals. Safety and objective considerations • Goal is to get participants practicing game related skills and learning how to play game. • Participants can choose to move closer or further away to challenge themselves accordingly. • Participants will be encouraged to challenge themselves and try different variations in skills.
20-55min	Full sized game: 5 v 5 – 7 v 7 • 4 x 4min quarters with 1 minute break in between	Organise teams based upon the individual's level of confidence and movement capabilities – Ensure teams are distributed as evenly as possible to ensure fun and social environment. May need to use substitutes if numbers exceed 7 v 7 Safety considerations • Similar to small-sided games. • Some of the more confident participants may be more competitive so cue them to stay one arm's length away when defending and minimal body contact. • Opposition participants are not allowed inside defending teams goal area.
55-60min	Cool down	Sub maximal walking and Low intensity stretches.



Modified sport playing area dimensions

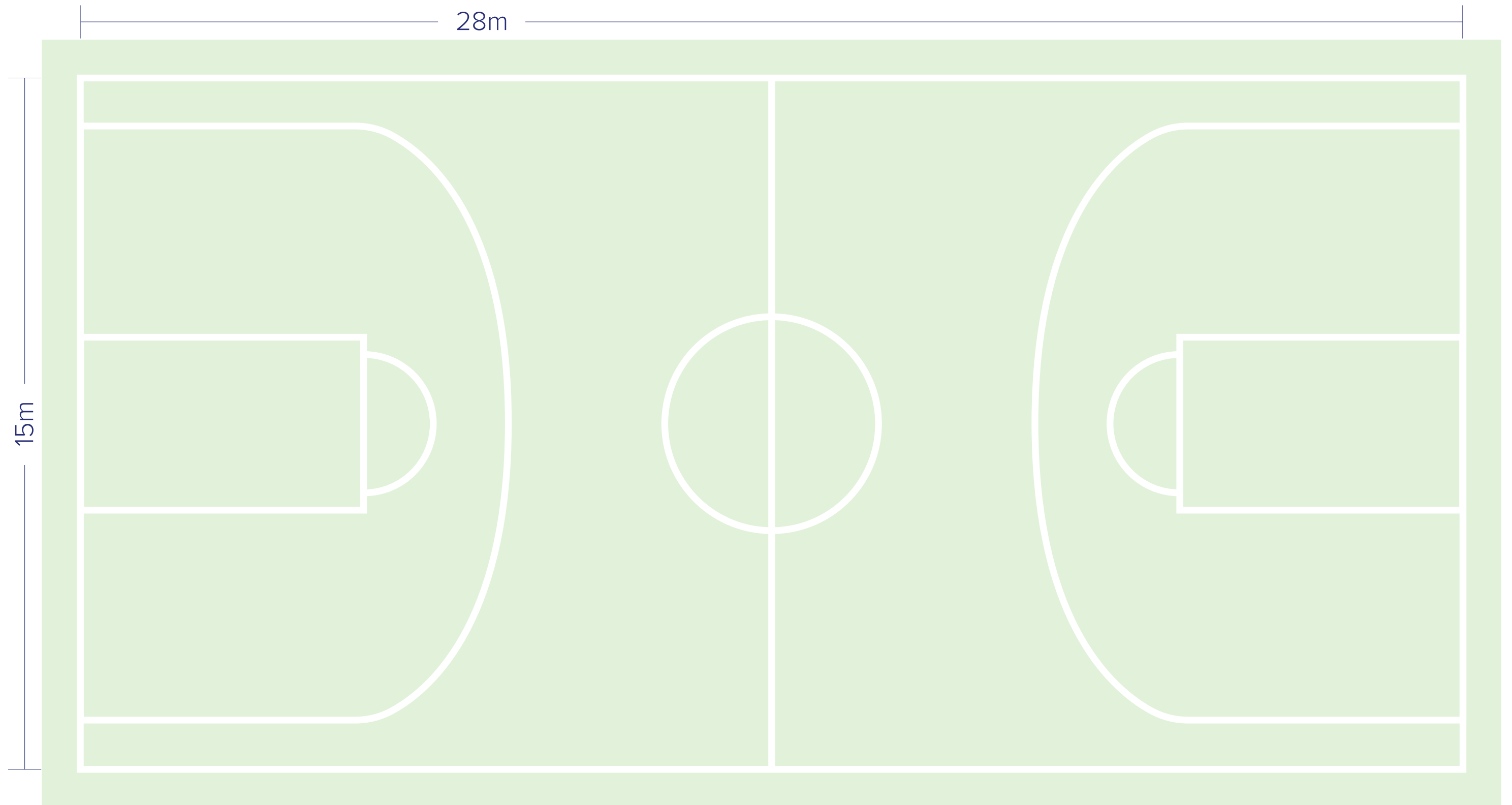
Please note, similarly to the session plans, the modified sport playing area dimensions were specific to the modified sport program developed by East Grampians Health Service and the program’s specific facilities and participants.

The following playing area dimensions are for demonstration purposes only and should be adapted to your environment and participants within your program.

Basketball

NOTES:

- Played on a traditional basketball court
- Lower hoops to lowest possible setting (if available)



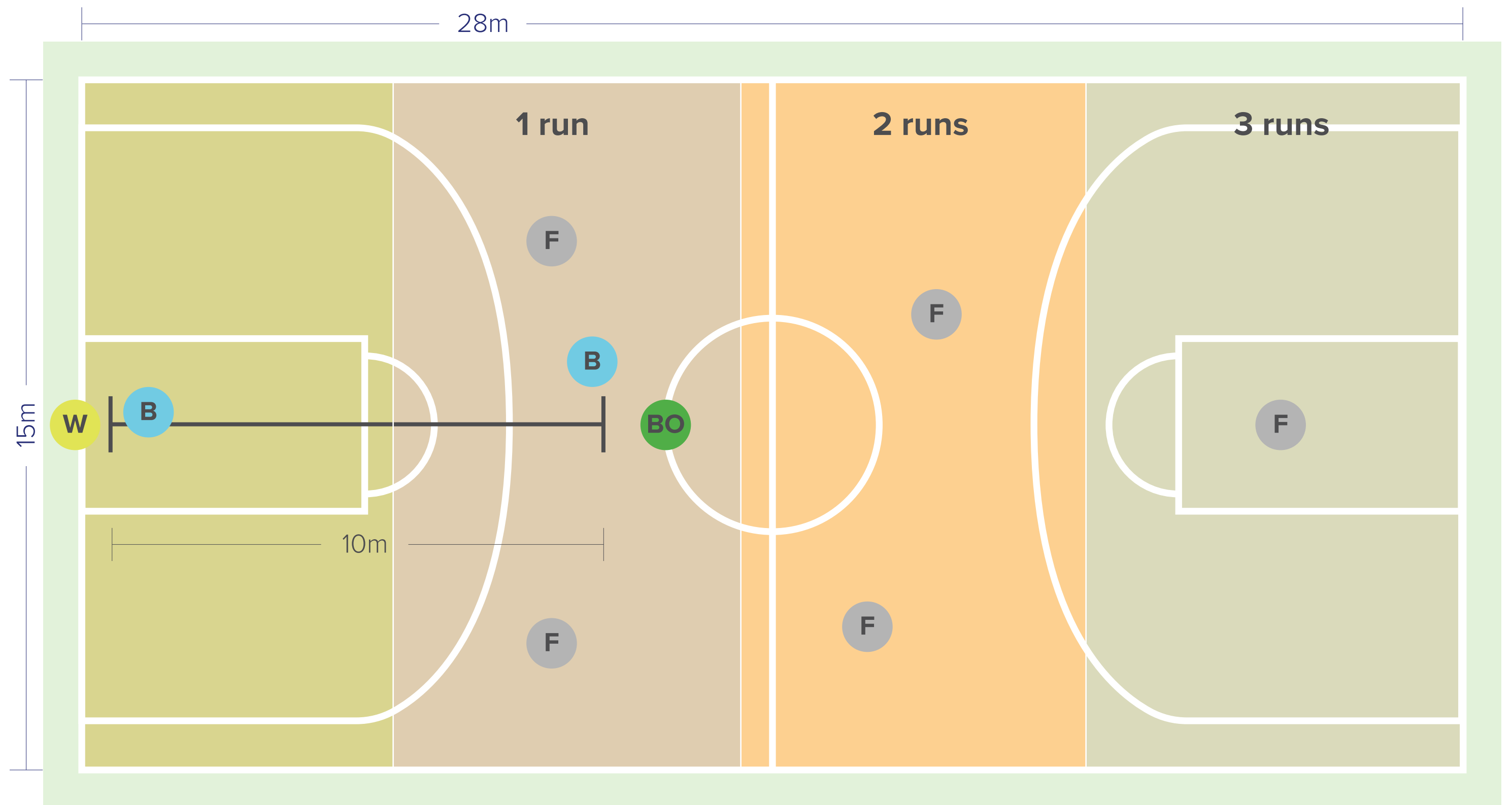


Australian Football

NOTES:

- Goals each end
- Fold basketball rings up to ensure that they do not interfere with the ball
- Increase or decrease playing participants depending on skill capabilities

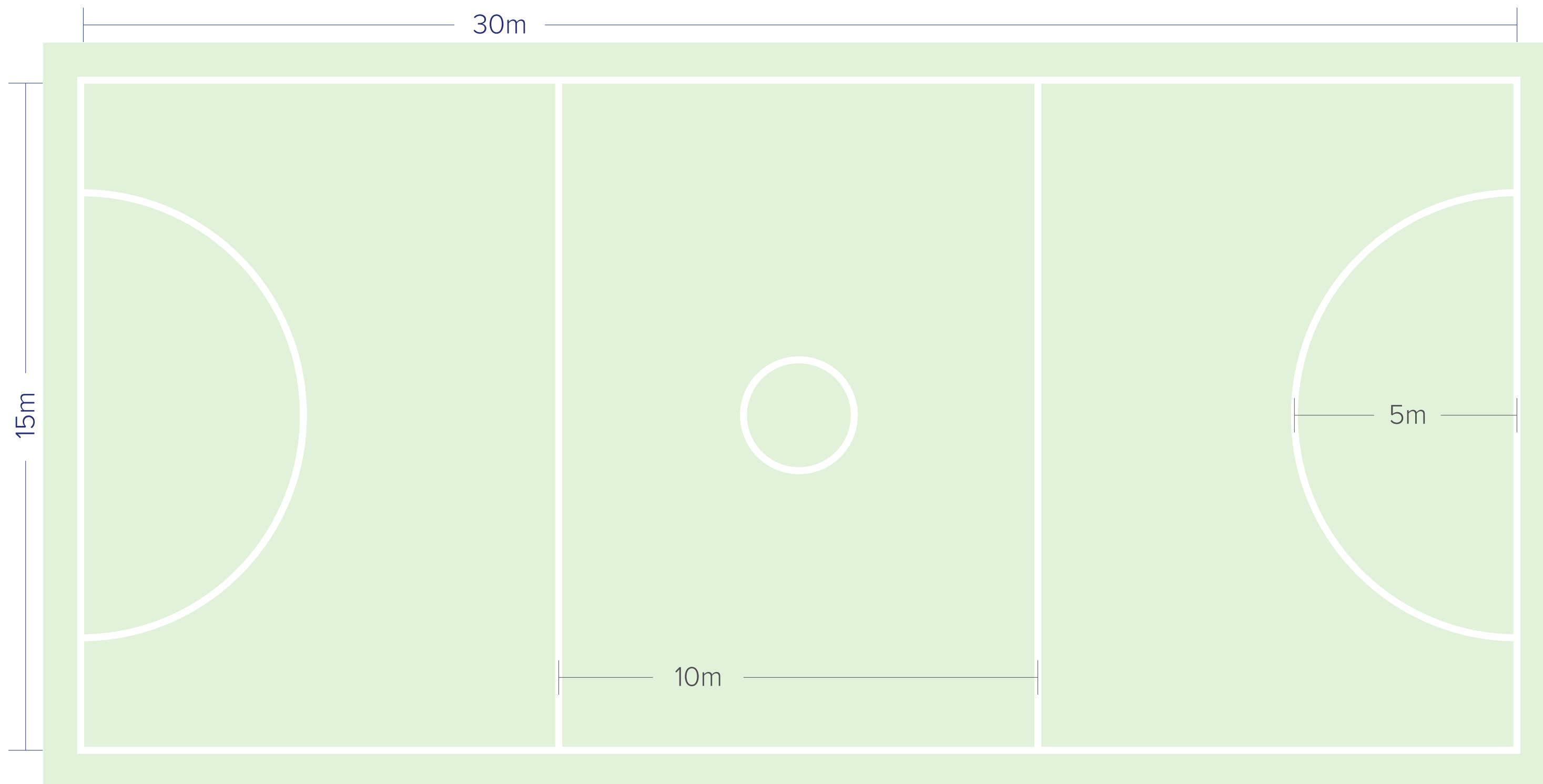




W Wicket Keeper
 BO Bowler
 B Batter
 F Fielder

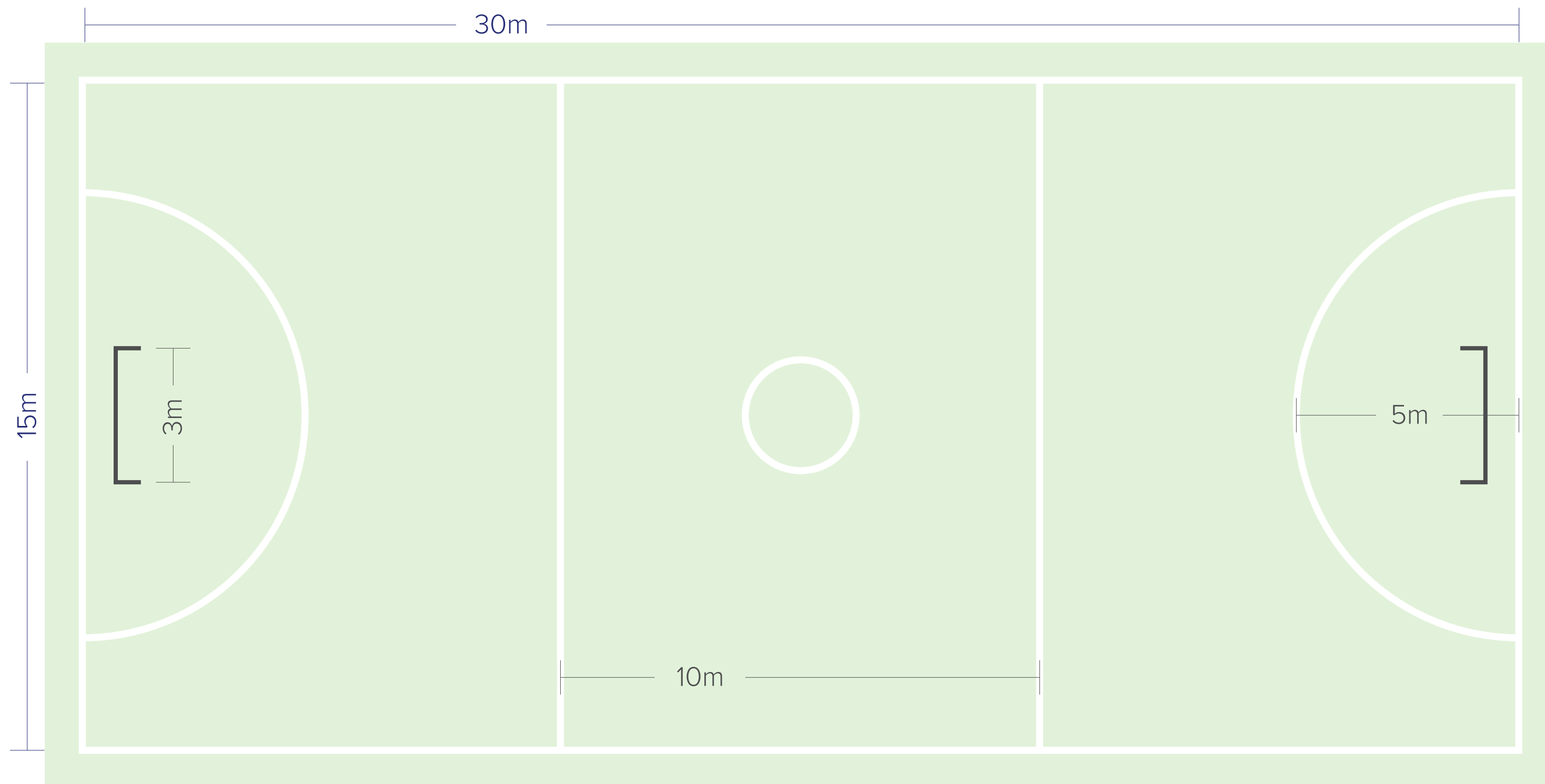
NOTES:

- Played on a traditional netball court
- Set up netball rings at each end of the netball court, lower these rings if possible



NOTES:

- Played on a traditional netball court
- Place futsal goals / cones in middle of netball semi circles at each end of court
- Semi circles are the keeper's safe zones
- Use netball lines as boundaries





East Grampians
Health Service



This toolkit was informed by practical experience delivering modified sport programs in rural Victoria and by research undertaken at EGHS.

Scan the **QR code** to access the published journal article.

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Supporting healthy, active and connected rural communities.

This toolkit was developed to assist rural communities, health services, sporting clubs, and community organisations to create accessible and enjoyable modified sport opportunities for older adults.

We would love to hear how this toolkit has been used in your community and the impact it has had on older adults

Please direct any feedback to EGHS at info@eghs.net.au

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LEADERS IN RURAL HEALTH CARE

