



## Year 12 ATAR Physical Education Studies 2025 School-based Practical External Assessment Lead Assessors' Reports

The school-based practical external assessment (SPEA) is an externally validated assessment for the Year 12 ATAR Physical Education Studies (PES) course and is a mandated requirement for all students enrolled in the course. The SPEA is conducted in accordance with the Year 12 ATAR PES course school-based practical (performance) external assessment design brief described in the course syllabus and the support material made available by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority).

### ***Summary***

**Number of students:** 1343

**Mean:** 64.97%

In 2025, the SPEA mean was 64.97% based upon 1343 students who participated in one of the following ten designated sports:

- Australian football
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Cricket
- Hockey
- Netball
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Touch football
- Volleyball.

This report reflects on data and student performance from each of the ten SPEA sports in 2025 and provides feedback from Lead Assessors to support teachers and students.

The reports contain:

- observations of strengths and weaknesses observed for each sport at a section and criterion level
- advice for teachers
- advice for students.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Australian Football**

**Number of students:** 68

**Mean:** 71.54%

**Maximum:** 91.75%

It was clear that teachers were prepared and students understood how the SPEA was to be conducted. Overall, teachers sought to invest time in player development as to movement and leading patterns and potential ball movement.

There were variations between student conditioning/fitness levels. Those who had done limited work struggled to maintain intensity at a high level for very long. It is important for students to maintain fitness levels leading up to the SPEA. There was varied ability for students to play defence that was not purely one-on-one. Some students appeared to struggle with the principle of handover or covering the most dangerous option.

There was also varied ability to find a target with disposal weighted appropriately to advantage. Short targets by hand and foot were most common but limited in range of higher-end skills, such as longer weighted handballs or kicks to advantage.

Students who earned higher marks were often able to show a range of disposals with weightings appropriate to the situation and conditions. Students in this higher range could also maintain a very high intensity in their efforts.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

Students demonstrated a sound level of fundamental skill execution in Australian Football. Most were able to perform key movements with an acceptable degree of consistency, control, fluency, and precision. The kinematic sequencing of both the kicking leg and upper body actions for handballing and marking was evident, although the efficiency of energy transfer varied, particularly when students were placed under game-like pressure.

Footwork quality ranged across the group. Stronger performers displayed purposeful movement patterns, balance and effective repositioning, while others showed reduced agility and inefficiency entering and exiting contests.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 7.29 (/10)*

Overall, most students demonstrated proficiency aligned with the mid-range descriptors in the marking key and operated at moderate intensity for the majority of their SPEA performance. Varied levels of student conditioning impacted how well students could maintain and demonstrate consistency with their skill execution.

Most students often performed skills with acceptable precision and fluency by hand and foot. Students demonstrated variations in fluency and precision with ground ball pick-ups and marking, with higher-achieving students able to gather the ground ball at speed and in one take before disposing the ball. Marking of the ball was another skill with variation with higher-achieving students able to mark the ball in one grab and often in front in the hands or in the air, at the highest point. Kicking skills were often demonstrated via shorter kicks to the player leading up to the kicker's foot, while other students could at times demonstrate more complex weighted kicks to advantage to their fellow teammates.

Groups demonstrating a high understanding of leading patterns inside the game play area and how to create space assisted some groups with demonstrating a range of different skills and their fluency and precision in executing them.

*Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 7.34 (/10)*

Student skill selection was generally appropriate to the game context, with most students demonstrating mid-range proficiency. Students typically chose simple and familiar skills such as basic short, lead up kicks, handballs and uncontested marks that were mostly appropriate for the situations presented, and they were usually able to achieve the desired outcome.

Several students demonstrated the capacity to select from a broader range of simple and more complex skills, particularly when under less pressure. Students achieving higher marks showed a higher range of skills under high pressure situations. This included choosing overhead marking techniques (e.g. extending hands in front or taking the ball at the highest point) when advantageous, rather than defaulting to chest marks. In open play, many students showed an emerging ability to weight kicks to advantage, and at times, to place the ball to space or into a position that improved the options for teammates.

Decision-making often became less consistent under higher pressure or in contested situations. In these contested situations, some students reverted to less complex, more familiar skills, occasionally missing opportunities to apply more effective alternatives, such as a leading target kick, a defensive spoil or quick hands release to a teammate in better position.

Overall, students demonstrated a sound level of skill selection that supported their execution capabilities, with evidence of thoughtful decision-making in many situations, though greater consistency and confidence in choosing complex, situationally appropriate skills remains a key area for growth.

**Section Two: Tactical application**

Students demonstrated a developing understanding of tactical concepts in both offence and defence. Offensively, most students were able to maintain possession through appropriate short-range passing, basic structural setups, and occasional use of angled or weighted ball movement to create attacking opportunities. Some students effectively supported the ball carrier and ran into space, though consistency in communication, pace of attack and blocking to remove a defender was variable.

Defensively, students showed emerging awareness of positioning, with several able to spoil, apply pressure or intercept to regain possession. Communication and coordinated support of other defenders were evident at times, though not sustained across all phases of play.

Overall, students displayed foundational tactical awareness, with clearer strengths in maintaining possession and basic defensive positioning, but there was room for growth in structured play, collective communication and consistent application under game pressure.

*Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 7.37 (/10)*

Students demonstrated a developing offensive understanding, performing required attacking skills with reasonable consistency and generally selecting options appropriate to the competitive situation. Most were able to maintain possession through short-range passing and simple structures, occasionally setting up effective plays by passing to leading students or moving into space to support the ball carrier. Ball projection was mostly appropriate, with students at times using suitable angles, speed and weighting to advantage teammates and create forward momentum.

The pace of attack varied with several students able to recognise opportunities to increase tempo when opponents were out of position. Offensive decision-making also included some effective choices in pass distribution, such as selecting short versus long options or directing the ball to space.

Student creativity and deception was inconsistent in game play; however, many students demonstrated moments of anticipation that led to scoring opportunities or led to an improved team positioning.

*Criterion Four: Defence*

*Mean: 6.76 (/10)*

Students demonstrated a solid foundational understanding of defensive concepts, performing most of the required defensive skills appropriately for the competitive situation. Many were able to regain possession through timely spoils and pressure acts like chasing and smothering. There was also evidence of simple interceptions that generally worked to reduce opponents' attacking options by blocking movement lanes or closing space around the ball carrier.

Positioning was a relative strength, with several students consistently moving into effective defensive positions, such as taking front spot in marking contests and shifting position to push opponent boundary side to limit passing options. Intercepts occurred most frequently when students anticipated opponents' passes early and adjusted their movement accordingly; however, many students were still reactive to situations rather than proactive.

While communication and coordinated defensive structures were evident at times, they were not applied consistently under pressure, with many following an opponent along instead of handing over a player where it would have been suitable. Some students demonstrated moments of anticipation or strategic decision-making, but these were less consistent than their offensive actions.

**Advice for teachers**

- When using umpires, ensure that in tight conditions they make a call for a player to have the disposal to reduce congestion and get the ball moving between students.
- Ensure that pocket dimensions of the field are consistent with the *Assessment guide – Australian Football* available on the course page of the Authority's website.
- Ensure that your students are effectively warmed up before participating.
- Prepare students by using a range of offensive and defensive situations that provide opportunities for them to demonstrate their tactical abilities.
- Continue to provide a range of practice scenarios under increasing levels of pressure to develop skills towards the complex end of the continuum.
- Ensure that bibs and player numbers are organised prior to the SPEA session ensuring that each team has a different coloured bib.

**Advice for students**

- Not only do you need to demonstrate a variety of skills, but you also need to consistently demonstrate your skills for the entire duration of the SPEA; conditioning and fitness are vital.
- Practise a range of scenarios under increasing levels of pressure to develop skills in a range of settings.
- Practise creating space inside the 50 m offensive area and identify suitable moments to either get into the contest or hold out to a suitable space to receive the ball.
- Work on appropriate defensive tactics like handover on defence and the relevant communication cues to support this.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Badminton**

**Number of students:** 111

**Mean:** 55.49%

**Maximum:** 100.00%

The assessment structure of doubles play worked well and venues were mostly appropriate. There was a limited number of higher-achieving students observed within the groups. The ability of numerous students to smash with power was noted; however, control of direction and steepness and tactical aspects, such as attacking between opponents and in front of own net player, was far less common. Very few students appeared to understand defensive concepts such as retreating to 'side-by-side' positioning or looking to block sideways or lift high and deep when pressured.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

Overall, students displayed a sound foundation in skill execution, with many making appropriate choices. Skill selection and application were generally effective, showing a growing understanding of doubles gameplay in badminton. Consistency, technique and variety of shots appeared to be still developing, showing that there was clear potential for improvement. Refining technique and expanding the range of shots used will strengthen overall student performance in badminton.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 5.50 (/10)*

Skill proficiency was clearly a weakness for many students. Technique, effectiveness and variation of shots (different types of lifts, serves and/or attacking shots) was limited and less impressive than skill selection.

#### *Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 5.55 (/10)*

Generally, skill selection was satisfactory, with an intent to attack high and/or short shots and lift when pressured.

### **Section Two: Tactical application**

Overall, students demonstrated a developing understanding of tactical application, with strengths more evident in offence than defence. There was some evidence of effective attacking intent; however, the range of attacking shots and the ability to consistently influence gameplay was limited. Defensively, performance was less consistent, with many students showing emerging awareness of effective positioning, racket positioning and shot selection under pressure. While students attempted to respond to attacking play, defensive formations and controlled defensive shots were used inconsistently, which impacted overall defensive effectiveness.

#### *Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 5.90 (/10)*

Attacking play was mostly smashing, often correctly chosen when the shuttle was high/short. A lack of variation of downwards shots was noted, along with limited understanding of how to set up play to get better attacking opportunities or hitting to create opportunities for net player to intercept.

#### *Criterion Four: Defence*

*Mean: 5.23 (/10)*

Defence was observed to be weaker than offence, with students appearing to have a limited understanding across several key areas. For example, many students struggled with moving into effective 'side-by-side' positioning, often remaining front and back, which gave the net player limited time to react and left the rear player too far back to contribute effectively to defence.

There also appeared to be a limited awareness of keeping the racket in front of the body, with many students holding the racket predominantly on the forehand side, restricting their ability to defend body shots or angles to the backhand.

Students demonstrated limited use of lifts to shift a rear attacking opponent. Under increased pressure, many students continued to use excessive swing rather than adopting more effective defensive blocks to the sideline, net or mid-court.

#### **Advice for teachers**

- Ensure you and your students watch professional badminton, looking at skills such as hitting/footwork technique, tactical play, and rotations between doubles formations (front and back attack, side-by-side attack and side-by-side defence).
- Ensure you and your students are familiar with the rules of badminton.
- Practise skill drills to develop correct technique and control; match play alone is not enough.
- The serve, return and third shot are the most important in badminton doubles play and need planning and practice.

#### **Advice for students**

- Practise game play more and/or arrange extra hitting sessions.
- Watch professional badminton and, where possible, film and watch yourself play.
- Decision-making is important; know when to attack, then attack.
- When defending, be safe and try to create time for yourself. If a tactic is working, stick with it until it stops working, then change.
- Serve well; it is your first opportunity to gain an advantage. Take your time, be deliberate, and have a plan of what response you are trying to get from your opponent.
- Practise moving fast, reach out for a high/early contact point and challenge your opponent by using your strengths and attacking their weaknesses.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Basketball**

**Number of students:** 92

**Mean:** 75.53%

**Maximum:** 98.25%

Overall, the structure of the assessment worked quite well. There were no issues with the venues, and teacher support in the administration of the basketball SPEA sessions was exemplary. Most students appeared to be of a high standard and performed well in the basketball SPEA.

Generally, student performance was of a high standard. This style of assessment allowed students to demonstrate their skills in a context that aligns well with the game of basketball, at the required intensity where overall skill level of students was consistently strong. Decision-making under pressure, appropriate skill selection, and implementing effective team defence strategies were areas where students performed at a lower level.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

Overall, students performed well in this section, suggesting that perhaps some students play basketball at a high level outside of the school environment. Execution of the required skills was consistent and students completed the assessment tasks with high intensity and very good skill proficiency.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 7.68 (/10)*

Students' skill proficiency in the SPEA was demonstrated at a high level. They showed a strong understanding of the game and were controlled in their application of skills throughout the assessment. As the assessment progressed, their execution began to decline due to fatigue and their overall proficiency became less consistent.

#### *Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 7.58 (/10)*

Overall, students demonstrated a good understanding of selecting appropriate skills at the right moments in the game.

Students who were weaker in the assessment found it more difficult to showcase their abilities, whereas higher-achieving students demonstrated a wide range of skills, such as dribbling, effective shot selection and purposeful passing to create scoring opportunities for themselves and their teammates at a high level of consistency.

Higher-achieving students were most evident in their defensive side of the game. Higher performing students were able to contain their opponent effectively and regain possession of the ball, which was a significant factor in distinguishing the top-level performances.

### **Section two: Tactical application**

The four-on-four half-court structure allowed students to demonstrate their full ability on both offence and defence. It required them to transition quickly between the two, adapt their tactical application and respond effectively under pressure. This format provided a clear and authentic representation of their game understanding.

#### *Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 7.67 (/10)*

The main difference observed between the higher-achieving students and the rest of the group was the intensity at which they played allowing a wide range of effective offensive strategies to be displayed. Lower-achieving students tended to lack structure and composure when the intensity increased, which often led to mistakes and disjointed play.

Higher-achieving students consistently demonstrated advanced offensive concepts that created scoring opportunities. They effectively used motion offence, spacing, post play, and pick and roll actions, and were able to execute these strategies at a high level.

*Criterion 4: Defence*

*Mean: 7.35 (/10)*

Students who were able to demonstrate a range of defensive strategies in this criterion performed well. This included skills such as off ball defence, effective on ball screen coverage, correct positioning away from the ball, and boxing out.

Students who could guard multiple positions (both guards and post players) and communicate clearly and consistently with their teammates were highly successful. In contrast, students who were frequently beaten off the dribble or demonstrated poor off the ball positioning were not successful in this criterion.

**Advice for teachers**

- If using student helpers, ensure they can support the assessment effectively.
- Practice four-on-four half-court basketball as much as possible, as it is a very different style of play compared to full-court basketball; with minimal breaks and constant transitions between offence and defence. Students need to adjust to the faster pace and tactical demands of this format.

**Advice for students**

- Play with intensity but maintain control to ensure your movements and decisions remain effective.
- Demonstrate a wide range of dribbling moves, passes, and shot-making skills to show versatility and proficiency.
- Communicate effectively on defence, including calling out coverages and clearly stating positioning when off the ball.
- Make the right play; however, scoring on every possession will not earn top marks. Students who consistently make the right decisions with effectiveness and read the game well will perform the best.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Cricket**

**Number of students:** 15

**Mean:** 67.02%

**Maximum:** 90.00%

The assessment ran more effectively when there was an umpire. Having an appropriate pitch and outfield is important for safety and provides students with a fair opportunity to demonstrate their skills.

There was a wide variety in student performances; however, most were able to demonstrate strong performance in one or two disciplines, with those who performed best doing so across all three disciplines of batting, bowling and fielding. It was clear when students were familiar with the marking key and had a well-defined game plan for both batting and bowling. Overall, poor fielding skills led to lower marks.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

Students were required to demonstrate their skills in batting, bowling and fielding. Many struggled with consistency of skill execution and tended to be stronger in one discipline than the others.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 6.67 (/10)*

The students' batting, bowling and fielding all contributed to their skill proficiency mark.

**Batting:** students were required to consistently execute the shots they selected for the deliveries they faced. When performed well, students demonstrated fluency and control through effective weight transfer and footwork. When executed correctly, the batter timed the ball and hit into gaps or over the field when appropriate.

**Bowling:** students were required to execute their skills with consistency, control, fluency and precision. Those who were able to communicate the type of delivery they intended to bowl and then successfully execute it stood out in this section.

**Fielding:** students were required to demonstrate high catches, flat catches and ground fielding on the boundary and within the fielding restrictions circle. As part of this, they were also required to demonstrate both overarm and underarm throws.

Many students dropped regulation catches, misfielded simple ground balls or struggled to throw accurately to a target.

#### *Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 6.87 (/10)*

The students' batting, bowling and fielding all contributed to their skill selection and application mark.

**Batting:** students were required to select the correct shot based on the delivery bowled, playing full balls off the front foot and short balls off the back foot. Students who performed well in this section consistently selected effective run-scoring options.

**Bowling:** students who performed well in this section bowled deliveries that matched the field they set. When appropriate, they demonstrated a variety of spin/swing, paces, lengths and widths to challenge the batter.

**Fielding:** students were required to walk in and perform a split step at the correct time; it was noticeable when this was not done. They also needed to demonstrate anticipation during match play and select the appropriate method to catch and throw the ball based on the context. When the ball

was hit to the opposite side of the field, students were expected to move into position to back up throws at the stumps.

### **Section Two: Tactical application**

Students were required to demonstrate tactical application in batting, bowling and fielding. For this section of the assessment, it was vital that students had a clear plan based on their strengths and could modify it according to the conditions and the opposition they were competing against.

#### *Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 6.07 (10)*

This criterion is based on batting. Batters should aim to maximise their scoring from balls they face without getting out. Students who did this effectively set up at the crease to play to their strengths. Many batters did not back up at the non-striker's end or communicate effectively when running between wickets.

#### *Criterion Four: Defence*

*Mean: 7.27 (/10)*

Bowlers should aim to reduce scoring opportunities and build or maintain pressure on the batter. The bowler is responsible for setting their field, and very few students adjusted from a ring field with three on the offside and three on the leg side. Bowlers should approach their two overs as twelve set plays, ensuring the ball they bowl matches the field they have set.

Students needed to play their role in the field, whether as a stationary catcher, saving a single or protecting the boundary. They should have looked to having an impact on the game while fielding, as this formed part of their assessment.

### **Advice for teachers**

- Ensure you and your students are familiar with the requirements of the cricket assessment, including the requirement for an umpire and the number of fielders.
- Support your students to develop a game plan based on their strengths that will allow them to demonstrate their tactical abilities.
- Provide students with opportunities to practice the cricket assessment and refine their skills and strategies.

### **Advice for students**

- Be prepared for all parts of the assessment (batting, bowling and fielding).
- Ensure that fielding is completed at match intensity.
- Have a clear game plan (taking into consideration the modified number of fielders) on how you want approach batting and bowling that will maximise your strengths.
- Ensure you have your personal playing and safety equipment.
- Ensure you are aware of your sport's dress code and the rules of your sport.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Hockey**

**Number of students:** 30

**Mean:** 75.31%

**Maximum:** 96.75%

Most schools enabled a well-structured assessment with clear roles, appropriate numbers of players, and effective use of facilities. Some schools relied on specialist hockey staff to administer and support sessions.

Best practice was evident where assessment formats were clearly defined and communicated, adequate numbers of competent support players were present, and sessions were structured to maximise student opportunity and involvement.

Overall, student performance reflected a broad range of ability levels and suggested that all students had prior or current experience in competitive hockey. Higher-achieving students demonstrated strong technical proficiency, effective decision-making, and the ability to influence game play both on and off the ball, offensively and defensively.

In contrast, lower-achieving students often struggled to consistently execute fundamental skills under pressure and had limited impact on gameplay. The half-hockey field appeared to favour students with a stronger game sense and tactical awareness. A key observation was that students who actively sought to influence play, through movement, communication, and positioning, were more successful than those who were reactive or passive.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

Overall, student skill execution was moderate to high, with differentiation between student performance suggestive of an established hockey background.

Higher-achieving students demonstrated consistent control, fluency and precision in both fundamental and more advanced skills under game conditions. In contrast, lower-achieving students showed inconsistency, particularly when executing skills under pressure or at speed.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 7.67 (/10)*

Higher-achieving students demonstrated consistent execution, control, and technical efficiency, evidenced by accurate passing, a clean first touch and composure under pressure. These students were also able to successfully execute more complex and advanced skills, such as reverse stick passes and shots, overheads and a range of tackling techniques with a high level of precision and control. In addition, stronger students showed more effective body positioning, footwork and movement sequencing, resulting in more efficient and reliable skill execution.

Generally, mid-range-achieving students were able to perform core skills in less pressured situations but lacked consistency and fluency when operating at game intensity.

In contrast, lower-achieving students demonstrated limited control and inconsistent technique, particularly in ball reception and passing.

*Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 7.63 (/10)*

Higher-achieving students demonstrated effective and adaptable decision-making, selecting appropriate skills based on space, pressure and game context. These students were more likely to utilise a wider range of skills, including advanced techniques, to maintain possession and create attacking opportunities.

Mid-range-achieving students showed basic decision-making but often defaulted to predictable or less effective options.

Lower-achieving students demonstrated limited awareness of game context, often selecting inappropriate skills or failing to adapt to pressure. There was clearly a strong relationship between game awareness and the ability to apply both fundamental and advanced skills effectively.

**Section Two: Tactical application**

Tactical application varied significantly across the cohort and was a key differentiator in overall performance. Students with stronger game sense and technical ability were able to consistently influence play in both offence and defence, while others struggled to contribute meaningfully beyond isolated involvement.

*Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 7.63 (/10)*

Higher-achieving students demonstrated effective use of space, timing of leads, and purposeful movement, contributing to more structured attacking play. Generally, their passing was more accurate and effective, enabling improved ball movement and retention of possession.

Communication from these students was more frequent, purposeful, and influential, supporting team cohesion and decision-making.

Mid-range-achieving students showed some ability to support play but were inconsistent in their movement and positioning. In contrast, lower-achieving students were often static or reactive, with limited off-ball movement and minimal impact when not in possession.

*Criterion Four: Defence*

*Mean: 7.30 (/10)*

Higher-achieving students showed strong positioning, anticipation, and communication, enabling them to effectively close space and support teammates. These students demonstrated the ability to apply a range of defensive techniques, including effective marking, channelling, and tackling, with greater success and control, allowing them to limit attacking options and regain possession efficiently. Their communication had a clear influence on team defensive structure, improving organisation and response to attacking play.

Mid-range-achieving students demonstrated basic defensive understanding but were inconsistent in positioning and decision-making. In contrast, lower-achieving students often reacted late, showed limited spatial awareness, and had minimal impact on defensive outcomes.

### **Advice for teachers**

- Ensure all aspects of the assessment are planned and prepared well in advance, including facilities, equipment, personnel and format.
- Practise a six-on-six half-field format with goalkeepers at each end to provide an authentic game environment.
- If you have fewer students, implement a four-on-four attack versus defence format with one goalkeeper.
- Ensure non-assessed students are organised, punctual and understand the importance of their role in maintaining assessment quality.
- Ensure students are appropriately warmed up prior to participation.
- Ensure you are familiar with the rules of hockey, including safety requirements.
- Ensure students have a clear understanding of how they will be assessed, including the marking key criteria (skill execution and tactical application).
- Explicitly teach and reinforce the key components of the marking key, including skill proficiency, skill selection, and tactical behaviours in offence and defence.
- Provide students with multiple opportunities to practice under game-like conditions, not just isolated drills.
- Design training sessions that replicate the structure and demand of the SPEA, including decision-making under pressure.
- Provide targeted, assessment-specific feedback, particularly around decision-making, positioning and communication.
- Expose students to a range of offensive and defensive scenarios, ensuring they can demonstrate marking, channelling, tackling, space creation and communication.
- Develop both technical skill execution and tactical awareness, ensuring students can apply skills effectively within game play.

### **Advice for students**

- Ensure you are fully prepared prior to the assessment day, including having the correct equipment and understanding how the session will run.
- Understand how you will be assessed, including the criteria for skill execution and tactical application.
- Practise the required skills regularly under game conditions, not just in isolation.
- Work on applying a range of skills, including more advanced techniques where appropriate (e.g. reverse stick, overhead, tackling variations).
- Focus on making effective decisions based on space, pressure and game context.
- Look to impact the game when not in possession by creating space, leading and supporting teammates.
- Communicate clearly and consistently to influence play and support team structure.
- In defence, apply marking, channelling and tackling effectively to limit attacking opportunities.
- Maintain consistent effort, involvement and focus for the duration of the assessment.
- Be aware of and adhere to the rules, dress code and safety requirements of hockey.
- Take responsibility for your preparation by engaging in practise, feedback and improvement prior to the assessment.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Netball**

**Number of students:** 481

**Mean:** 62.30%

**Maximum:** 100.00%

Student performance in netball varied. Higher-achieving students executed a better and wider range of skills and strategies through set plays and structures. These students were intentional with their on-court skill selection, and their intensity was also higher.

Lower-achieving students demonstrated less understanding of the rules of the game and positional requirements, and a smaller range of skills, as well as less refined skills.

### **Section one: Skill execution**

Overall, students demonstrated a generally sound level of skill execution, with most able to perform fundamental netball skills. A range of skills was observed across ability levels, reflecting varied engagement and game play contexts. However, more advanced or less commonly used skills were performed less consistently. While most students demonstrated appropriate skill selection throughout game play, the quality and consistency of execution varied, particularly during fast-paced or less structured phases of play.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 6.22 (/10)*

Most students could execute simple skills well (shoulder/chest pass, leading, landing, dodge, hands over defence). In many cases the outcome was positive, even if the skill itself was executed poorly (e.g. shadow defence).

Skills that were not performed well or not performed often included, lob, shadow defence, delay/deny and higher-level evasive moves, such as rolls, and circle rotations.

#### *Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 6.30 (10)*

Chaotic game play observed at some SPEA sessions led to a wide range of skills being demonstrated in both the higher- and lower-level ability students.

### **Section Two: Tactical application**

Students' tactical application varied. Some students demonstrated very limited tactical understanding beyond attempting to gain depth towards goals. Some students demonstrated extensive tactical skills, including use of set offensive structures; moving between 'man-on-man' and unit defence; and interchanging between screens, holds and circle rotations when shooting.

#### *Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 6.33 (/10)*

Some students consistently demonstrated a range of set centre pass and backline structures.

Students in some sessions did not always execute such structures well, but they clearly knew where to go and who to throw the ball to while attempting to gain possession or create scoring opportunities. Sometimes, ball skills would let them down in these circumstances but their ability to recognise where and when to lead and spatial awareness was evident.

#### *Criterion Four: Defence*

*Mean: 6.10 (/10)*

Generally, defensive application was weaker than offensive application. This was mostly due to the reactive nature of most students when playing defensive roles. Some higher-achieving students demonstrated a wide range of defensive skills, while most students did not demonstrate defensive positioning well, despite some students utilising their athleticism, allowing them some opportunistic tips or intercepts.

#### **Advice for teachers**

- Read the World Netball Federation rules regarding jewellery, shoes, taping etc.
- Ensure you focus on 2–3 centre passes, backline throw in and sideline throw in structures to assist students to easily demonstrate tactical understanding.
- Practice and training are essential; practise the required skills regularly under game conditions and not just skills in isolation.
- Ensure students are fit enough for the demands of the assessment.

#### **Advice for students**

- Intensity needs to be consistent across all rotations.
- Ensure you are aware of your sport's dress code and the rules regarding jewellery.
- Try to use a variety of centre passes, sideline and backline offensive structures.
- Utilise the width and depth of the court to create space and scoring opportunities.
- Ensure you demonstrate consistent defence, using dictating positioning through shadow defence, hands over pressure defence, and delay/deny defence.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Soccer**

**Number of students:** 69

**Mean:** 68.12%

**Maximum:** 86.75%

Soccer SPEAs were conducted across multiple regional and metropolitan hubs. Overall, the assessment structure of small-sided games (four-on-four) provided a balanced platform for students to demonstrate both technical proficiency and game intelligence, allowing for clear differentiation between skill levels.

Best practice was evident in several areas. Most venues were high-quality, well-maintained pitches, which minimised ground interference and allowed for cleaner first touches and more accurate ball projection. Teachers who used clear and concise instructions facilitated fluid transitions and changes, maximising ball-in-play time and opportunities for assessors to observe performance.

Student preparation also contributed positively, with students arriving in full kit and appropriate footwear demonstrating a high level of readiness and a professional mindset. The use of easily identifiable, large, single-digit numbered bibs further supported efficient identification of students during assessment.

Student performance was characterised by high technical proficiency in isolated environments, but a noticeable decline in 'precision and fluency' when the intensity shifted. Their performance often dipped during the tactical phase when under defensive pressure. Overall, many students demonstrated a high degree of control but were lacking in 'consistent high intensity' required for a high level of achievement.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

Student's skills proficiency varied greatly, as seen in the range of marks allocated. Students displayed a range of technical ability, which influenced their consistency, fluency and kinematics. Game play intensity impacted the skill execution at times, such as passes that lacked the correct weight. At times, students made the wrong decision in terms of skill choice, such as attempting a through ball when too close to the bye line resulting in the ball running out of play, which led to an undesirable outcome.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 6.93 (/10)*

Most students performed at a moderate level of intensity. While ball control was generally sound, only the top-tier students consistently achieved the 'desired outcome' with flighted balls and non-preferred foot execution.

#### *Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 6.75 (/10)*

Students were successful in selecting simple and familiar skills. However, higher marks were achieved by those who selected a broad range of complex skills (e.g. first-time volleys or long-lofted passes) appropriate to the specific game situation.

## **Section Two: Tactical application**

Tactical awareness was strongest in offensive transition. Defensive organisation, specifically communication and support play, was the most common area where students were unable to achieve high marks. Higher-achieving students were able to identify the appropriate moments to attack a defender by dribbling at pace, choosing to shoot when afforded the opportunity, or attempting to create a scoring opportunity for a teammate. Lower-achieving students lacked game influence, choosing to keep possession when an attacking option was available, made no forward runs or movement off the ball for teammates, and lacked the intensity to create scoring opportunities. Higher-achieving students identified the appropriate opportunities to regain possession, applying intensity to opposition players and were able to communicate with teammates to work as a defensive unit, denying scoring opportunities and blocking passing options. Lower-achieving students lacked the intensity to apply pressure to opposition players, or attempted to regain possession that demonstrated a lack of understanding of their role in a structured defensive unit.

### *Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 6.88 (/10)*

Students showed strength in 'ball projection', specifically in short passing to teammates to maintain possession. However, many struggled with 'creating scoring opportunities' through creative through-balls or effective crossing, often reverting to simple lateral passes rather than attacking the goal.

### *Criterion Four: Defence*

*Mean: 6.72 (/10)*

Individual 'jockeying' and tackling were proficient among students. However, many students struggled with the 'support of defence' component, often failing to track runners or communicate effectively to cover gaps in the defensive line.

## **Advice for teachers**

- In pressure drills, incorporate defensive pressure earlier in skill drills to help students maintain precision and fluency when contested.
- To support tactical communication, focus on teaching students how to communicate defensively to improve their tactical application scores.
- To support conditioning, ensure students are prepared for the physical exertion of the four-on-four format, so that technical execution does not drop off due to fatigue.
- Incorporate 'pressure' variables in training. Students need to practice skills with a defender closing them down.

## **Advice for students**

- Use the full range of skills, do not just stick to the 'safe' pass.
- To achieve higher marks, you must demonstrate a variety of skills, including those that are more complex.
- It is not enough to just complete a pass; it must be done with precision and fluency.
- The marking key explicitly mentions high intensity, so do not let your work rate drop during the game. Maintain your intensity and communication from start to finish.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Tennis**

**Number of students:** 23

**Mean:** 75.13%

**Maximum:** 98.25%

Student preparation and participation were strong, with students warming up prior to the External Assessor's arrival. When sessions were delayed due to rain, adequate warm-up time was still provided to students. Participation was well managed; where numbers were odd, rotations were adjusted and time extended to ensure equal playing opportunities.

Overall, student performance across the SPEA showed a wide range of ability across individuals. A key strength was students' understanding of court positioning and their effective team communication, including both verbal cues and hand signals, was evident across most ability levels.

Lower-achieving students found it challenging to sustain quality rallies and apply complex skills under pressure, impacting their consistency and control during play.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

It is suggested that students that had experienced competitive situations in the sport were able to demonstrate higher levels of skill proficiency and performance under pressure.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 7.57 (/10)*

There was a wide range of ability levels observed across the cohort. Students with lower skill levels were particularly challenged in maintaining consistency during rallies, often resulting in early breakdowns. This inconsistency limited their ability to effectively demonstrate their skills in extended play.

In contrast, higher-achieving students displayed greater control and consistency, enabling them to sustain longer rallies and execute more complex and advanced skills with a higher level of success.

#### *Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 7.35 (/10)*

There was a clear range of ability in student skill selection and application, which directly influenced the quality of skill execution.

### **Section Two: Tactical application**

Lower-achieving students tended to rely on simple, basic skills and showed limited capacity or understanding to attempt more complex options. This suggested a lack of knowledge, confidence or exposure to higher-level skills. In contrast, higher-achieving students demonstrated a strong understanding of skill complexity and were able to purposefully select and apply more advanced skills in appropriate situations.

The distinction between these groups was evident, with higher-achieving students consistently choosing skills that enhanced their performance while lower-achieving students remained limited to basic execution, impacting their overall effectiveness. Skills that were seen in higher-achieving students included serve and volley, approach and come in, hand signals, serving formations, and intercepting at the net.

#### *Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 7.74 (/10)*

Students' ability to apply offensive tactics was observed to be linked to their confidence, knowledge and execution of more advanced skills. Higher-achieving students demonstrated a clear willingness to select and execute complex offensive options, which directly enhanced their ability to apply effective attacking play. For example, these students frequently transitioned forward and looked to take

control at the net, using tactics such as serve and volley or approach shots to pressure opponents and finish points.

In contrast, lower-achieving students were less likely to select these advanced offensive options during rallies. Their play tended to remain more passive, often avoiding opportunities to move forward and attack at the net. As a result, they were limited in their ability to demonstrate a full range of offensive skills, particularly in volleying situations, which were a key indicator of attacking intent and tactical awareness. Additionally, lower-achieving students often showed hesitation and a lack of confidence when attempting offensive actions, largely due to the perceived risk of making errors. This was evident in situations such as intercepting volleys, where they were reluctant to commit fully to the shot.

Higher-achieving students displayed a stronger understanding that taking calculated risks is an essential component of effective offensive play. They were more willing to make assertive decisions, recognising that attempting higher risk, attacking shots is necessary to apply pressure and create opportunities to win points.

*Criterion Four: Defence*

*Mean: 7.35 (/10)*

Defensive skills were observed in players both on-the-ball and off-the-ball. Off-the-ball skills include court positioning and movement, which were directly influenced by a player's overall understanding of the game, awareness of opponent movement and ability to anticipate shots. High achieving students demonstrated greater knowledge in this area, allowing them to predict opponents' actions and adjust their positioning and shot selection accordingly. This ability to anticipate play is a key factor in effective defensive performance.

Lower-achieving students often lacked a strong understanding of the game, which limited their ability to predict or respond effectively in defensive situations. They were also less able to select tactical shots to counter more offensive plays, often resulting in points ending prematurely. For example, if the opponents had a strong volleyer in the net, counteracting this by hitting cross court or lobbing over them.

**Advice for teachers**

- Ensure students have a strong understanding of the marking key and how each criterion is assessed; highlight what assessors are specifically looking for in terms of performance, skills, and knowledge.
- Teach students which skills are emphasised for each criterion and provide clear examples so they understand the expectations and can target their development effectively.
- Design training sessions that directly align with the SPEA criteria and include drills, activities, and practice scenarios that develop the skills and knowledge needed for assessment success.
- Where possible, provide students with video analysis of their own performance and encourage them to review and reflect on their skills under each criterion, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

**Advice for students**

- Understand the marking key in detail, including what specific skills and attributes are assessed under each criterion. Integrate this understanding into your training sessions, ensuring both drills and game play practice target the assessed skills.
- Showcase a wide range of skills consistently throughout the duration of the SPEA, demonstrating both competence and versatility.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Touch football**

**Number of students:** 273

**Mean:** 63.86%

**Maximum:** 100.00%

While a variety of tactics was evident, some demonstrated by students were outdated and no longer relevant. Conducting the SPEA on school sites was viewed positively, as students were familiar with one another, allowing for a wider range of tactics and improved game awareness.

Most students were able to maintain the 'flow' of the game, which allowed for a range of skills to be displayed. Most students did well at implementing what they were taught in class into their assessment. An overall weakness of the students was a lack of in-depth knowledge of the sport. Students had a good general understanding of touch football; however, knowledge on deception and creativity were lacking.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

Overall, skill execution varied from observed advanced skills to very poor, and at times non-existent skill execution. Some teams attempted to implement tactics such as a switch, wrap or long pass; however, these were often performed without a clear understanding of the desired outcome or at a lower intensity than game speed. Advanced skill execution must be displayed at both low- and high-level intensity to achieve higher marks.

Some students demonstrated a high level of deception and creativity, using skills such as the 'dump' and 'split', 'quicke', or 'buddy play' at appropriate times and achieving the desired outcome. Anticipation was identified as a weakness within this section, as effective execution requires awareness of how to manipulate players in the game of touch football.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 6.48 (/10)*

Students were able to demonstrate fluency during this section; however, lower-achieving students were unable to complete the skills at high intensity and with the same level of precision. It is suggested that this may be because they did not have the knowledge of how to manipulate the defence to be able to demonstrate the skills appropriately or at the right intensity.

#### *Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 6.33 (/10)*

Students did not perform as well in this criterion, perhaps as it was knowledge and context based. Some students were great at creating the opportunity to display the correct decision-making and choice of skill to execute during this phase. Likewise, some students did not have the knowledge of skills to create a deceptive moment within the game.

Most student teams used some form of line attack strategy, which was easy to see; however, the execution of that strategy was inconsistent. Some student teams were good at changing the pace of the game on-line attack to create scoring opportunities.

Having the SPEA completed by students within their own school perhaps meant that they were able to achieve some success in this area. Familiarity and training play an important role here.

## **Section Two: Tactical application**

The level of tactical ability varied among students. Students were often missing the high-level intricacies and details of touch football that support creativity, deception and anticipation.

At the start of play, students needed to demonstrate creativity, deception and anticipation from the first touch; however, this was not consistently evident across the teams observed. When restarting play with a tap, most students ran directly at the first defender who advanced out of the defensive line, usually the defender positioned directly in front of them. This resulted in one defender moving forward while the remaining defenders dropped back to regain an onside position. Ideally, students should have passed the ball to exploit the space created behind the advancing defender or, at minimum, shaped their body to pass and executed a dummy pass.

During game play, effective teams were able to ruck the ball down the field and transition smoothly into line attack. Similarly, students should have been able to demonstrate ruck defence and transition into line defence. Higher-achieving students were able to move fluently through these transitions without disrupting momentum or speed. In contrast, students with lower levels of touch football proficiency tended to treat these elements as two distinct phases of play, or play broke down entirely, requiring players to regather before attempting to implement any line attack strategies.

Despite these differences, the strategies students attempted to implement were generally clear, which made assessing them against the marking key straightforward.

### *Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 6.44 (/10)*

In touch football, offence is a complex concept to visualise, implement and measure.

Effective attacking requires knowledge of current trends in the modern game, an understanding of how to program defenders to react in predictable ways and the ability to execute attacking platforms with high intensity and precision. These elements could be achieved through a wide variety of approaches but were not demonstrated by lower-performing students.

Some students applied the same rucking strategy as their line attack strategy, which proved inefficient. In certain cases, teams rucked the ball and then stopped play before attempting a line attack. In contrast, other students were able to ruck the ball at speed and transition into line attack without reducing momentum or intensity.

Overall, attacking performance varied considerably. Some students were effective in setting up line attack plays and were able to communicate their attacking strategies by calling and directing the offensive play. Other students used or wasted more touches to organise an attacking platform.

There is significant tactical intent in touch football related to changing the pace of attack and this was especially important on a repeat set of attack, whereby students standing still on the attacking 7 m line must create their own try scoring opportunity. Some students were organised and able to achieve this; however, most were unable to achieve this consistently. More advanced players were able to implement three and four person plays, rather than relying on two person plays or individual acts of skill.

*Criterion Four: Defence*

*Mean: 6.31 (/10)*

Defensive understanding varied. Some students demonstrated a clear defensive strategy, while others did not. External Assessors noted that man-on-man defence was frequently used, despite being an ineffective approach in touch football. A lack of a range of effective defensive structures and principles within the game, adopted by students, led to lower levels student performance.

**Advice for teachers**

- Ensure correct field dimensions and field layout and that students have adequate time to practice on the field used for the SPEA .
- Do not script/choreograph the entire game play; students need to be able to problem solve in the moment and react to different defensive pressures.
- Allow additional time for logistics prior to the day of the SPEA.
- Referees need to be experienced and understand the modified game rules of the touch football SPEA.

**Advice for students**

- Consistently demonstrate your skills and maintain an intensity appropriate to you and the game.
- Be familiar with all aspects of the marking key.
- Revise the rules and watch video footage of actual games of touch football.
- Ensure you have adequate equipment, including personal protective equipment and water bottles, on the day of the SPEA.



## **Lead Assessor Report: Volleyball**

**Number of students:** 181

**Mean:** 67.34%

**Maximum:** 96.75%

Across schools, there was evidence that ATAR Physical Education Studies teachers approached the SPEA with appropriate diligence and professionalism. Required marks collection forms and documentation were well organised and accessible. Teachers often articulated their interpretation of the assessment process prior to the commencement to ensure consistency and clarity.

Support personnel, including additional players and umpires, were typically organised appropriately. Umpiring standards were suitable for the level of assessment, typically performed by a capable student or staff member. Participants and helpers appeared to have been adequately briefed prior to the assessment, resulting in efficient commencement and minimal confusion.

### **Section One: Skill execution**

Student ability levels varied considerably. While basic volleyball competency was generally consistent, higher-level skills and overall proficiency were less evident. Students demonstrated a sound understanding of the key components of individual skills; however, challenges emerged when these skills were applied within dynamic game play. Many teams had trouble effectively utilising free balls introduced at the conclusion of rallies. This was often characterised by delayed or limited transition, as well as a lack of utilisation of middle attacks in these situations.

Basic team communication was evident during assessments, including calling for the ball and providing encouragement to teammates. However, more advanced forms of communication were often limited. Few teams utilised time between points to discuss tactical approaches, make defensive adjustments, or plan attacking strategies. A consistent observation was that match play lacked intensity during the assessment. This may be attributed to nerves or insufficient warm-up prior to gameplay.

#### *Criterion One: Skill proficiency*

*Mean: 6.76 (/10)*

Skill proficiency was generally consistent, with most students demonstrating the ability to execute skills with an acceptable level of control. However, consistency and precision were identified as key areas requiring improvement. This was particularly evident in the accuracy of aggressive passing, specifically when passing the ball tight on the net to the setter, as well as in the consistency of height and depth when setting.

#### *Criterion Two: Skill selection and application*

*Mean: 6.80 (/10)*

Most students demonstrated a sound understanding of appropriate shot selection; however, there were areas of application that were consistently lacking. A notable observation was the limited use of setting on the first pass, even when anticipating a free ball at the end of each rally. Utilising a set on the first pass may enhance accuracy of the pass enabling the attacking team to establish a more effective offensive structure. This approach also facilitates a faster tempo of play, reducing the opposing team's time to organise an effective defence.

## Section two: Tactical application

Most students adopted a perimeter defensive structure, with two backcourt players covering deep cross-court areas and a third player positioned to defend the line. In the front court, two blockers were positioned in front of the attacker, while the third player retreated to provide additional cross-court support. This structure frequently resulted in a significant gap behind the blockers that defensive teams often struggled to cover if players were slow to react when attackers employed tip shots.

In many cases, defensive play was reactive, with many middle- and lower-ability students demonstrating difficulty anticipating shot selection based on the offensive setup and the trajectory of the set. Offensively, teams displayed a clear preference for setting to position four. Furthermore, passes were often directed too far from the net, thereby limiting the setter's range of attacking options.

A level of creativity and tactical variation in attacking play was often missing. Where defensive structures lacked challenge, attacking teams were not required to employ deceptive strategies. Similarly, when attacking intensity was limited, defensive teams were unable to fully demonstrate their capacity to anticipate and respond effectively.

### *Criterion Three: Offence*

*Mean: 6.78 (/10)*

Serving was a relative strength across most students, with many opting to perform a standing float serve. Several areas for improvement in offence were identified, including directing the ball low and deep into the opposition's court when not executing an attacking shot, increasing the utilisation of middle attacks to more effectively challenge defensive structures, improving the transition from defence to attack, and incorporating a greater variety of attacking options, such as line shots and tips, to enhance deception.

### *Criterion 4: Defence*

*Mean: 6.64 (/10)*

Most students were able to establish a basic defensive structure; however, many struggled to anticipate likely shot selection and instead responded reactively to play.

Blocking was identified as a key area requiring improvement across many teams. Common issues included ineffective footwork, poor timing, and excessive arm swing during the blocking action. Middle blockers were often slow to move into position, resulting in the block drifting, which reduced blocking effectiveness. Key areas for improvement include developing correct footwork when blocking, minimising excessive arm swing during the blocking action, increasing cover when a teammate is attacking, and initiating earlier transitions on free balls.

**Advice for teachers**

- Use a scoreboard during lessons and assessments to increase engagement, intensity, and performance.
- Use a tape measure to check net height and avoid relying on pinhole settings.
- Consistently use antennae during lessons and attach them after setting up the net and align them with each sideline.
- Develop a consistent and structured warm-up routine. Allow 20–30 minutes for your game play warm-up routine and ensure it is led by a teacher or team captain.
- Reinforce the importance of off-the-ball movement, not just ball contact. Students sometimes have the misconception that they are only being assessed when they contact the ball.
- Encourage students to be loud, positive and encouraging to one another. This can help to shake off nerves and instils confidence in themselves and the group during the assessment.

**Advice for students**

- Ensure you take the time to warm up correctly and for an appropriate length of time before the assessment.
- Remember that you are being assessed in your 'off the ball' movement, not just ball contact. Ensure you are active in every point, moving around the court to demonstrate your understanding of defence and offence off the ball.
- Treat this assessment as if it is a 'grand final' by competing with high intensity from the very start.
- Be loud and encouraging during the assessment. This will help shake off nerves and will give others confidence to perform their best.