

Provincial Playoffs usher in second season of the DStv Schools Netball Challenge

The new DSTV Schools Netball Challenge (DSNC) is now up and running with a lot of excitement all around. Over 3500 schools across the country heeded the call to be part of the second edition of the U19 tournament, with over 70 000 girls in the U19 division having taken to the courts in the preliminary stages.

The second season of the DSNC is now entering the business end with all provinces gearing up for the Provincial Finals which get underway this weekend, starting off in the Western Cape. The Western Cape along with Kwa-Zulu Natal are debutants in the competition having missed out last year.

The DSNC is a partnership between MultiChoice and SA Schools Netball (SASN) and offers a platform for players from all schools (urban and rural areas) to get to experience the sport on the same level. The tournament is divided into two streams, Ubuntu and Botho to ensure that all schools have an equal shot at glory.

And with some of the matches being broadcast live on SuperSport, it also gives them a taste of what it is like to play at a high-pressure level.

“As a proudly South African company and the biggest funder of sports, MultiChoice is committed to playing its part to unearth talent and grow the next generation of stars. One way we achieve this is by recognising the need for development through sports. As such, we are excited for the start of the DSTV Schools Netball Challenge” says Collen Dlamini, Group Executive: Corporate Affairs at MultiChoice.

Limpopo’s Hlabi Secondary School and Potchefstroom Gimnasium from the North West are the defending champions in the Ubuntu and Botho Streams respectively.

South African Schools Netball president Di Woolley is impressed with how the competition has progressed so far.

“All nine provinces are active, KZN did take a bit of a knock with the recent floods they experienced but they are competing, and they are on board. So, at our national championships, we will have nine provinces represented,” says Woolley.

Over 20 schools from five regions will gather at De Kuilen High School in Kuils River, for the Western Cape’s Provincial finals.

Matches will be broadcast live on SuperSport Variety 4 and the SuperSport Schools App from 9am on Saturday morning, June 4th. The winners from both streams will represent the province at the National Finals scheduled for the 8-9 August.

Western Cape Schools Netball chairperson, Gillian Oakes says there’s a buzz in the air for this weekend’s tournament.

“There’ll be a lot of excitement on Saturday. We have five districts here. There’s going to be stiff competition, they have played in their regions and now it’s culminating into the Western Cape final,” says Oakes.

Woolley mentions that teams will benefit a bit more this year, with training and knowledge sharing sessions to be delivered by industry experts and selected former Spar Proteas players arranged for all Provincial winners prior to the start of the National Finals.

“I’m hoping that our Ubuntu Stream schools will flourish this season with the extra coaching we’ve arranged once they’ve qualified for the provincial level. Either by some of TNL (Telkom Netball League) players or coaches or past Proteas just to give them the extra boost to help raise their game. Because we just feel our teachers have been so academically focused, they haven’t spent enough time dealing with the sport as well. I think that is what we are hoping to achieve this year and that this will now be a build up for next year, 2023 (World Cup) coming to South Africa,” she adds.