



SPORT

England Netball prepared for surge in interest as 2023 World Cup begins

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England Netball is prepared for a surge of interest in the sport, as the 2023 Netball World Cup is underway.

England got off to a flying start in Cape Town, beating Barbados 90-29 in their Pool B opener yesterday.

The Pool B favourites are hoping to make a big impact on the tournament, which runs until next Sunday.

Sport England recently confirmed that **netball** returned to be the top sports choice for women, and the World Cup aims to shine a spotlight on the sport and engage audiences.

England Netball's Chief Executive Fran Connolly said: "We know that this competition will serve as a catalyst for incredible interest in our sport."

“The team have been working tirelessly to prepare for this moment, and we are confident that their performances will inspire and captivate audiences up and down the country.

“The World Cup offers a unique opportunity for us to showcase the brilliance of this sport and we are absolutely poised to capitalise on this moment which we hope will inspire a new generation of netball enthusiasts.

“The beauty of netball is that there is a place for everyone aged 5-95 to belong, flourish and soar.”

London and the South East are being represented in Cape Town by five members of the Vitality Roses squad.

Defender Funmi Fadoju, shooter Olivia Tchine, and travelling reserve player Halimat Adio are all born and bred London players.

Alongside Jade Clarke and Chelsea Pitman, they all play for London Pulse who recently finished second in the [Netball Super League](#).

This is Clarke’s sixth World Cup and is England’s most capped player in the squad.

London suburbs are also being recognised in the squad also through the likes of vice-captain Layla Guscoth and travelling reserve playing Sophie Drakeford Lewis, who both play for NSL team Surrey Storm.

In London and the South East regions [England Netball](#) offers a variety of programmes such as Back to Netball, Netball Now, and Walking Netball.

These programmes are open to players with differing abilities, levels, and playing preferences, as England Netball is focused on giving more people the opportunity to play the game.

The 2023 Netball World Cup will continue support this effort of getting more players of the side lines and onto the court.

Middlesex Development Officer for England Netball Izzy Murphy said: “Not only is the World Cup a hugely exciting chance to watch our Roses squad compete for a medal against the best in the world.

“It will also be a huge driver of participation as the team inspire people across the country to get involved in netball. With their moment in the spotlight the Roses hope to ignite a legacy on and beyond the court, and we can’t wait!”

Find England netball sessions, find local programme or clubs to join by visiting their website [here](#).

Spectators at home are able to watch the World Cup on BBC Sport and Sky Sports throughout the tournament.

Featured image credit: Ben Lumley