



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **SINGAPORE WIN AGAIN TO BOOK THEIR PLACE IN THE NATIONS CUP FINALS**

*Goal difference determines who the hosts will face in close continental contest*

The final day of group matches at the Nations Cup created plenty of drama on court as each team was fighting for vital points to secure a top position on the points table.

Following a much-needed rest day yesterday, the teams were looking fresh and re-energised, knowing how much was at stake in the competition where vital world ranking points are up for grabs alongside the championship title.

**Papua New Guinea** started their final group match sitting joint-second on the table and knew that nothing but a win against the **Republic of Ireland** would see them into the grand final. They lifted the Nations Cup trophy back in 2008 but in their last appearance in 2011 could only manage a 5<sup>th</sup> place so the squad – which included many familiar faces from their past outings - had much to prove.

It was PNG who started the better of the two sides going ahead 17-11 after the first quarter, though both teams made several errors and looked tense on court.

Ireland was desperate to secure a second win in the competition and came here with the aim of bettering their 6<sup>th</sup> place finish in 2012, but they were always on the back foot and failed to convert too many vital scoring opportunities in the first half with it ending 33-17.

PNG were very aware of the small goal percentage that was separating them from Uganda and had to up their tempo in the second half to give them a fighting chance which they did to great effect, though Ireland didn't make it easy for them. The final score was an impressive **66-33** but they had to wait and see if it would be enough of a margin to nudge them into the final.

Co-Captain Maleeta Roberts explained, “We knew we had to win that one by a lot. We tried to get 20 goals every quarter but it wasn’t easy. We managed to pull it out in the end, we had a good chat at half time and asked everyone to give one more percent and we did.”

Speculating on their possible finals spot she added, “We need to start strongly tomorrow and play our game. Short, sharp passing and not get drawn into our opponents style of play. We need to be true to ourselves and work for each other.”

Ireland were disappointed to slip behind by so much but have still shown great improvement from last year and now have a shot to end the competition in 5<sup>th</sup> position, one better than 2012.

Coach Kaylea McQuade said, “That was tough for the girls. We started well; we seemed to be doing that this week, then letting one bad quarter affect the rest of our game. We had too many errors and PNG kept pushing for the full game. I want the girls to learn from this experience and we have put more pressure on ourselves this year because we have worked hard and know we can do better. We really want to end on a high tomorrow and get another win tomorrow.”

**Sri Lanka** was up against **Uganda** in the second match on court, the Asian side looking to upset the ‘She-Cranes’ intended run to the finals. Uganda have continued to improve over the week and played with grace and consistency throughout the 60 minutes. Other than their towering goal shooter, Proscovia Peace, they do not possess much height across the court, but what they lack vertically; they more than make up for in agility and accuracy.

They took a 21-35 lead into the second half and didn’t look back stretching their advantage to 29-53 with one quarter remaining.

The African defenders seemed to rattle Tharjini Sivalingam in the Sri Lankan circle and she missed several chances and was replaced in the second half by Thisala Algama who was effective for her side when they faced Singapore on Tuesday. She took her chances well but they were few and far between as Uganda continued to apply the pressure. They closed out the match **38-75** and tied with PNG on points for the competition.

Using the goal percentage system Uganda has made it into the final in their first appearance at the Nations Cup and their coach Fred Mugerwa is very happy to be in this winning position.

He said, "This is what I expected, we knew we had to win today so I told the girls that the people back home expect a lot from us as we must treat each game as if it is the finals. Today we have won by the margin that we wanted. We scored more goals than PNG and we have made it."

Looking ahead to the big match tomorrow he said, "It is always difficult to beat a team twice in a tournament and we don't know what our opposition will have in store for us but we will come and play as if we have never met them before."

Sri Lankan Coach, Somitha De Alwis felt her team were on the rough side of some physical play but overall happy as they did their best against a strong side.

She said, "Uganda played a very different style that we are used to in Asia. They are very hard players and we are not used to that. We tried our best on court today."

Sri Lanka will play off for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> position tomorrow versus PNG. In their previous four appearances they have never finished higher than fourth so they will be hoping to buck the trend and also reverse their 52-76 defeat by the 'Pepes' on Sunday.

Alwis added, "We are always happy to play PNG. We did not settle into the game well when we played them earlier so I think we can do better tomorrow and we are aiming for third position."

The crowds stayed in their droves to watch the closing match of the day between the **USA** and **Singapore**.

Singapore needed to victory to secure a top-two finish and after a nervous start in the opening quarter, they soon found their rhythm and tempo and had a 14 goal advantage after the first 15 minutes.

Midway during the second quarter, goal shooter Cassandra Soh suffered an injury that forced her to retire with Yu Meiling, a consistent scorer this week, came on in replacement

and kept the momentum going, closing the half 13-33 and the place in the finals well within their grasp.

The second half continued in the same fashion with Singapore able to rotate their team to give everyone in the squad some valuable court-time and still stretch ahead comfortably. The final whistle blew on a **23-75** score line – Singapore’s largest winning margin of the competition and the chance of revenge against Uganda.

Captain Lin Qingyi said, “We had a really tough match against Uganda last time so we have to figure out a plan and hopefully we can get a good result out of it tomorrow.”

Coach Ruth Aitken added, “We have got to work really hard and be united. We have been given another chance against Uganda to redeem ourselves and we must show Singapore that we have learnt from our experience.

“Uganda go in as the favourites and they deserve that based on their performances but we have to be really tenacious in our defence and confident in our attack. Sport is an amazing thing and we are going all out to win tomorrow.”

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For more information on Netball Singapore, log onto: [www.netball.org.sg](http://www.netball.org.sg)

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	PNG	Ireland	S'pore	Sri Lanka	Uganda	USA	For	Against	Pts	Goal Avg
PNG		66 - 33	43-44	76 - 52	52 - 52	72 - 31	309	212	7	145.75%
Ireland	33 - 66		31 - 42	49- 65	41-54	62 -33	216	260	2	83.08%
S'pore	44 - 43	42 - 31		60- 43	32-60	75 - 23	253	200	8	126.50%
Sri Lanka	52 - 76	65- 49	43 - 60		38 - 75	67 - 37	265	297	4	89.23%
Uganda	52 - 52	54 - 41	60-32	75 - 38		Lose by w/o	241	163	7	147.85%
USA	31 - 72	33 - 62	23 - 75	37 - 67	Win by w/o		124	276	2	44.93%

**RESULTS:**

**Papua New Guinea 66-33 Republic of Ireland (HT 33-17)**

**Sri Lanka 38-75 Uganda (HT 21-35)**

**USA 23-75 Singapore (HT 13-33)**

**DAY 4:**

**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		
7 <sup>th</sup> December Saturday	1.00pm	Republic of Ireland	V	USA
	3.00pm	Papua New Guinea	V	Sri Lanka
	5.00pm	Singapore	V	Uganda
	6.30pm	Closing Ceremony		

### **Current World Rankings** (as of 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2013)

Papua New Guinea – 18<sup>th</sup>

Republic of Ireland – 28<sup>th</sup>

Singapore – 21<sup>st</sup>

Sri Lanka – 23<sup>rd</sup>

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

United States of America – 19<sup>th</sup>

### **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 21<sup>st</sup> 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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Pictures available on request