



PRESS RELEASE
07 DECEMBER 2013

UGANDA CAPTURE THE NATIONS CUP 2013

Global contest closes with spectacular final day action in Singapore

Finals day at the 8th edition of the Nations Cup in Singapore didn't disappoint the packed stadium at Toa Payoh Sports Hall as **Uganda** lifted the Nations Cup trophy over hosts Singapore and the battles for the remaining positions were just as fierce.

Kicking off proceedings with the match to determine fifth and sixth places, the **Republic of Ireland** took on the **USA** with the Irish having the confidence of a victory over the USA on Tuesday and hoping for a repeat performance. It was a slow start to the scoring with both teams struggling to take control and convert their chances but Ireland settled into their rhythm and took the first quarter 15-6, maintaining the margin for a 30-11 advantage at halftime, and slotting in another 14 goals in the third (44-19).

The USA did look stronger in this game than their previous outing and tried to control the game at a slower tempo than the Irish usually play. Annette Payne (USA Captain) once again showed her versatility by moving positions throughout the match and Swasha Perkins played with pace and athleticism to keep her team fighting for scoring opportunities.

For Ireland, Captain Niamh Murphy led by example with a high work-rate in the centre and Genevieve Slater made several impressive interceptions during her time on court as Goal Keeper. They finished strongly and closed out the match **61-26** to record their second win of the competition and go one better than 2012, by finishing in 5th position, while the USA take 6th place.

Coach of the USA, Kevin Nickie, feels his team has learnt a lot from their first time at the Nations Cup. He said, "It has been a great experience. We have learned how to play against teams from the pacific side of the world, a very different style of netball. We have a lot to work on when we get home particularly our zone defence. We can capitalise on this and take it forward."

Irish Captain Niamh Murphy was delighted to finish on a high. She explained, “We are delighted with our performance today. We wanted to get another win over them, it was very physical but we did well. All our players got on which was good. Our final position is an improvement on last year and our matches during the week were also a lot closer than they were last year so it’s been really good. We don’t get the chance to play teams of this level at home so it is so good for our development. We really hope we can come back and be part of it again next year.”

The stadium was filling up fast when **Papua New Guinea (PNG)** and **Sri Lanka** stepped on court for the third and fourth play-off match at 3pm. Their earlier match-up was on the opening day of the competition with PNG winning comfortably 76-52 but they were not going to have it so easy today and there was just one goal in it after the first quarter: 13-14 in favour of the Asian team.

Sri Lanka were once again working well in the centre court with another strong performance from Captain Mareesha Fernando (WA) and vice-captain Semini Alwis (GA) linking up well to keep the attack going.

The Pepes gained composure in the second period and took the advantage (29-26 at halftime) but winning it by only four goals after Tiata Baldwin (GA) missed several scoring chances, PNG could not afford to step off the gas as they entered the final 30 minutes of play.

Baldwin switched to GK for the second half to partner Kilala Owen in the defensive circle in an attempt to shut down Tharjini Sivalingam (GS) but Sri Lanka fought back and won the third quarter by two goals, trailing by a single going into the final period.

PNG were already disappointed at not having a chance at the title after missing out on goal percentage to Uganda and they were not prepared to settle for anything less than third position so they raised the tempo one more notch which was enough to push them in front again and they won **60-48** in the end – the score line perhaps giving the false impression that it was an easy victory for them.

Co-Captain for PNG, Winnie Maverera, was relieved to have come out on top. She said, “We knew that Sri Lanka would give us a tough game after we beat them by a big margin last time. We were disappointed not to make the final. Sri Lanka came out strongly and we have

a few injuries so it was hard for us. In the fourth quarter we gave it our all. We have nothing left, we go home after this, and it worked.”

Sri Lanka has to once again settle for fourth position – the fourth time in their five appearances finishing in this spot but Captain Mareesha Fernando can see the potential in her young team.

She said, “My players did very well. This is a new team and they don’t have much experience so they weren’t able to hold in the final quarter. This exposure for us is excellent and we will improve for next year.”

Singapore and **Uganda** followed at 5pm and battled for the Nations Cup title in front of over 2,000 noisy fans with the hosts determined to improve on their performance against ‘She-Cranes’ on Wednesday when they went down 32-60.

The match began at a frantic pace, both teams trying to get the early advantage and it was Uganda who got out in front by six goals in the opening quarter (8-14). They didn’t look back and the formidable shooting combination of Proscovia Peace and Hadijah Nakabuke with her one-handed technique, amassed 29 points by the half, with Singapore only able to claim 12 in return.

It was proving very difficult to work the ball round the athletic Ugandans but Singapore looked to be finding ways to combat this in the third quarter (12-13) but the early deficit was too much to pull back against such a strong and physical side. Uganda remained ahead for the final period and took the title on their inaugural visit to the Nations Cup with a **29-52** result.

Peace spoke on behalf of her team after the match. She said, “We are very happy. This has been overwhelming, thank you to the crowd for supporting us and thank you to Netball Singapore for this opportunity.”

Singapore Coach Ruth Aitken gave her reflection on the final saying, “The first two quarters we really challenged in terms of getting some flow into our attack. We adjusted so much better in the second half. It is a tough ask to come back from that far down but the commitment from the team to finish strongly was really commendable.”

Captain Lin Qingyi added, "We did very well this week and have a very good squad and were happy to use all our players and this is really positive for us in aiming for the Asian Championships. That is nine months down the road though so we must work really hard as we want to have the best chance to defend our title."

An African side has now taken the Nations Cup title twice, following Tanzania's success in 2012. It was Singapore's win back in 2007 when we last saw an Asian side victorious but the hosts have improved vastly since their 5th place result in 2012 and they now look ahead and set their sights firmly on the Asian Championships in 2014 which will be held in the OCBC Indoor Arena from 7-14th September.

-END-

For more information on Netball Singapore, log onto: www.netball.org.sg

Facebook: Netball Singapore

Twitter: Netball_SG

FINAL STANDINGS:

1st: Uganda

2nd: Singapore

3rd: Papua New Guinea

4th: Sri Lanka

5th: Republic of Ireland

6th: United States of America

RESULTS:

Ireland 61-26 USA (HT 30-11)

Papua New Guinea 60-48 Sri Lanka (HT 29-26)

Singapore 29-52 Uganda (HT 12-29)

Most Valuable Player Awards:

USA: Pheona Forbes

IRELAND: Genevieve Slater

PNG: Kimberly Alex

SRI LANKA: Gayani Dissanayake

UGANDA: Nakachwa Halima

SINGAPORE: Olivia Flanagan

DAY 5:

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 th 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 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.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Lorna Campbell

Netball Singapore

[9180 5815](tel:91805815)

Lorna.Campbell@lcconsultancy.com.sg

Pictures available on request