



PRESS RELEASE
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SINGAPORE CONTINUE THEIR WINNING WAYS TO GO TOP AT NATIONS CUP

Cheers all round for more top netballing action on show

Africa took on Oceania in the opening match of day three of the Nations Cup with both teams dressed in red, and both looking for their second win.

Uganda and **Papua New Guinea** (PNG) were matched for height and physicality across the court, and in the end they were matched on score line too with the final whistle blowing at **52-52**. It was PNG that got the early lead through their consistent shooters Tiata Baldwin and Maleeta Roberts, six goals the difference after the first quarter (11-17).

Uganda have some real flair in the centre court with Jesca Achan (WA) and Halima Nakachwa (C) working hard to disrupt the flow of the Pepes - who had extended their lead to 21-35 at halftime – as much as possible.

The tables turned in the second half and the African teamwork was much more effective. They took the third quarter by seven goals (helped by the strong positioning and fighting spirit of GS Proscovia Prince who had a shooting score of 89% for the match).

With seven goals separating them going into the final period, PNG looked to be getting a little frustrated and made several errors, allowing Uganda a sniff of a comeback. Three minutes to play and one goal separated them. The nervous energy was tangible throughout the stadium and it was end to end action right until the dying seconds, Uganda missing out on a last shooting chance when Peace was pulled up for stepping.

The draw (one point awarded to each team) throws the competition wide open.

Ugandan Coach, Fred Mugerwa, was pleased by the second half performance of his team and that they were unlucky not to get the win. He said, "We made some mistakes in the first two quarters which we tried to rectify and it was unfortunate that we didn't get a lot of decisions going our way. We put in a lot of energy to comeback from being so far behind."

Uganda will play Singapore tomorrow, a first time meeting. Mugerwa added, "This is the first time we play them so we will see how they play today and then plan accordingly."

PNG Co-Captain Winnie Mavara was disappointed at the change of fortunes in the game. She said, "We were hoping to win this one, we didn't expect such a hard game. They came out stronger in the second half, they wanted it more. They are very physical compared to the other teams we have played, from the shooters to the defenders. Tomorrow against the USA we have to go out hard, we have to get back to winning again."

Second match on saw the **USA** take on the **Republic of Ireland** in what proved to be quite a one sided contest in favour of the girls in green. Ireland has improved with every game and went into this seeking their first ever win in the Nations Cup competition and it came in comfortable fashion **33-62**.

They settled in their game plan quickly as they read the play of the USA well and worked the ball with pace around their athletic opponents. USA looked strongest in their defensive circle but was left trailing in the centre court as Rebekah Meinders (WA) and Niamh Murphy (C) moved the ball with confidence for Ireland and set up plenty of scoring opportunities for Jan Hynes and Sinead O'Connor under the posts.

A thirty point advantage after the first two quarters allowed Ireland to make use of their bench and give everyone an opportunity on court. USA remained physical throughout, contesting every position on court and they rallied in the final period to take the last quarter 15-9. But it was too late to affect the outcome and the Irish were all smiles as they took two points for the first time ever in Singapore.

Jan Hynes described her team's reaction to the win saying, "Absolutely ecstatic, we have one win! That was definitely a boost to our confidence and tomorrow against Sri Lanka should be a good game, we are looking forward to it."

USA Vice-Captain Moya McLean is proud of her team as they are struggling through the competition with several injuries. "We are feeling pretty good. Faced with the adversities that we have, only eight fit players, we can only do our best. I had to take my time today as I am carrying an injury but I was able to hold my position and we finished strongly and hopefully the same tactics will work tomorrow."

Last but not least on court today was the Asian clash between **Singapore** and **Sri Lanka**. In 2012, Singapore got the upper hand in the Asian Championship finals but Sri Lanka came out on top in the Nations Cup meeting so both teams stepped onto court expecting a challenging encounter.

The crowds were out in force once again with huge cheers for the home team as they took control from the opening minutes and went 10 goals ahead in the opening quarter (21-11). Confident and controlled play from end to end by Singapore kept them ahead at the half (34-21) but Sri Lanka were eager to fight back and hunt down every ball.

Influential shooter for Sri Lanka, Tharjini Sivalingam - who towers above all her opponents at 200cm - was substituted after the first quarter which surprised many onlookers and changed the defensive requirements of Chen Li Li and Lin Qingyi who had kept her out of action in the opening 15 minutes. She did return to the court for the final nine minutes of play.

The second half was a closer affair as Sri Lanka adapted to not relying on their usual height advantage for the majority of it and they dug deep to use their other skills of speed and agility to keep them in the goal hunt.

Singapore's team work was outstanding as they moving fluidly across court, communicated well and linked from defence to attack through midcourt players Nurul Baizura (C), Shelby Koh, Aqilah Andin and Olivia Flanagan. The speed and commitment of all seven players on court was impressive and their fitness showed as they maintained the tempo throughout the match.

In the shooting circle, Chen Huifen (GA) and Yu Meiling (GS) are proving to be a force to be reckoned with linking well together and with the feeders. Cassandra Soh and Charmaine Soh got time on court in the final period and the shooters finished with a combined total of **60** goals against Sri Lanka's **43** to give them their third win of the competition which puts them at the top of the table ahead of their clash with Uganda tomorrow.

Ruth Aitken, Singapore Coach was full of praise for her team's consistency so far in the competition. She said, "We started really well and for us it was about showing that we are building a consistency of performance. I was delighted with the first quarter and they just built it from there. A great performance throughout the court."

Looking ahead to the match up against Uganda tomorrow she added, "They play quite unorthodox with a lot of short passes so we have to go back and look at our game plan."

Sri Lanka Coach, Somitha De Alwis, was upbeat as she is viewing the competition as developmental. She said, "It was a bigger score difference than we wanted but I am not disappointed. I wanted to give experience to our players as our main goal is next year's Asian Championships and we are a young team. We still have two games left in the group stages so we can still make the finals. But that's not our target, it's just for experience."

The action continues tomorrow.

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RESULTS:

Uganda 52-52 Papua New Guinea (HT 21-35)

USA 33-62 Republic of Ireland (HT 7-37)

Singapore 60-43 Sri Lanka (HT 34-21)

DAY 2:

Sri Lanka 67-37 USA (HT 35-20)

Republic of Ireland 41-54 Uganda (HT 17-25)

Singapore 44-43 Papua New Guinea (HT 23-23)

DAY 1:

Singapore 42-31 Republic of Ireland (HT 22-15)

Sri Lanka 52-76 Papua New Guinea (HT 30-38)
Singapore 'A' 50-53 United States of America (HT 21-31)

REMAINING FIXTURES:

Date	Time	Fixtures		
4 th December Wednesday	3.00pm	Papua New Guinea	V	USA
	5.00pm	Rep of Ireland	V	Sri Lanka
	7.00pm	Uganda	V	Singapore
5 th December Thursday	Off Day			
6 th December Friday	3.00pm	Papua New Guinea	V	Rep of Ireland
	5.00pm	Sri Lanka	V	Uganda
	7.00pm	USA	V	Singapore
7 th December Saturday	1.00pm	5 th	V	6 th
	3.00pm	3 rd	V	4 th
	5.00pm	1 st	V	2 nd
	6.30pm	Closing Ceremony		

Current World Rankings (as of 4th Nov 2013)

Papua New Guinea – 18th

Republic of Ireland – 28th

Singapore – 21st

Sri Lanka – 23rd

Uganda – (No world ranking currently due to lack of international exposure)

United States of America – 19th

About Netball Singapore:

Netball Singapore is the national body for netball in Singapore. This well-established

organisation has progressed dramatically since it commenced in 1962. It has become a professionally run National Sport Association which generates a proportion of its expenditure through sponsorship and other streams of revenue-generation. The association supports 68 multi-team club members and over 330 schools have netball in their curriculum.

Netball Singapore's mission is to encourage, promote and develop netball in Singapore. Singapore successfully hosted the World Netball Championships in July 2011 and has been awarded the rights to host the Asian Netball Championships in 2014. The National Team are currently ranked 21st in the World following their success at the 2012 Asian Championships where they were crowned champions for the second time in their history.

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