



## **Swiss Netball President's Report 2022-2023**

### **BACK TO NORMAL**

What an absolute pleasure it is to have our netball calendar back, bursting to the brim with netball activities. It is truly wonderful to see our members take to the court, whether it is playing in our junior or senior matchplays, league matches, our national competitions or national squad training. To also see our umpires sprinting around the courts keeping a close eye on the players and to hear our match bench officials blowing their horns, ringing the bells and / or keeping a close eye on the clock. We have missed you all and we are delighted to have you back on court!

The year is not yet over and we encourage you to use your member benefits if you haven't already. Great discounts at Aroha Wine, British Cheese Deli and Servizen. Other benefits we offered you this year and which we hope you did take advantage of was our partnership with Netfit Netball which provided you with access to fantastic netball focused fitness, skills, coaching and experience. Their library of information is vast and we hope that many of you used it to upskill in your areas. Head to our website for more information.

### **EVENTS**

#### **Matchplay**

This season to date we organized three **junior matchplays** and one **senior matchplay**, the last junior matchplay which we held at Bois-des-Frères saw players from clubs AGNA, GGNA, Kingfishers and LCV and one school team ISL play with and against each other in the U11, U13 and U15 age categories. We used all three courts, making it a non-stop day of netball. Particular thanks go to the coaches who were involved in the U11 category as this was scratch play and all the coaches and players supported and encouraged each other ensuring a fair amount of court time for everyone – a real delight for all the participants.

We welcomed ISL school to this event for the first time. This enabled school players who are not members of a club to play more netball. Their inclusion was due to a special request from the school. According to the girls and their coach, the matches were more challenging than school matches – great to hear. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the school for supporting us on numerous occasions with their courts, the last one being The Peppermill.

#### **National League**

The **Swiss Netball National League** took on a new format this season with the introduction of fixture dates and venues in the calendar with all matches being played on the same day at the same venue. Only one of the rounds was scheduled in Zurich which was very much welcomed by Zurich club. Thank you to all participating clubs in recognising that travel is an essential part of this competition, especially as we grow the sport and we hope to have more participating teams spread across the country. With three rounds left in the league and the last round scheduled for June, the top spots are still up for grabs.

Unfortunately, there were not enough teams to support a competition for the U15 League this season, but we are hoping that with the addition of a new junior club, Kingfishers, this may change and the U15 League competition will be revived next season. The U15 league was created to offer more netball opportunities and competition for this age group, bridging the gap between juniors and seniors, and increasing the overall standard of netball in Switzerland.

### **National Competitions**

Our National competitions, the **Junior Clubs Tournament (JCT)** and **The Peppermill** saw battles on court from the majority of our clubs. The JCT finals were highly contested with GGNA winning all four categories. Eleven teams entered The Peppermill, the highest number of teams to date which shows the progression and development of netball in this country. We welcomed two new clubs for the first time at the event, Kingfishers and LausAnge. Huge congratulations to Lancy Lightning who took home the solid silver Peppermill – the last time they won the event was in 2011. Second and third places went to Aubonne 1 and GIN respectively. Congratulations to all participating teams in both of our national events.

At The Peppermill we awarded the **Carmela Vonlanthen DiNenna Spirit of Sport Award** for the very first time. The award is awarded to someone or a group of people who encourage team spirit, who nurture and promote fair play and who champion netball in the local community, just as Carmela did. The award this year went to a very well deserved recipient, Emilia Hogg. Emilia was selected by an independent selection panel and was delighted to receive the award in person. Congratulations Emilia.

Many of our netball events need scorers, timekeepers, umpires and first aiders, without them we simply can't play netball. Many of you do this completely voluntarily for your club and for that we would like to thank you. These roles are often over-looked but they are vital to the smooth running and success of the event.

Another absolute must before, during and after events is the organisation. There are the draws to complete, the schedule to work out, documents to prepare as well as courts to tape, posts to manage and all the tidying up at the end. We would like to thank Saloté Waqanivalu and also Carol D'Alberti for being the backbone at these events, for ensuring they run smoothly, to time and with correct netball lines – marking the courts is a qualification in itself!

### **GROWTH**

We saw the creation of two new clubs this year, one junior club - the Kingfishers which is based at La Châtaigneraie International school and one senior club, LausAnge which is based at Collège Saint Roch in Lausanne. We welcome both clubs into our netball family and wish them the very best success in the netball world and beyond.

In January 2023, Charles Leslie was appointed our Head of Growth and we are looking forward to watching him grow into his role and promote netball across the country. He has some great ideas and we are very much looking forward to seeing them come to fruition with your support.

### **NATIONAL SQUAD**

This year, we saw even more trialists trial for a place in the National Squad. This is a positive step forward in our growth and development. We increased the number of our in-country Assistant Coaches from one to five following the advertisement of these roles. This year we ran the Avenir Suisse, the Junior Squad and the Senior Squad with our Head Coach Vanessa McErlain Naylor and Assistant Coaches, Jess Brown, Marneylea Browne, Sarah

Gillett and Bronwyn McGinity all of whom are in-country. Moniek Van Rossum is also an Assistant Coach and has been on maternity leave since the beginning of the season. One of our many ambitions is to improve the level of coaching in-country and this can only happen if coaches step forward and volunteer their time to do so. We thank the Assistant Coaches for coming forward and volunteering their time. Our Head Coach has supported all these coaches in their journey, encouraging and supporting them in improving their knowledge, giving them real insights and first-hand experience into weekend session planning, goal setting, selection processes, player management, expectation setting both on and off the court, how to adapt and adjust training sessions and player feedback. They were also supported throughout their coaching awards awarded via UKCC.

The National Squad has become more professional with commitment to training and personal fitness visibly improved. There is always a transitional period for players and coaches to adapt to different styles of coaching and this was tough at first due to the extended COVID break. This is the first full year of netball since the COVID outbreak and with so many new faces in the team the only way forward is up. We must remember and reiterate to our members that the National Squad is not a club or a school, expectations of performance and commitment during training sessions are different, conversations are open and honest and there are many selections throughout the year. There will be disappointment and joy, however, the National Squad is a Squad and they all support each other. We are delighted to confirm that as the number of trialists is increasing, there is now more competition for the final spots which in-turn will improve each athlete's commitment to personal development and level of play.

An **Open Team** was created in September 2021 and much to our delight, we are finally back on the **World-Ranking ladder** after playing in the required number of matches in the Europe Netball Challenge Cup in May 2022. Being world-ranked was one of our aims in our strategic plan.

We also competed in the **Europe Netball U17 Challenge Cup** in November 2022 (postponed from February 2022) and February 2023. Due to COVID and Switzerland having an older, more experienced Squad in the previous years, the majority of our former players were no longer eligible to play in this category. It was an amazing opportunity for our up-and-coming players to represent their county. We had the most new caps in all of the International teams with 11 out of our 12 players representing Switzerland for their very first time at the U17 level. Unfortunately, our Head Coach Vanessa McErlain-Naylor was rushed to hospital in November, the day before she was due to leave for Gibraltar and had to undergo, in total three emergency operations. Assistant Coach, Jess Brown who was due to accompany the squad was also unable to travel. Assistant Coach Bronwyn McGinity then stepped up to become Lead Coach for the U17 Squad and Assistant Coach Marney Browne accompanied the Squad as Assistant Coach and Emma Connolly as Team Manager. This unfortunate turn of events turned out to be particularly challenging for the young Squad, the management team and travelling supporters, which was noted by Europe Netball and further afield. We would like to thank Bronwyn and Marney for rising to the challenge and for the leading the team out on the International stage under these circumstances. We are delighted to say that both Vanessa and Jess made a full recovery.

In February, we attended the 2023 U17 Europe Netball Challenge event. Sadly, there were injuries and unavailability from those selected. However, the team who went fought hard in every match and played their best netball. More new caps for half of our squad due to many players in the November event being too old. Participation in this event was seen to be much more positive by Europe Netball than in the previous U17 event.

## **COACHING**

We held the Foundation to Coaching Course this year, laying the groundwork to strengthen and build up future coaches in country, something we are aware that we are short of. As

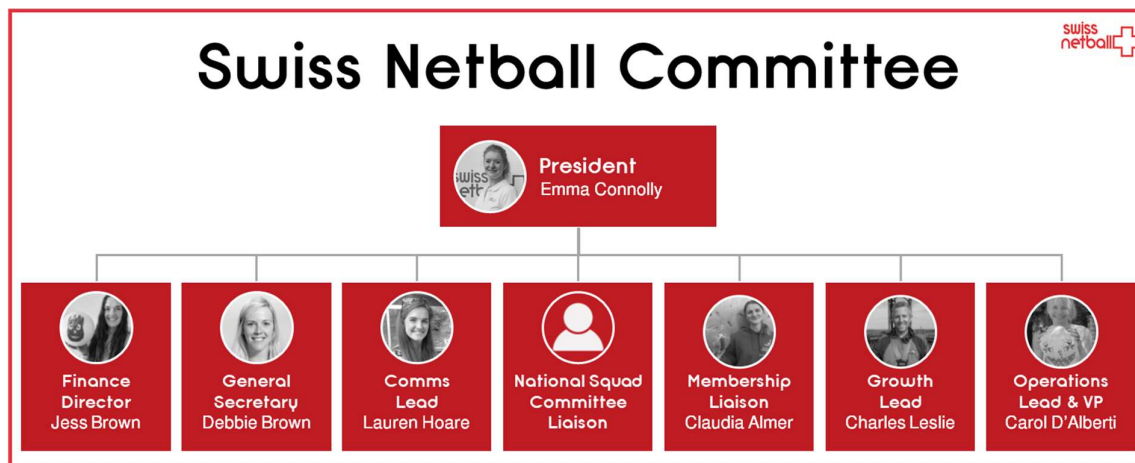
we develop and grow, more coaches are needed to support our players. Claudia Almer, our then Coaching Lead, expertly delivered this course.

We are also working together with Europe Netball for one of our in-country coaches to gain their Level 2 UKCC award. This opportunity was advertised to all our members and we are thankful for the coach who signed up. We also advertised Netball Europe's new Coaching Hub with many informational and useful Coaching Workshops, for the benefit of our coaches – we hope to find out from Europe Netball how many of our coaches actually benefited from this support and if it is something we continue to offer from Europe Netball. Famed guest coach Cat Tuivaiti was brought in to coach the National Squad one weekend. We saw this as the perfect opportunity to open it up to our in-country coaches. A few coaches attended and took home some precious nuggets of coaching knowledge shared by Cat.

## OFFICIATING

We started the season with a Game Management Workshop delivered by Europe Netball continuing with two Into Umpiring courses and two Europe Netball C Award courses. The Europe Netball Umpire Award Practical Assessments weekend resulted in three C Award and one B Award qualifications, increasing our in-country umpiring expertise. In addition, Bronwyn McGinity and Carol D'Alberti attained the Europe Netball C Award Umpire Assessor Award allowing in-country umpire assessment. Congratulations to you all! Thank you as always, to Helen for your continued support of tutoring our Umpire Award courses and we hope to see you back soon.

## NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



This year we had a look at our Committee structure and the positions on the Committee and decided to streamline them in-line with our strategic plan and to support our mission. This proposed new structuring was led by our General Secretary, Debbie Brown. Job descriptions have been updated for all committee roles as well as the Statutes for approval at the General Assembly. The Committee is constructed of volunteers and the aim was to share the workload more evenly.

This change in our structure and indeed the intention of the Committee to become much more of a decision-making body saw our much loved and respected Saloté Waqanivalu step down from Operations. Our Officiating lead Carol D'Alberti and our Coaching lead, Claudia Almer both stepped down as they are no longer committee positions. We advertised

the new roles and held interviews, namely for **Growth, Membership Liaison, Operations and National Squad Liaison** and we are delighted to say that Charles Leslie was appointed Head of Growth, Carol D'Alberti, Operations and Claudia Almer Membership Liaison. The National Squad Liaison role is yet to be filled.

We would like to thank Saloté for her commitment and hard-work on the committee for the past few years. Her smile and positive approach were a blessing and her desire to deliver and improve national events with your guidance was clear for all to see. We would also like to thank her family who often turned up early to help prepare the courts for our national events, something I'm sure that they don't miss!

We noted over the past events that some of our regulations are not inline. Next year, we are looking to harmonise and streamline these together with our policies and procedures including to formalise a complaints process.

We are also renewing the Members Forum as part of the new Statutes. We propose to replace it with the new Club Council, allowing proposals and solutions to be submitted to the Committee.

The streamlining of queries to the Committee has greatly improved however, we would like to take this opportunity to remind our Members to submit queries to [admin@swissnetball.ch](mailto:admin@swissnetball.ch) unless there is a specific request which should be sent to the appropriate mailbox, for example, [communications@swissnetball.ch](mailto:communications@swissnetball.ch) and [operations@swissnetball.ch](mailto:operations@swissnetball.ch) always copying in [admin@swissnetball.ch](mailto:admin@swissnetball.ch).

## **KEEPING IN TOUCH**

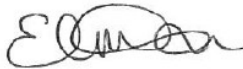
We have been working very hard over the past 12 months with our communications. We distributed a Christmas Newsletter to all our Members and we achieved an 85% read rate – our highest to date – this shows that you all want to know what is going on. We are continually updating our website ensuring that it is the single source of truth and we are delighted to say that we have revived our LinkedIn account. We have improved the quality, engagement and regular cadence of social media content, for example we have a 7% increase in followers in the last 90 days. In addition to that, we have added a Link Tree to our Instagram account, this tree provides more easily accessible information to you, our followers, if you aren't a follower yet, go on follow us! We also believe that we have improved our communications with clubs i.e., we provide a monthly round up of Swiss Netball events for member sharing. Talking about Member sharing and improved communications, we are delivering a free Digital Marketing session to clubs in May to assist our Members with the social media content.

We would like to thank Lauren Hoare and her amazing deputy, Amy Porter, and volunteer Brontë Goodwin, for leading the way in our communications – this is a huge task and one they have done superbly.

## **FINANCE**

The financial accounts will be presented at the AGA and we would like to thank Jess Brown for her professionalism and for keeping a close eye on the income and expenditure, for analyzing budgets in all of the varying areas, for agreeing costings and liaising with Europe Netball to minimise payment costs when paying our dues. Our finances are in very safe hands and we look forward to sharing with you all new information regarding fees in the not so distant future.

The Committee has worked so very hard this year with many other things not detailed above going on in the background. They all devote so much of their precious free time, more than normal this year, both graciously and willingly to help move netball forward in the right direction in our country. We overcome obstacles and we jump through hoops, becoming more united in our aims. One of which is to deliver netball to our members and to see netball played by more and more people, we hope these obstacles will be less, the hoops lowered. Every single one of us on the Committee are passionate about netball in the country, with continued determination to provide better and more opportunities for everyone in the sport, which we cannot do without your support. A huge thank you for your continued support and commitment to the sport, let's keep working together to grow this sport that we all love! One final note, we are always on the hunt for volunteers so no matter what you're interested in – if you'd like to help out, please do get in touch!



Emma Connolly  
Swiss Netball President

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### **Swiss Netball International and National Match Programme 2023-2024**

#### **International:**

- Netball Europe 2023 U21 Challenge: 6-8 October 2023
- Netball Europe 2024 U17 Challenge: 8-10 March 2024
- Netball Europe Open Challenge: 16-19 May 2024

#### **National:**

##### Swiss Netball Matchplay

- 1 October 2023 – Junior
- 29 October 2023 – Senior
- 4 November 2023 – Junior
- 20 April 2024 – Junior
- 2 June 2024 – Senior

##### National League:

- 14 October 2023
- 18 November 2023
- 2 December 2023
- 13 January 2024
- 3 February 2024
- 4 May 2024
- 8 June 2024

Junior Clubs Tournament: 19 November 2023

Peppermill Challenge Cup: 16 March 2024