

2018 SSA International Netball Tour Report

25 May to 1 June 2018

Gold Coast, Queensland

Tour Leaders Report – Di Sexton

The netball international tournament was at Runaway Bay in Australia. There were eleven teams at the carnival. The event commenced with a weekend training camp on the 25th-27th May and then the championship was from Monday to Friday, with the finals being played on the Friday. The girls travelled home on the Saturday. Australia was victorious winning the grand final against Auckland Samoa. There were 12 girls in the team, from all states (exc Tas) and ACT. There was significant organisation involved in transporting and accommodating the team. The girls/coaches required flights from 7 different ports which required coordination, so they arrived at a similar time. Ground transport consisted of two mini-vans and a car. The meals were a mixture of self-prepared, takeaway and restaurants. The accommodation was excellent creating an environment that allowed the athletes to relax and restore themselves for the demands of the next day competition. The facility included ice baths, pool etc. The uniforms were ordered through Struddys, and whilst they were of a good quality there were delays with the arrival of garments.

This event provided many opportunities for educational growth of the athletes. Being an international event allowed for increased awareness of other countries and cultures. The tournament was hosted by the Budgies and the opening ceremony included a presentation at the corroboree centre at Dreamworld. This presentation included a dreamtime story, fire lighting display, and face painting. Prior to the event, the girls knew of each other, but limited connections had been made. It is a powerful experience to be involved in a team sport competing at this level. The development of communication skills, resilience, tolerance, cooperation and compassion are traits that require development by all members if the team is to operate as one. Through the coaching sessions, the athletes were provided with the opportunity to develop these skills.

Recommendations

1. Bibs, blood dress, balls, first aid equipment should be stored at a central spot so these costs are not annually being required by current playing group.
2. Tour Leaders should be presented with previous year's budget, before current budget is requested, allowing for all items to be considered.
3. Sponsorship should be accessed, reducing financial burden on families
4. Earlier organisation of event should occur allowing of draws, opening ceremonies and all costs to be presented to enable accurate budget.
5. Team should be posted on SSA site when team is announced allowing athletes to seek sponsorship- proof

Issues

There were issues with the organisation of the event, basically the committee was short staffed and overwhelmed, but basically, they did the best they could with the resources available to them.

Coach Report – Kate Grey

The 2018 International Challenge was held from Friday 25th May until Saturday 2nd June in Runaway Bay Queensland.

Prior to departure the officials group worked with the athletes to prime their thinking around themselves as aspirant netballers and moving forward to represent their nation. We took stock of their current DTE (daily training environment) and support networks and ensured we balanced players heavy training loads at state level***. We worked with the athletes on aspects of preparation in regard to their current DTE including strength and conditioning, mindfulness, threat versus reward and SCARF neuroscience elements, recovery elements, court structures and strategies and ensured this was all done at a high level but in a developmentally appropriate fashion.

The first three days, of the above listed dates, included travel to Runaway Bay and then we moved into training camp mode. During the training camp phase the players and officials developed shared expectations, ways of working both on and off the court and delved into the practicalities of the elements of mindfulness, neuroscience of flow and how to approach the week from a holistic perspective whilst focusing on elite athlete preparation and what it takes to represent your nation. The girls took the court for two court sessions which focused on bring the structures and strategies the players had cognitively run through prior to arrival into physical application. We refined our attacking and defensive structures and ensured each court area (goalers, centre courters and defenders) all had specific ways of working as a unit area. This ensured individuals had specific skills and targets to meet when given the opportunity to step onto court. We played two practice matches against local state league sides to refine our focus areas and then faced a tough five days of competition. The competition was against much older athletes, the majority being senior secondary students who were physically and mentally more mature in many aspects.

During the competition phase the girls played nine matches, a Semi Final and a Grand Final. The girls had drawn their first match and remained undefeated throughout all other matches of the challenge, as outlined in the results section of this report. Each match the girls stepped on court with pride to represent their nation, a specific goal for them as an individual and our unit/team goal(s). The girls went from strength to strength across the week as they built on each goal and added to their 'toolbox' of netball skills and strategies. These were measured both individually for players and through our unit KPIs, taken on the bench, which were feed back to the playing group at each break. The players each received an end of challenge report which outlined these statistics, their areas of growth and future areas for development.

We were so proud of the mature and responsible way in which the athletes conducted themselves in each and every aspect of their time representing SSA. It was a fitting end to a sensational journey to walk away with the Gold Medal!

**Kate Gray (Coach) &
Peta Trahair (Assistant Coach)**

****This challenge falls three weeks after the Netball Australia 17&U National competition which the majority of the girls were involved in or were training partners for their respective state teams.*