



PRESS RELEASE
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UGANDA WIN BUT SINGAPORE REMAIN ON TOP AT NATIONS CUP

Teams battle for positions as finals are just one match away

Day four of the Nations Cup and it was another sizzling day of action at Toa Payoh Sports Hall as there is now just one more day of group matches to go on Friday to determine who plays for which positions in Saturday's finals.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) went up against the **USA** in match one and it was the Pacific Islanders who started strongly, (eager to make up for their mistakes last night where they drew with Uganda after having a 14 point advantage at the half) and went 23-9 ahead after the opening quarter.

USA played a slow and steady style on court and the Pepees seemed to drop-off their tempo in the second quarter which allowed the USA to settle and control more of the play. The Americans were using their tactic of holding their space, using their bodies to defend and passing with their long-looping passes instead of the fast footwork and flat passes that many of the other nations adopt.

Yet more injuries to an already depleted USA team didn't help them stage a comeback and the initial advantage created by PNG was increased further in the second half as they dominated possession collected their second win of the competition with a **72-31** victory.

The USA are still to get a win against one of the official competing nations and may struggle to improve on their table position as they will meet hosts Singapore on Friday night. They do have two points however after Uganda failed to arrive in time on the opening day and had to forfeit the match.

PNG will be up against Ireland on Friday and will feel confident about collecting another win but it may not be as easy for them as today's result with Ireland continuing to improve throughout the week.

PNG Co-Captain Winnie Mavara was happy to get back to winning ways. She said, "After our performance yesterday we had to come out strongly against the USA and not give them any chances. We plan on winning on Friday and still make it to the finals. Tomorrow is an important rest day for us to rest our aching muscles and a chance to recuperate before playing again on Friday."

USA Captain Annette Payne is still enjoying the experience despite the score lines. She explained, "We have a lot of aches and pains but it is all in the name of the sport so that is ok. We came with eight players and we probably have about six and a half still fit! It has

been a challenge for us but we are still giving our best, we won't give in, and we will fight hard in each game."

Second match was a case of déjà vu for the **Republic of Ireland** and **Sri Lanka** as they first met 12 months ago, also on day four of the competition.

Ireland however were hoping to reverse the fortunes of the 21012 score line (Sri Lanka won 60-73) so they came firing out the blocks and took the first quarter 17-13.

The second quarter started out being goal-for-goal before Sri Lanka found ways to consistently get the ball to their unstoppable shooter Tharjini Sivalingam to give them the advantage and they went ahead 27-34 by the end of the half.

At the other end of the court, the players were equally matched on height and Charlotte Lynch and Fiona Morrissey hustled in the second half to take all their opportunities and try to keep the Celtic side in with a chance. The Irish supporters were vocal in their support, willing the girls to get the upper hand once more.

However Sri Lanka showed an improved performance in the centre court with Captain Mareesha Fernando leading by example in wing attack, covering plenty of ground and encouraging her teammates throughout. They won the remaining three quarters (despite a spirited fight back from Ireland in the final 15 minutes) and took the match **49-65** to deny Ireland their second win and that elusive first win over an Asian side.

Fernando felt her team had a much improved performance today. She said, "I am very happy. Ireland have improved a lot since we last played them so my team worked very well – passing and communicating – they did a good job. Yesterday was really hard for us so it is good to get another win. We play Uganda on Friday which will be another tough match and we hope to keep improving."

Captain for Ireland, Niamh Murphy couldn't hide her disappointment at her second loss against Sri Lanka saying, "We had a game plan to combat their tall shooter and it seemed to work for the first quarter but then we threw away a lot of balls which were precious to us so we are quite disappointed. We didn't take care of the ball and when you throw that away, there is no chance against such a tall shooter."

The day of competition ended with the closest match-up between **Uganda** and **Singapore**. This was the first time the sides have met but having watched each other over the past few days, they both knew it would be a tough fight.

The 'She Cranes' took an early lead and were up 14-9 in the first quarter. They played with pace and power and look to have really settled into their playing style, showing confidence and contesting every ball to make it a very physical battle.

Singapore were on target in the shooting circle with Chen Huifen and Cassandra Soh in the first half when they got their scoring chances and looked impressive running the ball in

attack. The challenge was to match the pace of Uganda when they gained a turnover and this left them seven points behind at the half (27-20).

Although unranked, Uganda was always going to be a formidable force as they made it to the semi-finals of the 2013 African Championships, narrowly losing out on a finals spot against Malawi – ranked 5th in the world.

The third quarter score line ran away from them and they were unable to pull back the deficit as too many interception attempts were just a finger-tip out of their reach and Uganda kept their error rate low and the intensity high.

Singapore tried to lift their performance for the final quarter but lost out **60-32** on the final whistle. Despite suffering their first loss of the competition they remain top of the table (one point in front of PNG and Uganda) with one final match against the USA on Friday which they must win to guarantee their place in the championship play-off on Saturday.

Ugandan Coach, Fred Mugerwa was very pleased with the victory. He said, “After yesterday’s loss we came all out. We didn’t want to take any chances; we had to win this game to have a chance to make the finals. Our match on Friday – we must approach it like a final as anything else but a win will put us in a very difficult position.”

Singapore was disappointed with their performance and must now focus on the USA match on Friday. Coach Ruth Aitken gave her thoughts. “We were a bit flat today but Uganda definitely stepped up and have been the big improver this week and I don’t think we adjusted as well as we should have. We were under a lot of pressure and we need to get back to our style of play. The USA plays a very holding game so it’s about our movement around them and having confidence in each other again.”

Captain Lin Qingyi added, “It felt quite messy today. I think we need to go back to the drawing board and work something out if we get to face them again. Tomorrow is important to get our bodies sorted and be ready for Friday.”

There is an all-important rest day for players tomorrow (Thursday). The action continues on Friday.

-END-

	PNG	Ireland	S'pore	Sri Lanka	Uganda	USA	For	Against	Pts	Goal Avg
PNG			43-44	76 - 52	52 - 52	72 - 31	243	179	5	135.75%
Ireland			31 - 42	49- 65	41-54	62 -33	183	194	2	94.33%
S'pore	44 - 43	42 - 31		60- 43	32-60		178	177	6	100.56%
Sri Lanka	52 - 76	65- 49	43 - 60			67 - 37	227	222	4	102.25%
Uganda	52 - 52	54 - 41	60-32			Lose by w/o	166	125	5	132.80%
USA	31 - 72	33 - 62		37 - 67	Win by w/o		101	201	2	50.25%

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RESULTS:**Papua New Guinea 72-31 USA (HT 38-18)****Republic of Ireland 49-65 Sri Lanka (HT 27-34)****Uganda 60-32 Singapore (HT 27-20)****DAY 3:****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		
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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Photos available on request