

TE PUKE HIGH SCHOOL

Touch Handbook & Selection Criteria

GUIDING EXCELLENCE • SPORTSMANSHIP • TRANSPARENCY • COMMUNITY PATHWAYS

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1. WELCOME, PURPOSE & GUIDING VALUES

At Te Puke High School (TPHS), sport is an integral vehicle for developing our rangatahi (youth) holistically. We hold a proud history of regional, national, and international sporting achievement. Whether playing competitively or socially, all student-athletes, coaches, and parents are guided by our school's core values and Sport New Zealand's *Balance is Better* philosophy, which emphasizes multi-sport participation and delaying early specialization.

VALUE	MĀORI CONCEPT	APPLICATION IN TOUCH RUGBY
Relationships	Whakawhanaungatanga	Fostering positive connections between staff, student-athletes, coaches, and whānau.
Respect	Whanaungatanga	Showing honor to opponents, officials, rules, and spectators on and off the field.
Responsibility	Takohanga	Demonstrating self-management, personal accountability, punctuality, and high attendance.
Resilience	Manawaroa	Building mental toughness, physical conditioning, perseverance, and strong sportsmanship.
Realising Potential	Whakapakan	Striving for continuous skill development, personal excellence, and growth (Plus Ultra).

2. PROGRAMME PATHWAYS & DEVELOPMENT

Pathway Structure: Year 9 to Post-Secondary

- 1. Transition & Foundation (Year 9):** Focuses on core skill acquisition, game fundamentals, multi-sport engagement, and adapting to secondary school competition.
- 2. Development & Progression (Years 10–11):** Focuses on tactical execution, specialised positional roles, strength & conditioning, and integration into the Plus Ultra High-Performance Athlete Programme.
- 3. Performance & Senior Excellence (Years 12–13):** Focuses on elite tournament performance, advanced sub-system execution, video analysis, and competing at regional and national championships.
- 4. Post-Secondary & Community Extension:** Fostering lifelong engagement through direct connection to local adult leagues and regional representative pathways.

Tier & Team Breakdown

Tier / Level	Scope & Target Competitions	Focus & Expectations
Premier Boys Team	BOPSS Champs (Div 1), Touch NZ Secondary Schools Nationals	High performance, tactical mastery, system execution, merit-based selection, and a top-2 regional finish. Thursday Men's Module integration.
Premier Mixed Team	BOPSS Champs (Div 1), Touch NZ Secondary Schools Nationals	Division 1 promotion, cohesive dynamic play, fitness, merit-based selection, and a top-20 national finish.

Tier / Level	Scope & Target Competitions	Focus & Expectations
Junior / Development	Local & BOPSS Regional Fixtures	Skill progression, positional versatility, tactical awareness, and structured playing time.
Social Teams	Local Secondary Modules / Leagues	Participation, school identity, community connection, and fun.

Strategic Goals & High-Performance Development (Plus Ultra Integration):

- **Adult Module Integration:** Utilising the Thursday Men's Module for senior system execution and pressure testing playbooks.
- **Plus Ultra Athlete Programme:** Integrating elite Touch players into the Plus Ultra framework for specialised mentoring, gym access (SUB10 Fitness), and athletic development.

3. CODES OF CONDUCT & EXPECTATIONS

Player Code of Conduct

- **Academic & Attendance:** Maintain a minimum 80% class attendance record and positive classroom behaviour to remain eligible.
- **Commitment:** Attend all scheduled trainings, gym sessions, and fixtures. Communicate absences well in advance.
- **Substance Policy:** Strict adherence to TPHS rules regarding alcohol, vaping, and banned substances.
- **Fair Play:** Show respect to all referees, touch judges, and opponents. Verbal abuse or foul language will result in removal from the squad.

Spectator & Whānau Code of Conduct

- **Positive Sideline Culture:** Cheer positively; celebrate effort and skill for both teams.
- **Respect Officials:** Respect refereeing decisions at all times. Touch relies on swift, respectful play—harassment of officials is strictly prohibited.
- **Zero Tolerance:** Physical or severe verbal altercations will result in immediate removal and potential bans from TPHS sporting events.

4. TEAM SELECTION PROTOCOLS & TRIAL PROCEDURES

Trial Procedures & Transparency

1. **Notice:** Trial dates, expectations, and criteria are publicly announced at least 2 weeks prior.
2. **Multiple Windows:** Players will participate in a minimum of two trials/assessment sessions.
3. **Assessment Panel:** Evaluations are conducted by the head coaches, TIC, and independent evaluators.
4. **Sign-Off:** Premier rosters are strictly provisional until reviewed and signed off by TIC Tayla Toma and Director of Sport Martin Ash.

Selection Rules & Protocols

- **Premier Rosters:** Selected pre-season. Junior players may trial; if skills are evaluated as equal between a junior and senior student, preference goes to the senior student.
- **Game Time Equity:** For non-Premier teams, coaches are mandated to provide equitable playing time across matches.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Selectors/coaches with family ties must recuse themselves from scoring that athlete. Tie-breakers rest solely with the TIC & Director of Sport.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA & PLAYER EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Core Evaluation Framework

- **Core Playing Competencies:** Catch-and-pass execution at speed, dump mechanics, driving capability, defensive communication, switch awareness, and sub-box transition efficiency.
- **Core Personal Qualities:** Work ethic, discipline, resilience under fatigue, adaptive mindset, and team-first attitude.

Position-Specific Selection Criteria

Position	Key Selection Criteria & Expectations
Middles	• Exceptional aerobic fitness, high work rate, and continuous defensive communication. • Clean, rapid dump execution and sharp transition off the mark. • Strong vision to direct play, execute quick drives, and manage sub-box rotations efficiently.
Links	• Outstanding lateral speed, agility, and defensive containment on 1-on-1 matchups. • Precise catch-and-pass ability while running flat and fast. • Ability to identify spatial gaps, execute wrap/play options, and create numbers on the outside.
Wings	• High top-end speed, strong diving technique, and safe ball handling in tight try-line situations. • Excellent defensive positioning and wing-shut timing to force inside wraps. • Disciplined positional holding to maintain field width during attacking sets.

6. DISPUTE RESOLUTION & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

TPHS enforces a strict, staged procedure for addressing team selection enquiries or sideline complaints:

STAGE 1: The 24-Hour Rule

Parents, carers, and students must wait 24 hours after team announcements or match completions before lodging a complaint or requesting feedback. Immediate field-side or post-trial confrontations are strictly prohibited.

STAGE 2: Informal Resolution (TIC Level)

The student or parent contacts TIC Tayla Toma via email. The TIC will consult with coaching staff and arrange a meeting to provide constructive feedback and developmental steps.

STAGE 3: Formal Complaint (Director of Sport)

If procedural unfairness or code of conduct breaches persist, a written complaint must be submitted to Director of Sport Martin Ash. The director will review scoring rubrics, interview independent selectors, and provide a formal written resolution within 5 school days.

7. LOGISTICS, UNIFORMS & HEALTH SERVICES

• **Fees & Payment:** Tournament, transport, and entry fees vary and must be paid prior to season start.

Bank Account: 12-3217-0084683-02 | *Reference:* [Student Name/ID & Touch] • **Financial Aid:** Confidential financial assistance is available via the A. Lionel Litt Memorial Education Fund by contacting

jocelyn.reardon@tepuke.school.nz. • **Playing Uniforms:** Official playing singlets/shorts are issued via the TPHS

Sports Office. Custom gear must be ordered through Legend Sportswear—unauthorised use of TPHS logos is

prohibited. • **Physiotherapy & Health:** Free on-site ACC physiotherapy (Boutique Physiotherapy) is available

Mondays/Fridays (8:00 AM–12:00 PM). Parent consent forms must be submitted at reception. • **Safety & Police**

Vetting: All adult volunteers, managers, and coaches involved in regular duties or overnight trips (e.g., Touch Nationals) must complete a police background check.