

SSA International Netball 2019 Report

23 May – 1 June

Palmerston North, New Zealand

Tour Leaders Report

The tour was organised based on the competition dates and format provided by the Aotearoa Maori Netball Oranga Healthy Lifestyles for the International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge.

The dates for the challenge were Monday 27th May to Friday 31st May so bookings were designed around providing education opportunity and preparing the team appropriately for the competition week ahead.

Flights and Transport were booked through MTA Travel and the Accommodation was booked based on recommendations from the host bulletins. The Hotel Coachman in Palmerston North was selected based on its proximity to the playing venue.

Itinerary

Training Camp – 28 February to 3 March 2019

Thursday 28 February	Arrival in Darwin for all team members including shadow squad NB. Peta Trahair and Ian Landy were already in Darwin at the SSA Conference
Friday 1 March	AM Training Session and Recovery
	PM – Barramundi Fishing Adventures (team building experience)
Saturday 2 march	AM - Training Session and Recovery
	PM – Training Session and Recovery
Sunday 3 March	Practice games versus local NT teams organised by Peta Trahair before departures at the Darwin Airport NB. Kate Gray stayed on one extra day to provide professional development to NT Coaches and players on Sunday afternoon.

International Tour – 23 May to 1 June 2019

Thursday 23 May

- Arrival in Sydney as a team
- Flight to Wellington and Drive to Palmerston North

Friday 24 May

- Education Tour of Rugby Museum, Palmerston North

Saturday 25 May

- Training at Central Energy Trust Arena and recovery at hotel

Sunday 26 May

- Training at Central Energy Trust Arena and recovery at hotel

- Opening Ceremony, Cultural Welcome and Teams Dinner

Monday 27 May

- Day One of Competition – Games vs Australian Indigenous and South Africa

Tuesday 28 May

- Day Two of Competition – Games vs Fiji and Auckland Tonga
- Visit to the Sport and Rugby Institute for use of the plunge pool and lunch recovery at Massey University

Wednesday 29 May

- Day Three of Competition – Games vs Pacific Rim and Aotearoa Maori

Thursday 30 May

- Day Four of Competition – Game vs Auckland Samoa and Semi Final vs Fiji
- Recovery and Dinner at Sport and Rugby Institute at Massey University

Friday 31 May

- Day Five of Competition – Final vs Aotearoa Maori

Saturday 1 June

- Drive to Wellington
- Departure for Sydney and then to home domestic destinations

Educational focus of the tour – where you went

We completed an education tour of the Rugby Museum, Palmerston North. This museum is similar to the National Sports Museum of Melbourne but focussed on the revered All Blacks and the history of the players and tours. It is manned by enthusiastic volunteers, and has an interactive zone giving the students an opportunity to kick for goal, use the tackle bags and test their strength against the scrum machine.

We also spent time at the Sport and Rugby Institute at Massey University using the 'green room', a large indoor facility with an artificial surface that Rugby Union players can use to tackle safely when the weather is inclement for training. We also used the plunge pool and spa for hot/cold recovery and were treated to some very impressive food served to athletes staying at the facility learning about how the University is athlete friendly.

The students also learnt much from the cultural exchange with an amazing opening ceremony, cultural welcome and team's dinner with all team's present. This exchange cannot be underestimated in terms of exposure to different cultures

And finally, the amount of work that went into discussions and practice of the mental side of participation in the games was amazing. Presentations on mindfulness were a regular part of each day and the Coaches led the students through many exercises to allow them to clear their minds and focus on the task of playing their role in the team.

Finally, the exchange of ideas between the team members and Suzi Giblett on a range of topics was a highlight. Suzi was much more than a sports trainer to the team. As a player, coach, and umpire of the sport, and as a counsellor and mentor to the girls, she provides a huge amount of knowledge on managing injuries, supporting the coaches' messages on styles of play, interpretations of rules and when things got tough how to be positive at all times.

What you think could be improved on for the following year and what worked well

What worked well?

- The Coaching staff were terrific in preparing the team
 - Kate completed an enormous amount of work for both the training camp and the tour with a handbook and related activities
 - Peta organised an amazing training camp (which had never been done before) giving the team and the shadows a chance to learn about each other and the style of play that was being taught. The tour would not have been as successful without this opportunity to meet (especially when one shadow member had to be brought in due to injury)
- The Sports Trainer was invaluable – as describe above, Suzi was far more than a medic
- The inclusion of the student coach when injury did not allow Charlotte Smith to take part was very valuable for the team and for Charlotte
- The organisation of the event by the host body was first class should be acknowledged as aspirational for others seeking to host.

What could be improved?

- Communication to parents regarding information and cost of International Tour
- Ensuring accommodation bookings match team officials expectations
- Accurate uniform measurements at try on

Any issues

- Communication of costs to parents
 - The cost given to parents in the initial information was unrealistic. When the budget was calculated and communicated this caused some parents to express concern.
- Uniform sizing and delivery – Issues with Sports Centre
- Accommodation that was booked had two problems on arrival
 - The Coaches required separate rooms which meant booking an additional room
 - The Tour Leaders room did not have adequate meal preparations or space requirements to be the hub for breakfast so a different room had to be booked on arrival.

Any Recommendations

- Budget accurately and advertise the cost of the training camp and tour with confidence to the selected team
- Continue to offer the training camp (including the shadows) in the city which best provides value for money for the students involved (use an equalisation method)
- Consider the inclusion of a student coach if any selected player is injured following selection, and the coaching staff believe the student will benefit.
- Consider the selection of a student umpire to attend the Challenge as part of the umpiring panel.
- Accept the offer to attend the next Challenge in Pretoria, South Africa
- Further develop the Education component of the experience outside of the netball

Team Manager Report

Details about the team

Melissa Oloamanu – Captain
Trinity Rond – Vice Captain
Kim Hearnden – Vice Captain
Ruth Aryang
Lucia Fauonuku
Holly Garac
Jessie Grenvold
Poppy Hancox
Abbey Hicks
Keisha Kean
Olivia Nicholls
Millie Roach
Charlotte Smith (Student Coach)

Team Results

SSA def Australian Indigenous	49-13
SSA def South Africa	30-21
SSA def Pacific Rim	40-22
SSA def Fiji	38-26
SSA def Auckland Tonga	32-23
SSA lost to Aotearoa Maori	24-27
SSA def Auckland Samoa	32-23
Semi Final - SSA def Fiji	28-22
Final - SSA lost to Aotearoa Maori	23-22 (Silver Medal)

Any team awards

SSA Tournament MVP – Melissa Oloamanu

Coach Report

The 2019 International Challenge was held from Thursday 23rd May until Saturday 1st June in Palmerston North, New Zealand.

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 biggest inclusion in preparation for the challenge was the Training Camp running prior to the Challenge. In terms of player fatigue levels and the ability to reflect, engrain and refine the learning prior to departure the training camp was an outstanding addition to the program. This however will

need to be weighed up each year with regards to additional costs for families and player loads in preparation for the 17&U carnival and Australian 17&U AIS Camp.

The first three days, of the above listed dates, included travel to New Zealand and then we moved into pre-challenge 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 bringing the structures and strategies the players had cognitively and physically run through at Training Camp and revisited prior to arrival into physical application. We refined our attacking and defensive structures and ensured each court area (goalers, centre courters and defenders) 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 were unable to play any practice matches against local sides to refine our focus areas due to logistical challenges in NZ. This is something that would have benefited the group and we would recommend including in future tours irrespective of practice matches at training camp. We 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 seven matches, a Semi Final and a Grand Final. The girls had gone undefeated in round matches until we met the Maori team where we were defeated by three goals; 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 play off in the Grand Final against the Maori team. Losing by only one goal in such a hard-fought affair was a fitting ending to our journey; to walk away with the Silver Medal is something the girls will hold dear for years to come!

As coaches one of the highlights would be the girls who game in to the Challenge fragile from poor recent netball experiences commenting by the end on having 'regained their love of the game', this is a true measure of how we hope each girl walks away from this experience. A hard fought affair that inspire them to want more from their netball.

**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. The challenge also falls a week before the girls selected from the 17&U competition for the Australian Squad travel to the AIS. These dates are standard additions in the netball calendar and with State*



bodies overseeing player loads more carefully on the relevant AMS (Athlete Management Systems) and greater focus on athlete overall wellbeing a conversation regarding the timing of this challenge will undoubtedly be raised in the not to distant future.