November 2014

The Official Quarterly Newsletter of the International Netball Federation

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Welcome to our Netball World

What a time this is for world netball. Netball certainly lived up to its billing as one of the most exciting tournaments at the Commonwealth Games. The immaculate organisation and wonderful atmosphere of the 2014 Glasgow games provided a superb showcase for netball, and our athletes, umpires, coaches and thousands of fans rose to the occasion in the full glare of unprecedented media interest in our sport.

But the story doesn’t stop there, next it’s Auckland’s turn to step into the spotlight, as New Zealand hosts FAST5 Netball World Series, the INF’s fast and exciting version of netball. FAST5 is hugely entertaining, an ideal way to win netball new friends, discover new talent, and take netball to a larger international TV audience.

Next year sees the first Netball World Cup, a new spin on our world championships which brings netball’s premier event in line with other world-class sports. I am delighted to see four African nations getting through to the final 16, with Uganda and Zambia making only their second appearance since 1963. It was also exciting to see Argentina take part in the Americas’ qualifiers, a country which is making enormous strides in developing netball and must be congratulated for its strides in developing netball and must be congratulated for its

Netball is growing at a rapid pace. Women all over the world are playing, and enjoying the benefits of fun, friendship and fitness. Our task, as netball’s international governing body, is to ensure that the world’s top women’s team sport continues to lead from the front. Success at the top of our sport depends on healthy grassroot netball; recognising the incredible contribution our volunteers make, and the crucial importance of coaches and umpires to our thriving game. Indeed, in order to ensure that the game of netball remains a vibrant and thrilling sport fit for a rapidly changing world, the INF is undertaking a professional review of international umpiring, as well as reviewing the rules, recognising the impact these have on the health of our sport.

I urge member countries to encourage their players to become involved in coaching and umpiring as there is a growing need for these skills internationally. Let us ensure that we explore and develop the full range of netball’s amazing pool of talent, on and off the court.

The Hon. Molly Rhone, OJ, CD
President, International Netball Federation

INF CEO Clare Briegal shares the latest decisions being taken by the INF Board to ensure that netball’s governing body continues to set world class standards for a world class sport.

Netballers, Play True
On 1 January 2015 the new WADA anti-doping code comes into effect, which has been designed specifically to protect the clean athlete. Doping cheats, whether they be the athletes themselves or the coaches and support personnel who have encouraged them to take performance enhancing drugs, will be subjected to stronger penalties including bans of four years for the athletes or up to lifetime bans for support personnel.

INF welcomes the introduction of the new code and our anti-doping rules have been updated to reflect the new WADA code. These new rules will be issued in November to Members to allow time for Administrators, Athletes and Coaches to understand the changes. INF will also be undertaking a programme of education during the year to ensure we remain a clean sport. Look out for this at the Netball World Cup and go to our website and www.wada-ama.org for further information.

International Umpiring Under the Microscope
The INF Board has commissioned a complete review of International Umpiring to assess the pathways and processes in place and how we need to evolve to meet the needs of our developing sport. Wharton Consulting from the UK were appointed to carry out the study.

All International Umpires (IUA) and International Talent Identified Umpires (ITID) were asked to complete an online survey and umpiring experts from around the world were interviewed to develop a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of our current system.

The INF Board is delighted with the response rate for the survey and will be reviewing the recommendations of the report at the November Board meeting.

New Codes and Guidelines for Members
INF has published a new Code of Conduct for International Umpires and new Pregnancy Guidelines to supplement the updates to the Regulations that were issued in July 2013. The Document Library on the INF Website, www.netball.org, is a central resource for all the official documents of the INF.

Congress 2015
INF Congress will be held in August 2015 before the Netball World Cup in Sydney, Australia. Look out for further communications on this from the INF Secretariat early in 2015. The new rules will be implemented for international matches from January 2016.
2014 saw Glasgow provide the back-drop for a superb Commonwealth Games, and netball played a leading role in the spectacle. Packed crowds witnessed an intense competition, in which it rapidly emerged that there was little to choose between the top five nations. The world’s media quickly picked up on the exhilaration of the netball competition, with coverage peaking for the medal matches.

INF President, the Hon. Molly Rhone, OJ, CD, was in demand for a non-stop round of media interviews and VIP visits to the netball court, with special guests ranging from the Earl and Countess of Wessex to Usain Bolt. Molly Rhone explains: “The atmosphere was amazing, and the competition drew in the most incredible range of spectators, who quickly got hooked. We couldn’t have had a better showcase for netball. We were able to demonstrate the quality and inclusiveness of the world’s top women’s team sport – not just to the wonderful people of Glasgow, but to a huge international media audience.”

In a highly-anticipated final, World Number 1 side Australia took the Commonwealth Games title, with a dazzling display of pace and precision to see off holders New Zealand 58-40. But en route to the final, both sides faced tenacious opposition, suggesting that the top of the world order could soon be unsettled by some new faces.

In the group matches, New Zealand were given an early scare before overcoming a determined Malawi 50-47, and were further rocked by injuries to key shooters Catrine Latu, Maria Tutaia and Ellen Halpenny, which kept each of them from the court for some of the competition’s initial stages. Workman-like wins over competition debutees Northern Ireland (78-29) and hosts Scotland (71-14) were secured before the Kiwis faced Jamaica to contest the top spot in Group A. Prior to this, the Jamaicans’ toughest contest involved seeing off a Malawi side inspired by the athletic Mwai Kumwenda 81-50 in a thrilling match. Without frontline shooters Tutaia or Latu, New Zealand struggled to impose their authority on a Jamaican side showing composure and discipline early on. The Kiwi pressure ultimately told, however, and the holders edged through to the semi-finals 50-42.

Australia opened with a relatively straightforward 63-38 win over Wales, before encountering an England team filled with self-belief and ready to take the fight to the Aussies. In a thrilling game, which kept the crowd on the edge of its seats, England led until the dying minutes, before errors allowed Australia to steal the advantage and a 49-48 win. This result ultimately decided the top two positions in Group B, with only South Africa troubling England to compete for the second qualification place in a match which England ultimately won 40-26.

The Diamonds overcame Jamaica with a business-like 57-42 win in the semi-finals, but for holders New Zealand, the path to the gold medal was a treacherous one, with a determined England side standing between them and the final. Held to 10-all at the end of the first quarter, the Kiwis introduced Maria Tutaia at the start of the second period and her sharp-shooting helped the side claw back a five-goal lead midway through the quarter to lead 20-19 at half-time. Dogged defence from New Zealand prevented England building on any advantage and a 49-48 win over close rivals Wales. Hosts Scotland scooped ninth place, defeating Trinidad & Tobago 46-28, while Barbados were too strong for St Lucia, taking 11th position with a 53-27 win.

With the Netball World Cup 2015 less than a year away, Australia will be keen to back up their Commonwealth win with another world title. But as the Glasgow competition has shown, the gaps between the leading nations are closing all the time, and the heat will definitely be on the host nation when the world arrives in Sydney next year.

Jamaica celebrate Bronze

Malawi and New Zealand battle it out

The gold medal match once again pitted the world’s top two against each other and it was Australia who were quickest out of the blocks, with the attacking combination of Bassett, Medhurst and Robinson providing a masterclass of pace and precision. For the Kiwis, their opponents were too hot to handle, and despite some typically dogged defence, for them there was no way back. Australia regained the title with a 58-45 win.

England found it impossible to galvanise themselves in the bronze medal match, and a disciplined Jamaica side were determined to make possession count. The Sunshine Girls held their form and their focus to take full advantage of England’s errors, and took the bronze medal 52-48.

Malawi could claim to be the best side in Africa, after defeating South Africa 53-44, while Northern Ireland toppled an impressive campaign in their first Commonwealth tournament to take seventh place with a 58-36 win over close rivals Wales. Hosts Scotland suffered another shock, taking 11th position after being defeated by Trinidad & Tobago 46-28.

With the Netball World Cup 2015 less than a year away, Australia will be keen to back up their Commonwealth win with another world title. But as the Glasgow competition has shown, the gaps between the leading nations are closing all the time, and the heat will definitely be on the host nation when the world arrives in Sydney next year.
The Netball World Cup 2015 is being billed as the biggest celebration of international netball the world has ever seen.

Sixteen nations from around the globe have secured places to compete in Sydney, Australia, and the event’s Chief Executive, Marne Fechner, is delighted to see everything coming together: “It’s been an exciting process, which has seen regional qualifying events stretching across the globe, from Singapore to Canada to Botswana, and we’re now thrilled to know the 16 teams that will contest for netball’s biggest prize.

“Every nation will take a different road to Sydney 2015, and we know the diverse mix of netball styles and cultures will help make the event an electrifying 10 days of competition on and off the court.”

The top six nations automatically qualified when the INF World Rankings were confirmed in July. These were Australia, New Zealand, England, Jamaica, Malawi and South Africa. As a result of the Regional Qualifiers, they will be joined by Wales, Scotland, Fiji, Samoa, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zambia.

Africa
Uganda and Zambia (who both defeated higher ranked African nations), will each be competing in only their second World Cup since the tournament began in 1963. They are joined by Malawi and South Africa, who qualified for the World Cup by virtue of their top six world rankings.

International Netball Federation President, the Hon. Molly Rhone, OJ, CD, said: “This has been a particularly exciting lead up to the Netball World Cup, with an unprecedented four African nations making it through to the Finals. The competition will be fierce and the rivalry intense at our flagship INF event next August.”

Asia
The host nation and World Number 1, Australia, is the World Cup’s best known team from the Asia region. At the Qualifying Event for the region, Sri Lanka upset higher ranked nations to join Singapore as the two qualifying nations. Hosts in 2011, Singapore had to qualify the hard way for 2015. However, the added pressure seemed not to worry the nation, with Singapore finishing the Asian Qualifiers undefeated.

With such an exciting mix of countries, Marne Fechner is keen to see netball fans make the most of the experience: “We invite the people of Australia, and each nation around the globe, to get behind their team on their road to Sydney.”

Europe
England is one of four nations (alongside Australia, New Zealand and Jamaica) to have played in every World Cup. The English have never finished lower than fourth place; with their highest ever finish second behind Australia in 1975 in Auckland, New Zealand.

Wales and Scotland qualified by finishing in the top two at the Regional Qualifying event earlier this year in Cardiff, Wales. Both have a consistent record at the event, competing in 13 of the 14 editions of the tournament (missing the 1967 and 2011 Cups respectively).

The Americas
Jamaica’s Sunshine Girls, ranked fourth in the world, will bring flair to the 2015 World Cup. They are joined by Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados, who made it through after winning performances at the Regional Qualifying Event in Calgary, Canada. With both nations missing the 1991 event, Sydney 2015 will be the countries’ first World Cup in the Harbour City. Ranked ninth and tenth in the world, Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados overcame Canada, the USA, Grenada, The Cayman Islands and Argentina to lock in their positions at Sydney 2015.

Oceania
In the Oceania region, Fiji and Samoa overcame the Cook Islands and Papua New Guinea to book their spots in Sydney. To the joy of their energetic supporter base, Fiji finished the event undefeated. World Number 2, New Zealand, is the other team from the Oceania region, and likely to be a strong contender for World Cup gold.

Secure Your Seat
Netball World Cup
7 to 16 August 2015
Allphones Arena and Netball Central
Sydney, Australia

For information on Fan Packages visit
www.nwc2015.com.au
Asia is now one of the biggest netball regions in INF, with 20 member countries affiliated to the Asian Netball Federation (ANF). In 2014 alone, three new member countries were admitted as ANF members – Myanmar, Vietnam and, more recently, Afghanistan.

And it has not stopped there. A netball course was run in the Philippines in August, attended by 25 coaches and players. In October, our Netball Singapore coaches will be going to Timor-Leste and to Laos to help establish netball there.

What has caused this sudden flurry of activity, and is it sustainable?

Netball has been included in the multi-sport Southeast Asian (SEA) Games 2015 for only the second time in the 56-year history of the Games. The 2015 SEA Games will be hosted in Singapore in June 2015, and will feature 11 member countries and 36 sports.

Sports in the SEA Games typically get more funding support, and greater spectator and media interest in their countries. With this big opportunity to establish netball firmly as an SEA Games sport for the future, Netball Singapore has spared no effort to get more countries to take up the sport. Malaysia will host the bi-annual SEA Games in 2017, and they have included netball on their list. Brunei then hosts the Games in 2019, and they are lobbying strongly for netball to be included. Netball will then stand a very good chance of being a long-term SEA Games sport.

With the assistance of the Singapore National Olympic Council, Netball Singapore is able to reach out to many of the SEA countries.

Coaches were sent to Vietnam in December 2013 and Myanmar in March 2014, and several more times since then, to coach and assist their national teams. Both countries then took part in the Mission Foods Asian Netball Championships in Singapore in September 2014. The teams showed excellent progress in just a few short months and they truly enjoyed the experience. Kyi Lai Soe is the captain of the team from Myanmar, and is confident about their development: “I hope to learn as much as we can before next year’s SEA Games.” This is already happening for Myanmar’s shooter, Khin San Dar Kyaw, who explains that one of the benefits of international competition is learning from more experienced players: “I really look up to Chen Huifen, Singapore’s GA.”

Vietnam and Myanmar’s first batches of players and coaches have come from basketball, and they have been really excited by netball and the attention the sport gets. “What I like about netball is the teamwork and how we bond together as a squad,” explains 19-year-old Le Thuy Vy, a shooter from the Vietnamese national team.

In addition to sending coaches to the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Laos, their teams have been invited to Singapore in December for training, practice matches and to watch the Nations Cup, an international netball competition that Singapore organises annually.

Afghanistan is the newest member of the Asian Netball Federation, with the support of the Pakistan Netball Federation. There are provincial netball bodies affiliated to the Afghanistan Netball Federation – Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Nangarhar, Helmond and Kunar. They have both women’s and men’s teams, and several ladies on their committee. This is an excellent development in a war-torn country, and it is hoped that netball will be firmly established as a sport, especially for the women.

This year’s Asian Netball Championships finals and third-fourth playoff were televised live in 11 countries in the Asian region, including Singapore, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. This gave the sport a higher visibility on television across the region and showcased the competitiveness of netball.

Netball is perhaps the only team sport where the women’s team is the top team in a sport! This unique positioning in a very competitive sports market has allowed all the focus and resources to be placed on the women’s team. This has had a great appeal among the newer countries, especially those with a basketball background. They feel that they have a great ownership of netball!

Article by Cyrus Medora and Jane Sng, Netball Singapore.

The other country that has made really big strides in netball is Chinese Taipei. They only set up netball in 2008, but in the recently concluded Asian Netball Championships they came in a very strong fifth place, beating India in the playoff. They have shown much progress and are testament that newer member countries can be competitive if they continue to develop their team and grow the sport.
In the last issue of Netball World, we spoke with Chair of the INF Rules Advisory Panel, Cheryl Danson, to find out about the group’s task to review the rules of the game. Their work is starting to really take shape, so we caught up with Cheryl to hear the latest developments. Whilst the details can’t yet be revealed, it’s obvious that some positive changes are on their way...

What’s developed over the last three months with the Rules Review?

After analysing members’ rules submissions and other rules material, the Rules Advisory Panel (RAP) have now agreed the rules changes, and the work of writing the updated rules text has been allocated to RAP members, with input from Dawn Jones (Officiating) and Jill McIntosh (Coaching).

We’ve also considered the rules book layout, and will be delivering the rules in a new format. We’ve had discussions with some other sports about their rules text and looked at their rule books’ layout to identify good practice. Looking to the future, we’d like to use video clips to support the rules text.

We had some useful feedback on the trials that members volunteered to undertake, and prepared recommendations for the INF Board about which of these should be included in the new rules.

Finally, we’ve prepared a detailed timeline for delivering the draft updated rules text to members by March 2015.

Which rules have been trialled so far and where?

Trial 1 – a two-point scoring system
Trialled in New Zealand.

Trial 2 – Injury / illness stoppage to be 30 seconds
Trialled in New Zealand and Jamaica.

Trial 3 – Throw In replaced with Free Pass
No trial undertaken – RAP have rejected this.

Trial 4 – Setting the penalty
Trialled in England, Jamaica and New Zealand.

Trial 5 – Taking Centre Pass
“The centre in possession of the ball shall stand with at least one foot wholly within the centre circle.”
Trialled in New Zealand and confirmation of support for this proposal from Australia.

Trial 6 – Advantage
No trial undertaken. RAP have rejected this, but recommended to the INF Board that the advantage rule is reworded to provide more clarity.

Trial 7 – Control of Start of Play
“The umpire shall restart the game after all goals scored in the co- umpire’s half.”
Advisory panels support this and will undertake their own trials and prepare evidence based on them.

Trial 8 – Division of Control
No member volunteered to trial this. As it is a significant change then it would need to be trialled. RAP recommended to the INF Board that the current division of control is maintained, but that it is emphasised in the rules that umpires need to co-operate with each other and work together.

Trial 9 – Centre pass signal
Suggestion: ‘The scorer shall indicate the direction of a centre pass immediately after a stoppage’.
Include wording in new rules text and ensure that it is clear that umpires remain responsible.

Reduction of whistle in the game
England and New Zealand have undertaken their own trials, and this has also been implemented in FAST5. RAP and Officiating have done their own statistical analysis, and further work is planned on this.

What can we expect from the new rule book?

We’ve been looking at other sports’ rule books and we’re planning to restructure our rules to include various new sections; an Introduction and Glossary, as well as sections on Equipment, Before the Match, During the Match, Sanctions, Start or Restart Play, and Game Management are all being considered. One of the key changes you’ll see is more diagrams.

What are the next steps?

We have a meeting scheduled for November in New Zealand around the Netball World Series. At that meeting we will consolidate the draft text that everyone has been working on and plan the preparation of more statistical and video evidence.

Watch out for more updates in our next issue of Netball World.
FAST5 Action in Auckland

Netball’s exciting FAST5 Netball World Series returns to Auckland, New Zealand in November 2014. The event is set to wow spectators, and offers more top-class netball in scintillating bite-sized pieces.

and produced back-to-back titles, winning in 2013 in a hotly-contested final against the Australian FAST5 Flyers.

The name FAST5 reflects the innovative netball rule changes, with on-court team numbers reduced from seven players to five, and three goal point scoring zones. The wing positions in the traditional seven-a-side game are missing from FAST5 sides and the shooting circle is separated into three scoring zones. This gives shooters the chance to score one, two or three goal points depending on where they are in the modified shooting zone.

Superior shooting skills are required in the game and is a talking point, with a number of long-range shots falling within the ‘three point range’ or ‘super-shots’. This can somewhat nullify the very tall goal shooters who are often at their skilful best right under the net. Those shots taken at short range are worth just one goal point. Teams are also allowed to use rolling substitutions.

The shortened version of the traditional game of netball was the branchchild of the International Netball Federation and continues to grow in popularity around the world.

FAST5 Fern Katrina Grant says FAST5 certainly lives up to its name, describing it as one of the toughest physical challenges she has ever taken on. The fitness and skill required steps up a level from that needed in seven-a-side netball. “I am so glad there are rolling subs in FAST5 netball, because I don’t think anyone could last a full day with multiple matches if we didn’t get a breather,” said Grant. “Without the wing positions, all five players on the court need to work that extra bit harder to make sure the ball gets down to the right end to score.”

The party atmosphere of the two-day tournament adds to the whole experience for spectators, who are encouraged to dress up and support their favourite teams. Grant said playing in the FAST5 Netball World Series over the past two years has been fun, especially after a grueling six-match test series season in October.

“It’s a great way to finish the season with what is essentially a celebration of netball. Don’t get me wrong, we are out there on court to win, but the FAST5 event is something the team really enjoys,” she said. “The crowd gets involved and we all plan something special for our team entrance. It’s a lot different to anything else we do through the season.”

The Malawi Queens and Jamaican Sunshine girls are also renowned for their extroverted play on the netball court, while the England Fives, Australian FAST5 Flyers and FAST5 South Africa bring their own form of dynamism, making the tournament unique in the netball calendar.

FAST5 Netball World Series
8 to 9 November 2014
Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand

Staged over the course of two days at Vector Arena, the FAST5 concept has been taken to a whole new level with six international teams; England Fives, FAST5 South Africa, Malawi Queens, Sunshine Girls from Jamaica, Australian FAST5 Flyers and the FAST5 Ferns from New Zealand, playing 18 games over the period of the tournament.

The FAST5 Ferns from New Zealand were the inaugural champions in 2012

Photos courtesy of Michael Bradley
Jamaica Builds Exciting Future

The future of Jamaican netball looks bright after the start of a new training programme, launched in October by INF President, the Hon Molly Rhone, OJ, CD (pictured right).

Using reduced size posts and smaller balls, Basic School students and teachers demonstrated the new skills they have learned as part of a project introduced in the Red Hills area of Kingston, thanks to a partnership between Netball Jamaica and the Kiwanis Club.

The young participants have already learned improved hand-eye coordination, decision-making, teamwork and interpretation of basic instructions, all skills which translate to their everyday schooling, as well as to the netball court. Netball Jamaica is now seeking sponsors to enable the project to be extended to other areas of the island.

Scotland and Gibraltar Team Up

Gibraltar Netball has seen a significant increase in its number of qualified and enthusiastic netball coaches, thanks to a successful partnership with Netball Scotland.

In recent years, Netball Europe has established development partnerships between less developed and more developed member countries, and the relationship between Scotland and Gibraltar is proving particularly beneficial.

In October, Netball Scotland tutors Leighanne Carnacher and Janie Elliot taught and assessed 13 new UKCC Level 1 assistant coaches in Gibraltar. Laura Paterson, the Gibraltar Netball Coaching Coordinator, explains that the new coaches are raring to go: “The benefits to Gibraltar Netball will be evident with our development in the future.”

Netball Scotland is committed to continue supporting their ‘buddies’ to promote the progression of netball in Gibraltar and in Europe, and Gibraltar Netball is eager to continue this very rewarding relationship.

Australia Scoop High-Profile Awards

The accolades keep coming for Australian netball, with the sport claiming three honours at the Women’s Health ‘1 Support Women In Sport’ awards in Sydney.

The Australian Diamonds were named the A-Team of the Year, captain Laura Geitz took out the Leadership Legend award while recently retired great Catherine Cox received the Service to Sport award.

Geitz, who missed the celebrations whilst preparing for the Constellation Cup, was delighted to be recognised: “I’m just so honoured to win a leadership award, and in my first 12 months captaining the side. The girls are stoked with the team award and being recognised for all the hard work we’ve been doing not only on the court but off it as well.”

Diamonds’ Coach, Lisa Alexander, was just as happy for Cox: “Cath has contributed significantly to our sport, has had an amazing career and is an absolute legend of not just our sport, but Australian sport.”

Attending the ceremony were Australian Diamonds Rebecca Bulley, Catherine Cox and Bianca Chatfield.

Latest INF World Rankings

The world rankings were updated in September following a number of major international matches.

Whilst the Commonwealth Games took centre stage, it was the Regional Qualifying events for the 2015 World Cup that had the biggest impact on the rankings.

In Africa, Uganda rises to 13th, and Zambia to 18th, whilst Swaziland joins the list at 31st, having now played sufficient matches to achieve a ranking.

In the Americas, the USA makes a notable gain, to 26th, whilst Grenada joins the rankings at 29th.

Calendar of Events 2014 / 2015

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The world’s best are coming!
SYDNEY, 7-16 AUGUST 2015

Next year, the Netball World Cup returns to Australia for the first time since 1991. Don’t miss this chance to see the world’s top nations battle it out for netball’s ultimate prize.

For all the latest event news and info, visit nwc2015.com.au

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