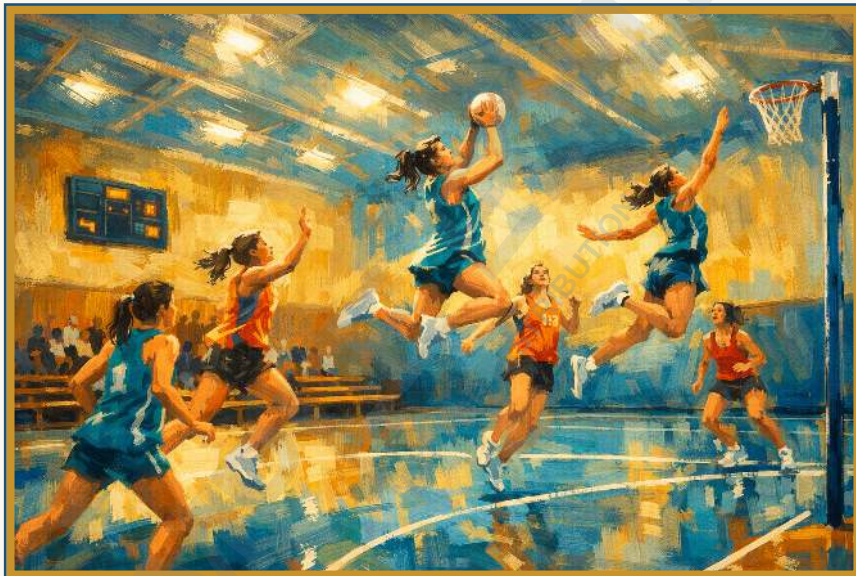


OFFICIAL EVENT EDITION

Highveld Netball Club



The Wisdom of Netball — The Netball of Life and the Life of Netball

PRESENTED BY SPORTSMART4LIFE

A word from the organisers



Highveld Netball Club

A word from the organisers

Dear Sample Reader,

This copy is yours. Your name is on the cover, and it is inside on the pages too, because it was made for you and for nobody else. No two copies of this book are the same.

We wanted to give you something that outlasts a fixture list. Kit wears out. Medals go in a drawer. But seven players who trust each other beat seven who are merely good, and that is worth writing down somewhere you will find it again.

What follows are the real voices of this sport — players, coaches and writers, most of them talking about the parts nobody puts on a highlight reel. There is a section on pressure, and what the people who handle it best actually do differently. One on trust, and why a group that trusts each other beats a group that is merely talented. One on losing, which is the section we would ask you to read twice, because everyone in this sport has lost and everyone worth knowing came back. There is a section on joy, which is the reason any of us started. One on mastery, and the unglamorous patience it asks for. One on rivalry, and the respect that runs underneath it. And one on belonging — on being part of something whether or not you are the one on the field.

You do not have to read it in order. Keep it in the kit bag. Open it the night before a hard one. Let it fall open at whichever page finds you, and if a line is worth keeping, keep it.

The game has taught you things already — about nerve, about other people, about getting up. These pages are simply the same lessons in other people's words, gathered in one place so they are there when you need them.

Thank you for everything you give to this. It is noticed, and it matters more than the results ever say.

— **The Committee, Highveld Netball Club**

Foreword

Netball is an honest game. It cannot be played alone — the rules themselves forbid it — and it has never waited for the world's permission to matter. From chalked school courts to finals in halls filled to the roof, wherever the game is played it teaches the same things: hold your nerve, trust your court, take the next centre pass, protect your joy, practise your landings, honour your marker, belong to something.

This collection gathers the voices of the game — the players, the coaches, the great watchers and writers who loved it best — arranged around seven themes that belong as much to life as to netball. Each chapter opens with an image and an idea, then hands the floor to the voices themselves.

Read it the way you would watch a final: sometimes for the drama, sometimes for the craft, and sometimes for one moment of stillness you will remember for years.

Ways to Walk with This Book

A collection like this is not meant to be read once and shelved. It is meant to be lived with — kept close, opened often, and put to work. Seven ways to begin:

- **The daily voice**
open anywhere each morning and take one voice with you into the day.
- **The reflection pause**
choose the theme your week is testing, read its essay slowly, and write one honest line of your own in response.
- **Match-day ritual**
before the big broadcast, read the theme the fixture will examine — rivalry before the derby, pressure before the final.
- **The team talk**
captains, coaches, teachers, parents: one voice a week is enough to open a changing room, a classroom or a dinner table.
- **The hard-week medicine**
when life tackles you, the defeat chapter is waiting. It was written for exactly that week.
- **The gift of a voice**
photograph the quote a friend needs today and send it with their name on the message.
- **The long read**
one theme per Sunday evening — a handful of weeks, properly kept.

However you use it, let it stay within reach of wherever you watch.

The Seven Themes

1. Teamwork & Trust	7
Seven positions, seven territories, one heartbeat — the game where the ball must pass through everybody's hands.	
2. Pressure & Nerve	14
Three seconds under the post with the whole hall watching — what the biggest moments ask, and how the still ones answer.	
3. Defeat & Bouncing Back	21
The centre pass after every goal — the game that builds forgiveness into its rules.	
4. Joy & Love of the Game	28
Chalked courts and Saturday mornings — playing because playing is the point.	
5. Mastery & Practice	35
Land, balance, pivot — the thousand quiet repetitions behind every soft release.	
6. Rivalry & Respect	42
The marker at arm's length all afternoon — the opponent who makes you better, and the handshake after.	
7. Watching & Belonging	47
Fold-out chairs and full final halls — why we gather, cheer, suffer and stay.	
About Highveld Netball Club	54
Between the Whistles — a closing word	56
Go Deeper with SportSmart	57

THEME 1 OF 7

Teamwork & Trust

Seven positions, seven territories, one heartbeat — the game where the ball must pass through everybody's hands.



Seven players, seven territories, one ball — nothing crosses this court except through somebody's hands.

Teamwork & Trust — in the game, in life

Netball is teamwork written into law. Each of the seven players is confined to her own portion of the court — lines she may not cross, no matter how much the game tempts her. The shooter cannot drop back to defend; the defender will never score; the ball itself is not allowed to travel the length of the court untouched — it must move through hands, or it does not move at all. Other sports hope their players will cooperate. Netball makes cooperation the only physics available. And so the game becomes a study in trust. The centre releases the ball toward a space that is still empty, believing utterly that a teammate's next two steps will fill it. The wing attack sprints a decoy line she knows will never be rewarded, so that somebody else's cut comes free. The defender wins possession she can do nothing with, and gives it instantly away — her triumph completed by other hands, three passes later, under a distant post. Nobody in netball finishes what she starts alone. That is not the game's limitation; it is its lesson. Families, wards, classrooms and companies are all courts with lines on them. No one is allowed to do everything, however capable they feel, and the sooner we stop resenting the lines, the sooner we learn the deeper game: doing your own third brilliantly, then releasing the ball. Pass to where your people are going, not where they are standing — it is the purest compliment there is, a wager on somebody's next two steps. Run the decoy lines. Give your winnings away. In the long season of a life together, the team that trusts beats the team of talents — every time it matters.

“We've been coming for years and we've been together. We're not just netballers on court but we're also friends outside of netball and I think that's what gives us the 100 per cent on the court. Us being friends outside of netball and to be able to put that on the court is very commendable.”

— Shamera Sterling-Humphrey

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“We just really locked in together. We weren't going to get beaten again after that.”

— Lisa Alexander

“As soon as Helen had the ball in her hands, I knew that she wouldn't miss.”

— Tracey Neville

“I did feel I helped develop a winning culture so I feel like I've done my job and the girls will be fine.”

— Ama Agbeze

“[Our] depth really helps us, especially with load management because sometimes you don't want just seven players playing every single series so it's good we have that depth, rotate, put in who we want to put in and it's good to see the youngsters coming in and getting the job done.”

— Shamera Sterling-Humphrey

“#ShowUp is about saying 'come along and support' to families, to mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters, to experience things first-hand.”

— Tamsin Greenway

“In that final moment it's really hard to romanticise the shot – you are panicking about missing and really wanting to get it in for the team. You stick to your processes, the moment goes by really fast, and then everything afterwards feels like a lifetime of celebration.”

— Helen Housby

“It's amazing being led by a leader like Noels. A leader who is massively in-tune with what you're going into, who's very clear about what she wants from people. She's genuine, authentic and she understands the responsibility of coaching the Silver Ferns.”

— Debbie Fuller

“It's been a real privilege to be the Vitality Roses captain for as long as I have and want to thank everyone for their support in helping to make my journey in netball so special.”

— Serena Guthrie

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"It brings people together from all walks of life and I have found that throughout my sporting career."

— Pamela Cookey

"It was massively tough missing out on the Commonwealths - it's always hard missing out on such a big event, but England won it so they picked the right squad."

— Rachel Dunn

"They're an incredible, weird, wacky bunch... they are pretty much why I play."

— Serena Guthrie

"I do remember a feeling of total disbelief afterwards, not knowing how to celebrate. We all ran around looking at each other and not knowing what to do."

— Helen Housby

"I just don't want people to struggle if they are struggling."

— Sharni Layton

"It's totally all worth it. When you've got the belief like that, there's nothing that can stop you. I love my team and my support so much, and I'm so glad that I came back."

— Casey Kopua

"We want athletes to be able to have full-time careers as part of this sport. At the moment a proportion of them do, but it's not a big enough proportion."

— Fran Connolly

"It's been a journey. If you look around the players that got the nod here there's been so much personal development, so for us although the game is hugely important it was so much more than that."

— Laura Langman

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I hope when I walk away from the GIANTS, I leave a legacy, and they continue to be a successful club with the values that we established."

— Julie Fitzgerald

"Well, my vision is to do work in the Caribbean — [and] not just at one place. I want to go everywhere I can in the Caribbean and so I am looking at several options."

— Connie Francis

"Our defending team was very solid as usual and our midcourt players got into the thick of things and our shooters shot the ball really well."

— Connie Francis

"It's my dream come true. The girls have worked so hard over the last international phase. They are the renowned, world number ones and to beat them at that time, I'm really, really proud - the feeling of that is amazing."

— Tracey Neville

"There are definitely some levels of inexperience but each girl that is on the defensive team, like we are workhorses, like we will provide interceptions and we do deflections, and we definitely give of our best and support the attacking team."

— Vangelee Williams

"When I took on the leadership with the Spar Proteas I always hoped I could change things up and allow the girls that come in to learn as much as they can and to be the best that they can be."

— Bongiwé Msomi

"Everybody executes their role so well and players put the team first. We work so well as a team off court, on court, and we're so focused on what we need to do within our units."

— Karla Pretorius

"The systems, structures and culture of excellence we have developed have created a strong and resilient team, capable of competing with the best on the international stage."

— Jess Thirlby

HIGHVELD NETBALL CLUB

More from Teamwork & Trust



Nobody does this alone.

“That team was more than just a group of players for me... They became your family, so you felt like you could achieve anything with that group of players.”

— Tracey Neville

A few more from Teamwork & Trust



Trust, built in the ordinary weeks.

“Everyone out there did their jobs and did it b****y well for 60 minutes. It's been a journey and one I was reflecting on this morning. Today you could tell how much it meant.”

— *Laura Langman*

“Being a Sunshine Girl is something that we wear on our sleeves. It's playing with pride; it's playing with passion. That's our attack slogan.”

— *Shanice Beckford*

“There's not one player in New Zealand who wouldn't follow her into war.”

— *Laura Langman*

THEME 2 OF 7

Pressure & Nerve

Three seconds under the post with the whole hall watching — what the biggest moments ask,
and how the still ones answer.



*Three seconds, one ring, the whole hall holding its breath — and the only voice that matters is the
quiet one inside.*

Pressure & Nerve — in the game, in life

Netball puts its pressure where everyone can see it. The shooter stands under the post, ball raised, and the game simply stops to watch. A defender stretches long arms toward her from the regulation step away; the hall holds its breath; and the rules grant her three seconds — three seconds to steady the feet, find the arc, and release. There is nowhere to hide and no one to pass the moment to. What the great shooters show us is that stillness is a skill. Watch one closely: the knees soften, the elbows settle, the eyes fix on a point above the ring, and the noise of the hall seems to fall away from her like water. She is not calm because she feels no fear; she is calm because her routine is deeper than her fear — grooved on quiet mornings until her body can carry the moment her mind is trembling through. And netball being netball, the pressure is never hers alone. The pass that found her under the post was itself an act of nerve; the whole attacking end held its shape so that one player could stand still. Life will stand you under the post soon enough: the interview, the diagnosis, the speech, the difficult call you have rehearsed in the car. The shooter's answer holds. Build the routine before the moment needs it. Soften your knees when the world stiffens. Take the full three seconds — hurry is just fear wearing running shoes. And release cleanly, accepting the miss as the price of the shot. Nerve is not the absence of trembling hands. It is a practised stillness that holds when the trembling arrives.

“We know that it is going to be massive, and we are mentally and physically prepared because we know that without the strong mentality it is going to be hard so we have to be strong mentally. We know that the teams are coming for us and we know that we have to be physically strong to withstand the pressure of these teams.”

— Jhaniele Fowler-Nembhard

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I was in a really dark, dark place, where I didn't have any emotions, I didn't really care if I was here or not anymore, which is hard and sad to talk about."

— Sharni Layton

"It is all about character and staying calm in difficult circumstances."

— Dorette Badenhorst

"Everyone has issues and I was sick of there being this persona that if you achieve something, you become this invincible human."

— Sharni Layton

"We have our standards, our fitness standards, that we're working on that have been out there for the last three or four years and those haven't changed. We know and the athletes know them."

— Noeline Taurua

"Tired, calm, weird and overwhelmed."

— Noeline Taurua

"When it went in, there was a huge wave of emotion and relief."

— Tracey Neville

"I compete on court, not in the gutter with low-mindset trolls. So stay mad and I'll stay booked."

— Romelda Aiken-George

"I wanted to make sure, irrespective of how much someone trained or what they did, it was more about them as a person and that they were right in themselves. That would then lead to them feeling good and delivering a good performance."

— Ama Agbeze

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Jamaican resilience - we wear our hearts on our sleeves. We are fighters. If you knock us down, we are able to get back up. We will fight to the very end.”

— *Shanice Beckford*

“We made a conscious effort to remind ourselves that there were people at home who no longer had a job, or were locked away in isolation, and we were lucky to still be doing what we loved.”

— *Julie Fitzgerald*

“What has impressed me is their tenacity. The same as Jamaica, they come through during the last minutes.”

— *Norma Plummer*

“When you put on the black dress there's a minimum standard you need to meet now and there's no budging on it. Today you saw that come to the fore.”

— *Laura Langman*

“It's full of nothing other than the process of taking the shot. You don't really have time to think about anything else.”

— *Helen Housby*

“Everyone [in the Malawi team] is a hard worker. Everyone wants to win.”

— *Joyce Mvula*

“I am not surprised by our huge victory because these girls are on a mission and they wanted to make a statement.”

— *Connie Francis*

“I'm still good enough so I'm just going to keep going until they tell me not to.”

— *Jade Clarke*

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“I know the player I am, the work I put in, and the job I came here to do.”

— Romelda Aiken-George

“If you're ever in a situation, whether it's a high-level game or at any level, take a shot.”

— Helen Housby

“We want to be that team who can go back-to-back from a Commonwealth Games to a World Cup.”

— Liz Watson

“We wanted to win every single day and one of our mottos was, 'If we're in it, we're in it to win it.' That in itself drove a lot of belief, a lot of togetherness and a lot of confidence in that we weren't scared of losing.”

— Tracey Neville

“I am totally proud of their performances. They came from playing in the lower grade and they competed and got the wins.”

— Norma Plummer

“I am yet to win a World Cup medal and so I am looking forward to achieving that medal this year. This is my fourth try at it and so I am going all out for it in South Africa.”

— Jhaniele Fowler-Nembhard

“I'm trying to take another path and make another footprint somewhere else as a full-time coach. I need to challenge myself in that capacity to see what I can do because if I've accomplished so much as a part-time coach. I don't know, the sky's the limit for full-time coaches.”

— Connie Francis

“I know I am the hardest worker in the room and be amongst the ones who want to work hard and because I knew exactly what that would do for my career.”

— Bongiwé Msomi

HIGHVELD NETBALL CLUB

More from Pressure & Nerve



The moment before it starts.

“It was a really weird feeling. I was quite calm - I don't know why.”

— Noeline Taurua

A few more from Pressure & Nerve



Nerve is not the absence of fear.

"I had been mentally ill for a while, and I didn't realise because it wasn't tangible."

— Sharni Layton

"I took time off last year for my mental health, having pushed myself so hard and for so long."

— Sharni Layton

"We've got nothing to lose in some ways. We've already won."

— Noeline Taurua

THEME 3 OF 7

Defeat & Bouncing Back

The centre pass after every goal — the game that builds forgiveness into its rules.



After every goal the ball returns to the centre circle — forgiveness is written into the rules.

Defeat & Bouncing Back — in the game, in life

In netball, nothing is ever allowed to be the end. Concede a goal and watch what the game does: the ball returns to the centre circle, the players take their positions either side of the line, the whistle blows, and everything begins again — even, ordered, and completely uninterested in what just happened. The centre pass is netball's quiet genius: forgiveness, written into the rules. However wretched the last passage was — the intercepted pass, the shot that rolled off the ring, the run of goals that turned the hall silent — the game itself insists on handing you a clean restart, again and again, until the final whistle. The good teams take the invitation literally. You can see it in their bodies after conceding: a clap, a called word, shoulders reset, and the next centre pass played as if the score were level. They have learned the discipline the restart teaches — that the previous minute is data, not destiny, and that carrying its weight into the next one is how a bad patch becomes a bad match. Afterwards, in the huddle, they will be honest about what went wrong; during the game, they play the pass in front of them. Life does not blow a whistle for us, which is exactly why the lesson matters. Your intercepted passes will come — the setback, the rejection, the plan in pieces on the kitchen table — and no umpire will hand you the ball at centre. You must walk yourself back to the circle. Grieve fast and honestly. Take what the last passage taught, leave what it cost, and play the next pass clean. Bouncing back is not a temperament. It is a centre pass — and you are allowed to take it every single time.

“There are five other players on court that need to take responsibility for what we do. We just had an off day that's all... it is a team sport. As someone who's been there for a long time you're always going to feel responsible but we all feel responsible actually, the ball didn't go our way and the English defenders did a really good job at putting the pressure on us.”

— Maria Folau

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“In hindsight, that early round loss was the best thing that could have happened.”

— Laura Geitz

“The skills that come with being organised, being prepared, being able to handle things that don't go your way. Having patience, and being humble. But also being able to enjoy life, because the high adrenaline and buzz can be stripped away so quickly through injury or non-selection.”

— Geva Mentor

“I am sad to announce that the time has come for me to gracefully exit the court, making space for the emerging stars awaiting their chance.”

— Phumza Maweni

“When I retired in 2020, at the time I thought that I had finished. Mentally, I tapped out of this level, and I just didn't want to continue anymore. But I am back and I am better.”

— Vangelee Williams

“You have a really rubbish netball game and you think the world's over and then you go to work and realise that's a bit of perspective.”

— Layla Guscoth

“Regardless of whether you make provincial teams at school or not, it doesn't have to define who you're going to be going forward.”

— Karla Pretorius

“Sport is a way of life; it can make you feel good or not, but you get over it quite quickly.”

— Irene van Dyk

“For me, the overwhelming excitedness of what's next; I love the unknown, I love that sense of being really progressive and moving forward.”

— Serena Guthrie

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“There were a few simple errors - passing and connection errors. But you don't throw out everything because of one loss.”

— Caitlin Bassett

“It's not always the finish we want, but it's always a great feeling.”

— Shanice Beckford

“We have put the last World Cup behind us because we know that wasn't the performance that we wanted to put out there, and so we are going to go out there fresh for this World Cup and the mindset is to go for the win in every game.”

— Jhaniele Fowler-Nembhard

“Taking part in athletics taught me to lose with dignity and win with dignity.”

— Irene van Dyk

“I think what winning gold does is validate it for people externally... And so, the journey is probably more important I think, than the medal.”

— Ama Agbeze

“The medal just is that little star at the top of the Christmas tree.”

— Ama Agbeze

“I wasn't ready to retire, I hadn't exhausted all my love for the game.”

— Laura Geitz

“None of life's challenges define who you are and what you will be, it's how you get through them.”

— Peace Proscovia

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“It develops quick perception and judgment, physical and moral courage, self-reliance and self-control, and the ability to meet success and defeat with dignity.”

— Senda Berenson

“After the final we just packed the loss away in a place to deal with it later.”

— Caitlin Bassett

“I believe that the dual aspects of life are really important and should never be underrated – particularly making opportunities outside of sport to learn and grow.”

— Pamela Cookey

“As disappointing as it's been results-wise, there are learnings that you come out with from being in a challenging situation like this.”

— Simone McKinnis

“I was extremely harsh on myself as a player, and that wore me down. So if you don't let people in to support you, life can become really tough.”

— Sara Francis-Bayman

“Although the loss was very rough we know that it's just the beginning. We've just got to get on with it, we're allowed to have an off day on court, everybody has their off days ... we know that we can do a lot better.”

— Maria Folau

“Anything is possible through hard work and determination. I didn't ever think that my life would turn out this way coming from poverty and lack of resources.”

— Bongiwe Msomi

“They never stop impressing me, just in their resilience.”

— Simone McKinnis

HIGHVELD NETBALL CLUB

More from Defeat & Bouncing Back



The walk back.

“I did know, actually, when I walked off the (Gold Coast) court that that was probably the last time I would wear green and gold.”

— Laura Geitz

A few more from Defeat & Bouncing Back



And then you come again.

THEME 4 OF 7

Joy & Love of the Game

Chalked courts and Saturday mornings — playing because playing is the point.



Before the finals and the flood-lit halls there was a chalked court, a bag of bibs, and the best morning of the week.

Joy & Love of the Game — in the game, in life

Ask netball people where it began and you will hear the same music: Saturday morning. Courts chalked onto school tar, a canvas bag of bibs, oranges at half-time, and a whole town's daughters — and increasingly its sons — playing four games at once while parents shout encouragement at the wrong match. Netball is one of the great community games: it needs so little — a ball, a ring on a pole, seven willing friends — that it has taken root wherever people gather, from farm schools to city halls, and made itself part of the weekend's furniture. That is where the joy lives, and the best players never let go of it. Watch a team in the moments after a beautiful passage — the ball zipped through five pairs of hands and dropped softly through the ring — and you will see grown internationals grinning like the schoolgirls they once were, because the deep pleasure of the game has not changed: the clean catch, the sweet release, the pass that lands exactly where a friend is about to be. Joy is netball's first language, and everything the sport becomes at the top is built on that Saturday-morning delight or it is built on nothing. There is a rule of life bouncing here. Duty is a strong engine and a poor fuel; the strength for your hardest seasons comes from the play you refuse to give up. Keep your version of Saturday morning — the choir, the garden, the kitchen dance, the game with old friends. Do it badly, do it laughing, do it with oranges at half-time. The day it stops being play, you have not grown up. You have only left the court too early.

“Playing in front of 6,000 people in the 2016 nail-biting Netball Superleague final at the Copper Box was miles away from my first Netball Supercup final years ago in Blackpool, where we played in front of 50 people – mostly our families.”

— Tamsin Greenway

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“It was really good to have the World Cup in Africa, it felt really good with the crowds.”

— Felisitus Kwangwa

“I'm not going anywhere. I love this sport too much for that.”

— Serena Guthrie

“The crowd, they bring their own flair, it's been fantastic.”

— Claire Maxwell

“Fans have supported their teams in record numbers this year, making Suncorp Super Netball the most attended season of Australian women's sport. We say a massive thank you to our fans for your passion and support.”

— Stacey West

“You've all become a part of my extended family and I'm grateful for the memories that will last a lifetime.”

— Eboni Usoro-Brown

“It's been a completely different atmosphere in South Africa. I think the people of South Africa are amazing.”

— Georgia Rowe

“The Commonwealth Games has really elevated our sport, and to come away from the Games in 2018 with the gold medal was huge for netball.”

— Geva Mentor

“You know it's a good time to go when you're running around the younger players in the squad and they're keeping you on your toes.”

— Ash Brazill

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Enjoy everything you do. Do what makes you happy.”

— Irene van Dyk

“Representing Jamaica and being a Sunshine Girl is an electrifying feeling.”

— Shanice Beckford

“Always playing in front of a Swifts crowd, they were so loud, they had so much energy, I remember I had my own Sharni Layton chant.”

— Sharni Layton

“There's that common bond now, that thread that will link us forever.”

— Laura Geitz

“My time at the Swifts was by far my favourite out of my whole netball sporting career.”

— Sharni Layton

“To be a part of a team is a gift. Teammates see you at your best, your worst and all the times in between. These are the memories that make the journey so special. Thanks for having me netball whānau, it has been a blast.”

— Laura Langman

“After just one hour attending a netball match, you can notice the difference the atmosphere has on people in changing their perspective.”

— Tamsin Greenway

“Everyone says it's like a dream come true, but I think for us it felt like a part of history.”

— Tracey Neville

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Meeting new people from different countries is the best part of the Commonwealth Games. The camaraderie and the atmosphere are just electrifying. I remember the ceremonies, looking up to thousands of people, was that goose-bump feeling.”

— *Shanice Beckford*

“Support them, listen to them, and guide them to become the happiest version of themselves.”

— *Irene van Dyk*

“It's everything that we've been wanting for little girls to see netball at such a high level.”

— *Martha Mosoahle-Samm*

“For netball in England, all the little girls at home I want them to be inspired by this. We certainly didn't have this kind of success to look up to when we were growing up and hopefully that will be the catalyst for big things to come.”

— *Helen Housby*

“To be part of the first World Cup on African soil is an incredible moment for us.”

— *Nat Metcalf*

“It's very rare you get a fairytale ending.”

— *Jo Weston*

“I don't think I would have a career in netball, but I'm so, so grateful that I did slash do.”

— *Lenize Potgieter*

“On the court I gained a lot of confidence from that win and went back to my club team feeling like a bit of a different player.”

— *Helen Housby*

HIGHVELD NETBALL CLUB

More from Joy & Love of the Game



Why anyone starts.

“I will miss the girls, they are pretty much why I play.”

— **Serena Guthrie**

A few more from Joy & Love of the Game



The part nobody has to be told to love.

“It is the Roses girls, it’s that family. They’re an incredible, weird, wacky bunch. It was an absolute privilege to be part of that group for so long.”

— *Serena Guthrie*

“We debuted in the same match in 2015 and it’s so special to be able to share this moment together.”

— *Jo Weston*

“I’m living my netball dream. But I wouldn’t be here without these people.”

— *Sharni Layton*

THEME 5 OF 7

Mastery & Practice

Land, balance, pivot — the thousand quiet repetitions behind every soft release.



The crowd sees one soft release drop through the ring; the empty hall saw the thousand that bought it.

Mastery & Practice — in the game, in life

Netball looks gentle from the sideline, which is the first thing the game teaches you is wrong. Catch a netball at speed and the rules allow you no luxury: land, balance, pivot — the grounded foot must stay grounded, however fast you arrived. That single law makes every catch a small examination of craft. The elegant player who seems to have all the time in the world is not lucky; she has practised landing until balance became her signature, and the game has slowed down for her because she did the work at speed. The shooter's arc is the same story. That soft, high, certain release — up and through, the ball dropping through the ring with barely a tremble — was grooved a hundred at a time on quiet afternoons, against the daylight, against the wind on an outdoor court, long after training officially ended. Netball mastery is unglamorous and utterly democratic. The ring does not know your school, your surname or your reputation; it responds to attention, repetition and honest error, and to nothing else. That is the mercy of a craft: unlike opinion, it never flatters you and it never lies. Nearly everything worth doing in a life obeys the same law — the language, the instrument, the trade, the patient art of staying balanced under pressure. So choose your craft and find your quiet court: the hour nobody sees, the standard nobody demands of you but you. Practise your landings, because life arrives at speed and its rules will not let you travel. Keep a private count of your shots. And when someone calls you a natural, smile — it is the name people give to work they did not witness.

“Look at what's happening in the WNBA and NBA at the moment, and how they elevate these athletes, create these amazing arena events, and everything that happens off court – the interest in what the players wear and do. All of that is the potential for us to activate through netball, and to do it in our own unique way.”

— Claire Nelson

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Success does not come easy. It is hard work, commitment, and lots of sacrifices.”

— Dorette Badenhorst

“Coaching has given me so much perspective. I really feel it's a point of difference for me now going back on court.”

— Karla Pretorius

“The longevity I'm also most certainly proud of, and the way I played. I never gave up.”

— Vicki Wilson

“Without Sky and the visibility that we've agreed through this new partnership, professionalisation isn't possible.”

— Fran Connolly

“You only get to create culture once, it was very important that I chose girls that I knew would fit in to the culture that would make us successful.”

— Julie Fitzgerald

“I was a great student of the game, and now I look back I can share that knowledge.”

— Vicki Wilson

“Our whole idea was there was nowhere to hide and everyone could see what everyone else was doing.”

— Noeline Taurua

“Whatever you want to work towards or whatever you want to achieve, it doesn't matter who you are, your height, or whatever your circumstances are, you can achieve it and it comes with a lot of hard work.”

— Bongjiwe Msomi

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I don't know when I'll stop growing and learning because there's so much new stuff happening so I try to keep myself current."

— Connie Francis

"When an opportunity presents itself for me it's about what can I learn and how can I take those learnings forward to be better."

— Noeline Taurua

"Learn new skills and never stop learning – you've never reached your full potential, there is always room for improvement."

— Irene van Dyk

"We are the women's sport of choice and have been for near on 100 years. For netball, we're not going anywhere, and we continue to keep growing."

— Stacey West

"The goal out there was to put on scoreboard pressure through me."

— Jhaniele Fowler-Nembhard

"This sport has shaped me into a confident and powerful woman, far beyond what I could have envisioned. I cherish and acknowledge every aspect of this experience."

— Phumza Maweni

"In 2024, Suncorp Super Netball showed why it is the world's biggest and best netball league."

— Stacey West

"I think we should work hard to go for top four, top five - we have been on sixth place for a long time. We are not improving. It's either we go down [or up] and it's possible [to improve]."

— Joyce Mvula

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Persistence always pays off.”

— Irene van Dyk

“Constructive criticism across all women's sport is something that needs to be addressed, sooner rather than later, to help it on its journey.”

— Tamsin Greenway

“I think there's a really careful balance for sports between revenue and reach. And I don't think one can really exist without the other.”

— Fran Connolly

“I've seen a lot of coaches promise a lot of stuff, then they can't deliver it and players get disappointed. So, I never promise.”

— Norma Plummer

“What's there at the moment is perceived pressure. When you actually stop the footage, look at it and break it down, you go it's not what you think it actually is.”

— Stacey Marinkovich

“Sometimes you have to have confrontation, and you have to have some hard discussions to get excellence. I just won't tolerate bullsh*t.”

— Lisa Alexander

“Keep doing the stuff behind the scenes that no one sees because it makes a real difference when you are at training or on the court.”

— Casey Kopua

“I could've stayed in Australia and sat on the bench somewhere, but I don't want to. I know I'm better than that, and I know that I can improve so much more.”

— Caitlin Bassett

HIGHVELD NETBALL CLUB

More from Mastery & Practice



The thousandth repetition.

“I wouldn't let them in the house unless they either fetched or passed the ball for me.”

— Vicki Wilson

A few more from Mastery & Practice



Hard-won, quietly.

“You know, there are no rights and wrongs in how you coach. In the end it's all about getting results.”

— Noeline Taurua

“She's one of a million in regards to her style and her shooting prowess and I think you get to that stage where people can name legends of the game and I feel she is one of them.”

— Noeline Taurua

“If government gives them financial support and also gives them all the facilities and pathways we have in Australia and New Zealand, we might never be able to touch the ball.”

— Norma Plummer

THEME 6 OF 7

Rivalry & Respect

The marker at arm's length all afternoon — the opponent who makes you better, and the handshake after.



For an hour she is the obstacle to everything you want — and the most honest coach you will ever have.

Rivalry & Respect — in the game, in life

Every netball community keeps a derby. School against school across town, club against club across a valley, the two best teams in the league circling each other all season toward one rowdy hall in September. Rivalry sharpens this game the way it sharpens every game: the passes are crisper, the intercepts braver, the hall louder, the silences afterwards deeper. But netball's rivalry has a particular shape, because the contest is so intimate. For a full hour the shooter and her marker live at arm's length from one another — one all patience and stillness, the other all reach and timing — locked in a private duel inside the public one. Nobody on the court knows your game better than the opponent assigned to ruin it. That is precisely what makes her valuable. She finds your weaker hand, your hurried release, your habit of drifting left — and by finding them, she writes your training list for the winter. Rivals do for us what friends are too kind to do. And the game's manners hold the contest safe: the handshake line, the cheers exchanged between teams, the umpire thanked, the marker you battled all afternoon told, honestly, that she was too good today. The respect is not a ritual pasted on afterwards; it is the frame that makes the ferocity possible. Life issues everyone a marker: the colleague whose work exposes ours, the old classmate whose progress needles us at midnight. Use her the netball way. Envy studies a rival's trophies; wisdom studies her training. Let her reach teach you a higher release. Want harder, play fairer — and when the whistle goes, mean the handshake.

“I would have those elements in them encouraged which bring out the love of honor, courage and fair play, and eliminate those which encourage the taking advantage of laws, cruelty, brutality and unfairness.”

— Senda Berenson

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“They're just scrubbers.”

— Norma Plummer

“We've got to take as a privilege and an honour, to know that we can keep getting better and, hopefully, teams don't catch us as we do that.”

— Liz Watson

“If I'm anywhere in the world the New Zealanders head for me, stop me at airports, want photos with me, the whole thing.”

— Norma Plummer

“Being able to reach a broader audience is amazing and I have had so many wonderful experiences... it is the Friendly Games but there is that sense of competitiveness.”

— Geva Mentor

“Teams that often come out on top, whether it be that pinnacle event or the domestic game, if you can go toe-to-toe someone is going to break.”

— Laura Langman

“A lot of what we were doing throughout the year was geared towards making sure we could beat New Zealand, such was their ability to perform on the big stage.”

— Sharelle McMahon

“It's something we've been talking about with the Silver Ferns; we remain humble, we remain grateful, but we slaughter them when we're out there on the netball court; we put our foot down.”

— Noeline Taurua

HIGHVELD NETBALL CLUB

More from Rivalry & Respect



Opponents, not enemies.

A few more from Rivalry & Respect



Respect, earned the hard way.

THEME 7 OF 7

Watching & Belonging

Fold-out chairs and full final halls — why we gather, cheer, suffer and stay.



Nobody remembers the score of the first match they were taken to — everybody remembers whose chair they sat beside.

Watching & Belonging — in the game, in life

Netball's first grandstand was a strip of grass beside a school court, and in most places it still is: fold-out chairs, grandmothers under umbrellas, a dog tangling its lead around the post, and half a town spending Saturday morning watching its daughters play. That is where the game's watching culture was built — close enough to hear the players call, familiar enough that everyone on the sideline knows everyone on the court. Netball fandom is not distant devotion to strangers; it is community, wearing a bib. And then there is the other picture, the one that still moves the faithful: the great hall filled to the roof for a final, thousands of voices rising for a sport the wider world spent a century overlooking. Netball did not inherit its packed arenas. Its people — mostly women, mostly unpaid, across generations — built the house themselves: coached the teams, marked the courts, drove the buses, raised the standard, and then filled the seats. Every big netball crowd is a monument to volunteers, and to sit in one is to feel something rarer than excitement. It is vindication, shared. The lessons travel. Belonging is built close-up, on sidelines, by people who know your name — so find your strip of grass, in sport and beyond it: the choir, the parkrun, the school hall, the congregation. And when the thing you love is overlooked, take the netball option: do not wait for an invitation to someone else's house. Build your own, season by season, bake sale by bake sale — and fill it. Turn up early, stay late, learn the names. The feeling of belonging follows the faithfulness, never the other way around.

“It's funny because it's never referred to as 'Women's Sport' and 'Men's Sport' – it's 'Women's Sport' and then just Sport. Men are seen as the standard, and then women are seen as on the side. I'd love it to get to the point where sport is just sport.”

— Ama Agbeze

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I was very impressed with the turnout. I could see it was a sell-out crowd which was expected because from the previous match with England, we knew the fans would come out and us pleading to the fans really helped a lot so we hope to continue."

— Shamera Sterling-Humphrey

"I feel the profile of netball has been really raised by the success of the win in Liverpool."

— Noeline Taurua

"We want to give Jamaica an Independence Day gift, and that will be like the ultimate gift to give them from us — which is that gold medal."

— Jhaniele Fowler-Nembhard

"They used to hate me in New Zealand. It goes back to when I called the Silver Ferns a bunch of scrubbers."

— Norma Plummer

"366,222 spectators walked through the gates of venues across Australia, delivering not only a 25 per cent increase on 2023 crowds, but the most attended female league in Australian sporting history."

— Stacey West

"If athletes who have everything at their feet go through it then it's ok for whoever else to go through it as well."

— Sharni Layton

"This is the most exciting thing that's happened in years."

— Anna Kessel

"We have never been as excited about netball in our long-term partnership, because it feels incredibly collaborative and aligned."

— Helen Falkus

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“The crowds have simply been the best.”

— Liz Watson

“I'm pretty happy that I did that. The Green Army always shows up.”

— Jhaniele Fowler-Nembhard

“You're ten times more likely to watch a sport that you've actually played.”

— Lucy Wray

“Our teams are doing a fantastic job of filling stadiums and accelerating viewership.”

— Stacey West

“I love putting my dress on and getting my hair done, knowing that I'm representing my small island, not just for myself but for the next generation of girls coming up and looking at us for that leadership.”

— Shanice Beckford

“It shouldn't matter whether it's a man or a woman playing. It's just sport.”

— Liz Ellis

“To say there isn't interest in women's sports is just nonsense.”

— Anna Kessel

“We make them proud, so they should come out and help us.”

— Joyce Mvula

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Through a lot of research, we’re constantly learning that women’s sport fans, with their digital-first approach, are sort of the fans of the future.”

— Helen Falkus

“Winning gold at the Commonwealth Games has brought netball to the attention of the masses. That moment gripped the nation, changed perceptions of netball and inspired thousands of people to hit a netball court near them.”

— Joanna Adams

“Going forward Noels if you’re listening we love you and we miss you and we want you back here, you’ve done so much for this group and the work you’ve done this whole year, you deserve to be here and we want you back Noels.”

— Grace Nweke

“I always use my story to inspire people out there not to give up on their dreams.”

— Mary Chalhok

“‘We Are Here’ is designed to encapsulate the power of our athletes and assert why Suncorp Super Netball is here – to entertain, to unite, to inspire and to empower.”

— Kelly Ryan

“It’s so great for netball – this elevation. It’s just brilliant for my sport, and a real acknowledgement of how consistently brilliant the sport has been over a long period of time.”

— Anne Sargeant

“We don’t want to take over, we just want to take part.”

— Sue Anstiss

“South Africans have been beautiful, since day one they’ve been backing us.”

— Bongiwé Msomi

HIGHVELD NETBALL CLUB

More from Watching & Belonging



Belonging, in the stands.

“There's a huge audience — mainly women, but also men — who've been alienated from sports coverage.”

— Anna Kessel

A few more from Watching & Belonging



The people who turn up.

“I have always tried to be respectful that we stand on their shoulders, women who aren't household names but were world class athletes.”

— Anne Sargeant

“More than one million people play netball in Australia, we are the number one sport for women and girls, and the world is taking notice.”

— Liz Ellis

“Traditionally, sports fandom is driven by habit – you're born into it with your family and community supporting a specific team. We're trying to build something new by learning and understanding the habits and motivations of women and girls.”

— Claire Nelson

About Highveld Netball Club

Highveld Netball Club is a demonstration client, invented to show how a branded edition looks and reads. In a real edition this page carries your own history, your own words, and the details your people would want to keep.

Website: sportsmart4life.co.za

After the final whistle



Until the next one.

Between the Whistles

The final whistle is only ever half true. Somewhere a ball is already in the air — a hall being unlocked, a court being chalked onto school tar, a child shooting at a ring in the last of the light, one more goal before supper. May the voices in this collection walk with you between the centre passes of your own life.

SportSmart4Life is the intelligent spectator's toolkit — learn the games you love, watch them smarter, and let the wisdom of sport walk into your life. Explore the sports, SpectatorIQ and the Voices of the Game at sportsmart4life.co.za.

Go Deeper with SportSmart

This collection began as a way of watching. If the voices in these pages made you want to watch with sharper eyes — and let more of the game walk into your life — here is where the journey continues.

- **The Netball Spectator Module**

eight tools that teach you the game itself — read the play, know the laws, follow the season's plots, and grow your Fan IQ match by match.

sportsmart4life.co.za

- **SportSmart4Life Membership**

the intelligent spectator's home — modules across 80+ sports, one member dashboard, and wisdom tools that turn watching into wellbeing.

sportsmart4life.co.za

- **SpectatorIQ — the Quiz Show**

test your sports brain in our quiz show — ladders, live rounds and power-ups across every sport we cover.

sportsmart4life.co.za

- **Voices of the Game**

the living library behind this book - thousands of verified voices to explore, sport by sport and theme by theme.

sportsmart4life.co.za

Every quotation in this collection is real, verified and honestly attributed — that is the Voices of the Game promise.