

# Memo



**To** Association Executives, Life Members  
**From** Darren Simpson, Executive General Manager Community & Pathways  
**CC** Tain Drinkwater, Chief Executive Officer  
**Date** Wednesday, 4 August 2021  
**Re** **Netball NSW Competitions & Programs Update**

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It is well known that the Greater Sydney region, including Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour regions are in the middle of an extended COVID lockdown, which will not end before Saturday 28 August. Unfortunately, this has created an extremely difficult position for many of the competitions and programs run both by Netball NSW as well as Clubs and Associations.

Pleasingly netball is continuing for the vast majority of regional Associations and Clubs and it is to be hoped that this can continue through until the scheduled end of the season.

While the lockdown is currently due to end on 28 August, a factor of significant concern is the unknown restrictions which may be imposed when the lockdown ends. There is a strong possibility that gathering limits or other restrictions may remain in place when the lockdown is lifted, making planning for the post lockdown period extremely difficult. Therefore, the decisions made on the activities below have been made with a view to providing the greatest amount of certainty in these difficult times.

Below is a summary of the status of various competitions and programs. Where necessary, additional specific detail on each will be communicated directly to the relevant stakeholders.

## **Origin Energy Premier League**

The Premier League competition has been abandoned for 2021. The competition was due to conclude on Wednesday 25 August. Even with the prospect of being able to extend the season for up to a month, the fact that players will have had a minimum of nine weeks with no ability to play or train makes a return to top level netball impossible.

## **DOOLEYS Metro League**

Similar to Premier League, the Metro League competition has been abandoned for 2021. Even though the Metro League season is scheduled to run through September, the same issue with regard to players being unable to play or train means a return is not realistic.

## **HART Junior State Titles**

The Junior State Titles, which had been re-scheduled to 24 & 25 September have been cancelled.

Those Associations which have been subjected to the COVID lockdown will not be in a position to prepare players for a State Titles event after not being able to play or train for at least nine weeks. It is also highly problematic that gatherings of the size required to hold the State Titles will be permitted in Sydney in September. Similarly, regional Associations are unlikely to be comfortable travelling to Sydney at that time.

It is heartbreaking to have to cancel the Junior State Titles for the second consecutive year, however there is no safe and realistic option given the COVID circumstances.

In order to provide a competition opportunity for regional Associations, who have continued to play and train, Netball NSW are planning to hold 'Country Challenge' events on the weekend of 25 & 26 September at two regional locations, depending on demand. These competitions will only be available to Associations who have not been under the Greater Sydney lockdown.

Netball NSW will communicate separately with Associations regarding the cancellation of the Junior State Titles and arrangements for the Country Challenge.

## **HART Regional Leagues & Regional State Cup**

The remaining Regional League competitions are due to proceed as planned.

The Regional State Cup is scheduled for the weekend of 2 & 3 October at Netball Central. Netball NSW is currently assessing alternate venue options for the Regional State Cup and will circulate contingency options to all regions prior to a consultation meeting for invited stakeholders to be held on Monday 9 August.

## **Masters State Titles and Social Masters**

The Masters State Titles and Social Masters are currently planned to continue as scheduled on the weekend of 16 & 17 October in Wagga Wagga. Entries for both competitions are currently open and further details are available on the Netball NSW website.

## **Court Craft Summer Series**

At this stage the Summer Series is proceeding as planned and is due to commence on 11 October. This will obviously be dependent on the easing of restrictions and Netball NSW will communicate regularly around any changes to these plans.

## **The Academy Challenge**

The Academy Challenge is scheduled for September 18-20 in Orange. Netball NSW is currently preparing a range of contingency options to be presented at a consultation meeting for invited stakeholders to be held on Thursday 5 August and an update will be provided following this meeting.

## **State Teams and Emerging Talent Teams**

Following the cancellation of the 2021 National Championships and the 2021 Metro v Regional series, Netball NSW continues to support the individual development of selected athletes.

## 2022 State Teams and Emerging Talent Teams Selection Trials

At this time selection trials for 2022 State and Emerging Talent teams will proceed as planned. Contingency plans will be put in place and implemented if necessary.

### Club and Association Netball

As mentioned above, pleasingly netball is continuing in regional areas of NSW not affected by the COVID lockdown. All Associations in the state are able to make their own decisions with regard to the timing and conduct of their competitions. Associations in the Greater Sydney region will determine whether their seasons will continue post the COVID lockdown or not, however any Associations who do choose to re-start will need to be operating under whatever COVID rules are implemented when the lockdown is lifted. Netball NSW will continue to provide details on any updates as they come to hand.

In line with the Netball NSW Affiliation & Membership policy, the Netball NSW portion of registration fees is not refundable given the amount of the season which has elapsed. Individual Associations and Clubs are able to make their own decisions with regard to providing any partial refund of their component of the fees.

### Additional Information

Netball NSW is extremely disappointed that the 2021 season has ended in this way for so many netballers after such a promising start following the COVID-affected 2020.

The NSW Government has urged all sporting organisations to use their entire network to spread the important health message with regard to COVID-19, that being the absolute need to minimise movement in the community and stay home wherever possible if living in a lockdown area. Vaccinations are also highly recommended.

The best source of information for the latest COVID-19 updates as they relate to sport is the new [NSW Office of Sport COVID-19 Latest Information](#) page. Memo's and links are also uploaded to the [Netball NSW COVID-19 Information](#) page.

Finally, there are a range of financial assistance packages which have been released by the NSW Government which may be available to Clubs and Associations. Netball NSW recommends Clubs and Associations visit the [2021 COVID-19 Support Package](#) page for more details, particularly on the COVID-19 Business Grants and COVID-19 Micro Business Grants.

Netball NSW will continue to provide updates as significant changes develop and further information relating to specific competitions or programs mentioned in this update will be sent to stakeholders. As always, for any further information, please feel free to contact your Regional Manager, Association contact person or any Netball NSW staff member for assistance.