



## **INTERNATIONAL NETBALL FEDERATION**

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### **The World's First Study Of International Netball Umpires Begins At The Vitality Netball World Cup 2019**

Researchers at the University of Portsmouth are hoping that the study will improve the development of umpires around the world. By understanding umpires at the elite level, the findings will be able to provide a framework for umpires at all levels to get the support and structures they need.

With global interest in netball increasing and the best players from around the world taking part in the World Cup from 12 July, the study, which is funded by the International Netball Federation (INF), provides a unique opportunity.

There are now 20 million people worldwide playing netball but only 41 umpires with an International Umpires' Award (IUA). The first two parts of this research study will be the collection of data from umpires at the World Cup. The research team will conduct fitness and physical conditioning tests prior to and during the tournament, after umpires arrive in the UK. The researchers will also fit heart-rate monitors to umpires during games.

The researchers will also look at the decision-making during matches through notational analysis of umpires, with all matches being filmed. Portsmouth researchers will sit court-side throughout the games to collect the data. They'll also use video footage to examine umpire performance. The third part of the research programme involves the analysis of umpire structures, development frameworks and management globally. The information from the first two parts of the project will inform the final phase of the research.

Dr Tom Webb, Senior Lecturer in Sports Management and Development in the University's Department of Sport and Exercise Science, is leading the project. He said: "Through the Referee and Match Official Research Network that I coordinate, our team was able to secure funding from the INF to undertake a multi-disciplinary comparative study of international umpires.

"Given the sporting summer we have, particularly in women's sport with the netball and football World Cups, this research project is a very timely and important piece of work that could have a very positive impact on women's sport around the world."

Christina Davidson, International Umpiring Manager for the INF, said: “This is an exciting research programme for the INF and we are pleased to be working with the Referee and Match Official Research Network from the University of Portsmouth. This research will enable an understanding of the physical demands on the umpires in netball and how this can be translated into fitness standards and decision-making. The depth of experience from the researchers involved and the information being gathered by them are key components to the research. We are pleased that the research is starting at the pinnacle event of the netball calendar.”

Find out more about the research [here](#)