

SCHOOL SPORT AUSTRALIA 12 & U and 15 & U NETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS HISTORY

The championships had their origins in the Australian State Schools' Basketball Association developed originally for primary schools and played predominately on grass. Interstate carnivals commenced in 1923 and continued in 1924 when a number of exchanges between individual states occurred. In 1924 visiting teachers from Victoria, Queensland and South Australia to New South Wales made exhaustive inquiries into the question of girls' games with the view to inaugurating interstate contests. In 1925 South Australia hosted New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland in both a junior and senior competition, one of the games attracted over 2000 spectators. South Australia was victorious in the junior section and South Australia and Victoria both finished in first place in the senior. This competition continued in 1926 in New South Wales and 1927 in Victoria.

With the introduction of a perpetual trophy the first officially recognised Australian State Schoolgirls Basketball (Netball) Championship was played at the Practising School, Brisbane in 1928. The final, on the afternoon of the August 22nd, was before a large crowd. Victoria convincingly beat NSW 23 goals to 4 goals. Mr John Donald Howie donated the perpetual trophy following the win of Victoria. Mr Howie was a Victorian Councillor from 1922 – 1932 and Mayor of Camberwell in 1927 and 1928.

Australian schoolgirls tournaments were organised to combine both a netball competition and an educational tour, When girls weren't playing they attended lessons at the local school or made educational day trips. In Brisbane the girls visited Toowoomba, the Olympic Tyre and Rubber Works in Geebung and took a trip to the South Coast of Queensland.

Netball rules and clothing endorsed notions that girls must retain their femininity and modesty if they participate in sport. Netball attire at this time consisted of billowing bloomers, which were caught at the knees, stockings to cover the legs, blouses and a hat or scarf placed around their hair line and tied at the back of the neck. Netball rules endorsed the myth that women should not over exert themselves in sport.

All players except the wing attack were restricted to play in a designated third of the court. Rules prevented play on movement or physical contest. For example, there was no rebounding after missed goals. Missed goals resulted in a throw in by a defence. Furthermore a throw in from the sideline required your opponent to stand next to you (outside the court) and no player was allowed to be within nine feet of the thrower. To prevent unbecoming behaviour, the game was a 'silent' game with only the captain permitted to speak on court. The game consisted of six terms which were seven minutes in length. The interval between each of the terms was two minutes except at half-time when the interval was five minutes.

In 1929 the age group for the competition was the age of 15 in the year of the competition. For many years only four states competed (NSW, Qld, SA, Vic). In 1930 the following rules were altered:

1. The ball shall be bounced in the centre of the field with sufficient force to reach the head height of players.
2. Goal throwing – the goal thrower may alternate feet after catching the ball.

There have been two breaks in the competition continuity with an outbreak of infantile paralysis in 1937 and the Second World War from 1939-1948. Although the war finished in 1945 it took a number of years for the competition to be revived. In 1947 much effort was made to restart the competition but only Queensland travelled to Melbourne and Victoria travelled to Adelaide but all three states were to encourage other states to participate in 1948. In 1948 NSW, Victoria and South Australia competed in Melbourne with the hope that a fourth team would participate in 1949 bringing about the resumption of the competition. In 1949 the carnival did recommence when South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania competed in Adelaide. This was the first time that Tasmania competed in the competition.

The Australian State Schools' Basketball Association Constitution of the time stated that the Association comprised of the following bodies – The Victorian State Schools' Amateur Athletics Association (later becoming The Victorian State Schools' Girls Basketball Council); The NSW Public Schools Amateur Athletics Association; The South Australian Public Schools' Sports Association and The Queensland State Primary Schools' Basketball Association. Later was the inclusion of The Tasmanian State Schools Sports' Council and The Western Australian State Schools' Sports Association.

The objects of the Association were the development of girls' basketball throughout the State Schools of the Commonwealth of Australia and to organise Interstate basketball contests in such a manner that the participants would derive the highest educational value from such contests. When voting each state was allowed two delegates and if the vote was equal the Chairman had the casting vote on matters other than constitution.

The carnival has continued unbroken since 1949. In 1950, as a result of a suggestion from the late Mr. R. McGregor, General Manager of the Victorian State Schools Amateur Athletics Association to the Australian State schools' Basketball Association Council conference held during the carnival staged by the NSW Amateur Athletics Association in Sydney, a record book was commenced. Records from 1950 show there was a junior and senior component, with activities spanning almost two weeks!

The Council met once during the carnival as an AGM to discuss the by-laws and rules changes. During the 1950 conference Tasmania, which was participating in their second carnival was accepted as an 'organised school body' within the terms of the constitution. For 1950, no trophy was available for the junior section so the council decided that each state should contribute (£1.1.0 - 1 pound, 1 shilling) towards the purchase of a cup to be known as 'The Interstate Girls Basketball Trophy – Junior Division' and be for the annual competition. The senior teams played for the 'Howie Cup'.

A 'senior' and 'junior' Australian team were selected to play two other teams - 'The Rest'. The Australian Selectors comprised of a panel selected from different States at the Preliminary Conference. This was the beginning of the selection of an Australian representative team, a tradition that still continues at the 15 and Under Championship today.

In 1953 a second meeting of the Council was programmed into the carnival. This was named the Preliminary Conference and was introduced in order that the examination of birth certificates and other such matters as deemed necessary could be discussed. At this meeting it was moved and carried that only women teachers be appointed as Manageresses for the Interstate Basketball teams.

In 1954 the game consisted of ten minute quarters with intervals of three, five and three minutes. In 1955 the age limit for the senior girls was 15 years of age on the 1st of September in the year the carnival is held. The junior team comprised of girls who had not reached their 14th birthday and did not turn 14 in the year of the competition.

The competition became All-Australian (all states but no territories) with the entry of Western Australia in 1956. This tournament was held in Brisbane and the Western Australian team travelled nearly 4000 miles by train, which took them nearly a week! This was due to the changing railway gauge and the passengers and freight changes. They had to change trains at Kalgoorlie, Port Pirie, Adelaide, Melbourne, Albury and Sydney.

By the 1956 tournament, the rules and clothing had modified to permit some freedom of movement. Hats, knee-length bloomers and stockings had been discarded. Sports tunics closely resembled box pleated school uniforms which covered the blouse and were drawn in at the waist by a cord or sash. The tunic was required to be seven inches from the ground when kneeling. Regular checks were carried out by netball associations at the beginning of each season. Girls were required to line up, kneel down and have their hem length checked.

Many restrictive features still remained – it was still a 'silent' game and rebounding from missed shots was still not permitted – actually as soon as the goalie took aim no one was allowed to move. As the goalie could take up to five seconds the immobility of the defences demonstrated the emphasis of no physical contest. By 1960 there were 6 states competing regularly at various venues in rotation. In 1961 all states fielded both junior and senior teams – a total of 120 girls.

In 1964, after a recommendation from the Directors of Education it was moved that the junior team be withdrawn from future carnivals so the teams were reduced to one per state. The following year the council unanimously decided that the junior trophy would remain in the hands of the state that had won it the most times. Consequently it is held by SA who had won it 8 times since 1950. SAPSASA still have the trophy in their cabinet today.

In 1965 council decided that the playing time would be increased from four quarters of ten minutes to four quarters of fifteen minutes. In 1966 bibs began to be worn stating positions. The bibs read AW and DW –

attack wing and defence wing. The seven positions were goalie, attack, attack wing, centre, defence wing, defence and goal defence.

With the gradual rise of age limits for participants, the staging of these competitions became difficult for a primary school body and so in 1967 the secondary school sports body took over responsibility increasing the age to 16. During this time Queensland and NSW withdrew from the competition as they requested that the competition be open age. Also in 1967 the number of umpires increased to two with each umpire taking responsibility for umpiring half of the court and their sideline.

1968 saw the re-establishment of interstate exchanges at a primary school level. South Australia made an exchange with Tasmania (basketball in Hobart). In 1969 South Australia received Queensland in football and basketball. It was hoped that other states would soon compete also and bring about a resumption of Australia-wide interchanges. The team size in 1969 was 10 players and their maximum age was 13 during the year of the carnival.

In 1969 at the secondary championship all players needed insurance cover. Parents/guardians were required to sign a certificate certifying that their child was fully insured against injury with 24 hours coverage.

1970 was the year that basketball was renamed as netball. Netball was the term used in England and by taking on this name change this gave netball an international focus.

It took until 1971 for the first Australian Netball Exchange to be held in Launceston, Tasmania. At the time the primary netball and Australian Rules football were hosted together and this joint event continued together until 1995. In 1972 when NSW won the exchange Mr Charles Ebert Assistant Director of Education who was the department liaison officer for the NSWPSA donated a trophy to be awarded annually at this competition.

1973 was the first time that secondary netball and hockey were programmed together, with four states involved (SA, WA, Tas, Vic) with both the hockey and netball competition. 1977 saw the largest possible competition as included for the first time where all the states of Australia and the two territories. This continued until 1989 when the first time since the inception of the Secondary Hockey/Netball Championships, the netball and hockey were held in completely different locations; netball in Launceston and hockey in Hobart.

In 1974 Betty Bennett (Victoria) was awarded a service award in the form of a silver medallion for outstanding service to girls' interstate netball over a long period of time. Betty was recognised again in 1991 when life memberships were awarded. Also this year it was passed that private school students could be included in teams if states association agreed to this. In 1982 three substitutes could be used but they could only take the court at half time. In 1987 officials from all secondary teams voted to enable all players to be interchanged at any of the intervals, a revolutionary move that was to be adopted by Netball Australia in the nineties. This enabled the coaches to make more use of all of their players.

1990 was the final year for the combined Secondary Hockey/Netball Championships. Julie Hewson (WA) became the first National Secretary for netball and reported that hockey and netball would be separating and using different By-Laws. For 16 years all eight affiliates had supported the combined championships - quite a remarkable record in women's sport.

1991 was the first official Australian Secondary Schools' Netball Championships since 1972. Unfortunately Tasmania withdrew from all school sport interstate competitions, not competing in a netball championship for 8 years. This was due to the Tasmanian Education Department no longer funding their school sport department.

1991 was also the first time that Netball Australia (AANA) had direct involvement through the presence of Jill McIntosh who was then the National Coaching Director. Jill who went on to become the National Coach attended the secondary championship (despite her hectic schedule) for the next thirteen years. She was a past player (1970) of this championship, being a member of the victorious Western Australia side and earning selection in the All Australia Schoolgirls' Team.

This liaison has continued to strengthen each year with the involvement of Netball Australia representatives at every championship since this time. From 1997 through to 1999 Janet Bothwell (the then National Coaching Director) conducted a Professional Development session for the state officials. This has become a very important component

of this championship and greatly appreciated by all involved. In 1991 a Merit Award was introduced, awarded to a skilful player who had just missed out on representative selection but showed potential.

For the first time in the history of the 15s championship, the teams participated in finals at the end of the round in 1992. Not only did this bring a climax to the excellent competition it also gave all the teams a chance to compete for specific finishing positions. 1995 saw the introduction of an Umpires' Convenor appointed by Netball Australia at the secondary championship, ensuring the appointment of umpires from a neutral pool was in line with other Netball Australia national championships. Chris Burton (the then National Umpires' Director) was instrumental in ensuring this continues. Chris was also a past South Australian player (1959) and selected in the All Australian Team at this Championship. Chris also coached the SA team in 1970.

At the finish of the 1992 championship Julie Hewson retired from the position of National Netball Secretary having re-established the Australian Secondary Schools' Netball Championships as a strong female event on the Australian School Sport Council calendar. Paula Nielsen a previous SA team coach was appointed to the National Netball Secretary position with the aim to further develop the competition and strengthen ties with Netball Australia. She continues in this position today.

In 1995 with the introduction of the National Junior Sport Policy interstate competitions conducted at the primary level needed the endorsement of the National Sporting Organisation to continue and as Netball Australia would not endorse the primary exchange this competition was disbanded until 1999. During these years tri state/territory competitions were conducted between South Australia, Victoria and Australian Capital Territory and another between New South Wales, Queensland and Northern Territory.

In 1996 the secondary Merit Award was changed to the Players' Player Award. This winner was selected by the players themselves. At the completion of each game the players individually voted for a player from the opposition based on court behaviour, execution of skills and contribution to their team. David Johnson (Kea Designer Sportswear/Champion/On Track Sportswear) began sponsoring the award in 1996 and has sponsored this award ever since.

1998 saw the introduction of up to 12 players instead of 10 players who can compete for each state or territory at the national championships; this also came in line with all other Netball Australia championships. It added another dimension to the game as coaches' work to use all 12 players during the minor rounds. This also gave more players the opportunity to compete for their state at this level.

In 1999 School Sport Australia gave permission for the primary exchange to continue and the event was conducted in Katherine, Northern Territory. To encourage the number of primary aged students at this event all states/territories involved sent 2 teams of 10 players. Since 1999 the exchange has invited school aged umpires to accompany teams encouraging the development of junior umpires. This was the first year that the National Netball Secretary was invited to attend the primary exchange with the aim to assist with the competition and to work towards having the event endorsed by Netball Australia.

The secondary championship in 1999 once again saw the return to a truly national championship with Tasmania rejoining the competition. The team coordinated by Netball Tasmania proudly represented their state.

In 2000 at the primary exchange Northern Territory could not afford to send two teams so South Australia fielded 3 teams. From 2001 the primary exchange converted back to one team of 12 players per state/territory with ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA and VIC competing and the format involved a double round robin competition with player development activities interspersed.

2001 saw the renaming of the championship to the School Sport Australia 15 and Under Netball Championship and the Exchange to the School Sport Australia 12 and Under Netball Exchange. This was to come in line with the Netball Australia underage championships and the School Sport Australia sport by-laws and guidelines.

After two years of planning the named secondary Australian team competed in a Trans-Tasman competition in New Zealand in 2002. The inaugural team of 12 players from four states competed in New Zealand against a New Zealand Schools Representative team, a Maori team (Aotearoa) and a Pacific Islands team (Pasifika). After a very closely fought out final against New Zealand the School Sport Australia team won by 1 goal on the same day that

Australia beat New Zealand at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. A great effort considering the New Zealand girls were on average two years older than the Australian girls. Congratulations to Cathy Fellows (VIC), Marg Smith (SA) and Stacey Campton (ACT) the inaugural coach, manager and umpire and inaugural co-captains Julie Prendagast (VIC – current ANZ Championship player and Australian player), Joanne Sutton (NSW – past ANZ championship player and past Australian player).

A Partnership Agreement was signed between Netball Australia and School Sport Australia in 2002 with both parties agreeing to work co-operatively and in partnership in the promotion and development of school netball programs at both the state and national levels. 2003 saw the appointment of all umpires to the secondary championship according to Netball Australia policy strengthening the link between School Sport Australia and Netball Australia. This gave another opportunity for TID umpires to experience competition at a national level. It also greatly assisted the players, as the funding of the umpires was no longer part of the levy.

In 2004 the International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge was hosted in Adelaide an extension of the Trans Tasman Challenge with 7 teams competing. This was the first time an Indigenous School Sport Australia team competed along with School Sport Australia, Netball New Zealand, Aotearoa, Pasifika, Cook Islands and Bastion High School from South Africa. It is hoped that this competition would continue to grow with IFNA (International Netball Federation) showing interest in supporting this event.

2005 saw a return of the 15 & Under Championship to Launceston, Tasmania. It had last been held in Tasmania in 1989, 16 years ago. It was a long awaited return.

In 2006 the 15 & Under Championship Players' Player Award was renamed the Amy Safe (Gillett) Award. Amy was tragically killed in a cycling accident overseas when representing Australia at the World Cycling Championship. She had previously represented South Australia in 1990 and 1991 at this Championship. As a 15 year old when asked what were the characteristics of a top sportsperson she wrote, "Determination, ambition to succeed, ability to accept decisions and any failures and continue on." This she did as Amy represented Australia in both rowing and cycling and South Australia in netball and triathlon. She is sadly missed but will now always be remembered at this Championship.

The International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge returned to Adelaide in 2006 with Singapore entering for the first time. Congratulations must go to the 2006 selected School Sport Australia team which competed in Auckland New Zealand in 2007 beating Netball New Zealand by 1 goal in the grand final. The team officials were co-coaches Kristy Keppich- Birrell (VIC), Joanne Macdermid (NSW) and manager Bernie Toohey (QLD) with the captain Ashton Hurn (SA). 2008 once again saw the International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge hosted in Adelaide. This year Sri Lanka entered the competition for the first time.

At the 2008 15 & Under Championship it was agreed that the draw from 2009 onwards would now be based on the finishing position of each of the teams in the previous year. This ceased the long standing tradition of the manager at the post championship meeting selecting a number by ballot that would decide the team's position in the draw.

After an invitation to attend the 12 & Under Exchange was extended to Carol Byers (Netball Australia Coaching development and Participation Manager) in 2008, wheels were put in motion to gain the endorsement of Netball Australia for this exchange. Carol could view first-hand the many student-centred learning opportunities that all participants experienced throughout the week and could see the value in the exchange at this age level.

In 2008 the first semi-professional netball competition in Australasia was introduced as a joint adventure between Netball Australia and Netball New Zealand named the ANZ Championship. The competition ran for nine years with an average of 35 past players from our championship competing for one of the ten franchises over the nine years, a remarkable achievement.

The 2009 competition saw the renaming of the Exchange to the 12 and Under Netball Championship to bring it in line with all other School Sport Australia events.

An official Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Netball Australia and School Sport Australia in 2009. This formalised a cooperative agreement between the two parties for both the 12 and under and 15 and under championships. With the 12 and Under Championships, Netball Australia commended the appointment of student

umpires and offered assistance in appointing personnel to coach these students. They requested that school Sport Australia ensure that team coaches have accreditation and that parent education sessions were conducted prior to the championship. At the 15 and Under Championships Netball Australia agreed to manage and fund the appointment of umpires and the umpires' allocation panel, provide coach education and provide a selector for the Australian team. Further to this at the international level Netball Australia agreed to assist in finding suitable international teams to invite to compete and manage and fund the appointment of umpires and the allocation panel. The MOU was renegotiated in 2010, again in 2011 and continues to be renegotiated.

2010 saw the International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge return to Adelaide with Bukit Jalil Sports School in Malaysia entering the competition. The selected 2010 secondary Australian team competed in Wellington, NZ in 2011 and beat Netball NZ by 12 goals, an outstanding effort. Well done to coach Kristy Keppich-Birrell (VIC), assistant coach Leesa Gallard (VIC), manager Peta Maher (SA) and captain Kaitlyn Brice (NSW).

2012 saw the return of Western Australia to the 12 and Under Championship, they had not competed since 1964. To incorporate WA into the competition a double round robin could no longer be held so a single round robin followed by a "like-ability" second round robin was with the player development activities. 2012 was also SAPSASA's 100 year celebration and as part of the celebration the 12 and under netball and Australian football championships were hosted at the same time. This gave the opportunity for both teams from the same state/territory to mix together as they did from 1991 – 1995.

Also 2012 saw the International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge hosted once again in Adelaide with Samoa entering the competition for the first time. It was once again a fantastic week of netball, networking and fellowship for all of the girls.

Following the 2013 12 and under championships it was agreed by all team officials to return to the double round robin format so games were shortened to 8 minute quarters and players restricted to only 8 quarters on any one day. This would encourage the use of all 12 players and remove the finals format in 2014. For the first time in the history of School Sport Australia an indigenous team competed in the 12 and under championships. The Budgies Indigenous Netball team filled the bye which was created as Tasmania does not currently enter a team at this level. Congratulations to Shane Ambrum, Deb Farrell and JoAnne Kelly (team officials) who did a fantastic job putting together the indigenous team which included girls from Queensland, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia. It was agreed if there was ever a bye and no other state/territory wished to put in a side then the Budgies would be invited.

The International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge hosted in Adelaide in 2014 including Fijiana FANZ (Fijian's in NZ & Australia) and the Auckland Tonga Netball Association as first time competitors increasing the competition to 10.

It was disappointing that Netball NZ in 2015 chose to withdraw from the International Netball Championships particularly as they developed the competition back in 2002 but it was with excitement that the International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge was hosted by Bukit Jalil Sports School in Malaysia - the first time outside of NZ or Australia. At the 15s championship post championship meeting the length of quarters was reduced from 12 to 10 minutes to come in line with Netball Australia rules. At the 15s championship post championship meeting the length of quarters was reduced from 12 to 10 minutes to come in line with Netball Australia rules. In 2016 the International Schoolgirls was hosted in New Zealand for the first time by Aotearoa Maori and it was great to see the New Zealand Secondary School Netball team return to the competition for this one year.

In May 2016, Netball Australia announced that it would be parting ways with Netball New Zealand leaving behind the ANZ Championships and introduced a professional Australian competition called the Suncorp Super Netball. Three new franchises were introduced - Giants Netball, Magpies Netball Club and the Sunshine Coast Lightning joining the five existing Australian teams - Adelaide Thunderbirds, Melbourne Vixens, NSW Swifts, Queensland Firebirds and West Coast Fever. In 2020 the following 32 past players will compete for one of the ten franchises.

Adelaide Thunderbirds –Chelsea Pitman (2002/03) NSW, Maisie Nankivell (2014) SA.

Giants Netball - Kiera Austin (2010), NSW, Caitlin Bassett (2002/03) WA, Matilda McDonnell (2015) NSW, Kristiana

Manu'a (2010) NSW, Samantha Poolman (2006), NSW.

Magpies Netball Club - Ashleigh Brazil (2004) NSW, Kelsey Browne (2007) VIC, Madison Browne (2003) VIC, Molly Jovic (2010) VIC, Natalie Medhurst (1998/99) SA.

Melbourne Vixens – Tayla Honey (2012) VIC, Emily Mannix (2009) VIC, Caitlin Thwaites (2001) VIC, Liz Watson (2009) VIC, Joanna Weston (2009) VIC.

NSW Swifts – Sophie Garbin (2012) WA, Sarah Klau (2009) SA, Lauren Moore (2013) NSW.

Queensland Firebirds – Mahalia Cassidy (2010) QLD, Tara Hinchcliff (2013) QLD, Kim Jenner (2013) QLD, Jemma MiMi (2011) QLD.

Sunshine Coast Lightning – Annika Lee-Jones (2011) WA, Jacqui Russell (2003) QLD, Stephanie Wood (2006) QLD.

West Coast Fever – Jessica Anstiss (2011) WA, Verity Charles (Simmons) (2006) NSW, Olivia Lewis (2013/2014) WA, Kaylia Stanton (2007/08) WA, Alice Teague-Neeld (2010/11) VIC.

2017 the International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge was hosted by Netball Fiji in Suva, Fiji. This was the first time that Netball Fiji had entered a team in the challenge and it was exciting for them to have the opportunity to host the event. It was a particularly educational and cultural week with many opportunities for our team to mix with the locals. A highlight of the week was visiting the Suva Methodist School playing netball against the school netball team and handing out netballs to the school.

In 2017 this netball championship became part of the Pacific School Games (PSG), an international school sport event involving around 4000 students in 11 different sports. This was the first time in many years that the 12s and 15s championships competed together at the same event. The 12s competition includes the same team as in 2016 but in the 15s championship the Budgies Indigenous team and India entered into the competition.

2018 saw the International Schoolgirls Netball Challenge hosted for the first time by the Budgies Indigenous Netball Team in Runaway Bay, Queensland. This was a great week of netball and congratulations must go to the School Sport Australia team that defeated the Auckland Samoa Netball team 44-37 in the grand final. Well done to coach Kate Gray (VIC), assistant coach Peta Trahair (NT), Manager Dian Sexton (NSW) and co-captains Maddison Ridley (VIC) and Reilly Batcheldor (QLD).

2019 saw the first boy compete in the 12 and Under Championship as a representative for Western Australia. Given equal opportunities for all students at this age group and there not being a separate boys' competition both genders are eligible.

Many of our Australian representatives in netball have had their first championship experience at this level and it is important to note that a number of our former competitors have been most successful at the international level. Current Australian squad members who have taken part in the School Sport Australia Netball Championship are Kiera Austin (2010), NSW, Caitlin Bassett (2002/2003) WA, Ashleigh Brazil (2004) NSW, Sarah Klau (2009) SA, Emily Mannix (2009) VIC, Stephanie Wood (2006), Liz Watson (2009) VIC and Jo Weston (2009) VIC.

Since 1923, there have been many rule changes and netball is under continuous reappraisal. Today's schoolgirls enjoy netball rules which encourage fast and vigorous play. The movement between thirds permits greater mobility. Rules allow, and rebounding from missed goal shots almost demands, much more physically demanding contests for the ball. Agility and freedom of movement is complemented by sports uniforms which allow this freedom.

Netball has changed dramatically from the first official tournament in Brisbane in 1928 but the renewal of old acquaintances, the establishment of new friendships along with the importance of the interstate competition have remained as essential features of both the School Sport Australia 15 and Under and 12 and Under Netball Championships.

Paula Nielsen

National Netball Secretary 1993-2020

(including extracts from "Netball Looking Back" by Jan Ryan, Western Australia)