



**RISING STAR.** Coach Jenny van Dyk is a force to be reckoned with on the local netball circuit. Picture: Reg Caldecott

# Jenny finds her groove

**VAN DYK:** AT THE RIGHT TIME, I WOULD LOVE TO BE THE PROTEAS COACH

➔ **Jaguars coach is preparing her squad for New Zealand trip.**

Wesley Botton

Even in her youth, as one of the country's most talented young netball prospects, Jenny van Dyk could envisage herself becoming a coach.

Van Dyk played for the national team from Under-13 level all the way through to the Under-21 age group, but in her final year of high school she picked up serious shoulder and knee injuries in the space of a week.

Gritting her teeth at varsity level, after making the Tuks squad, she played through five operations and ultimately made a decision to stop when she received her degree in sports psychology.

"I just got the feeling I should stop playing and start coaching," Van Dyk said this week.

She started out by guiding junior teams before being promoted to manager of the University of Pretoria netball club, and she took control of the Tuks senior squad in 2010.

As a coach, she has really found her groove over the last couple of years, lifting six titles at varsity, interprovincial and Premier League level with the Tuks, Tshwane and Gauteng Jaguars teams.

"We've consistently grown and improved as a group," Van Dyk said.

"I think I can count the matches we've lost in the last five years on one hand, which has been fantastic."

A former coach of the national Under-19 and Under-21 squads, she was announced last week as the mentor for the NSA President's team, and Van Dyk ultimately has her sights set on the head coach's position with the national senior side.

"I feel I have a lot to offer this country, and at the right time, I'd love to be the Proteas coach," said Van Dyk, who lives in Pretoria with husband Coenie and their two-year-old son CJ.

For now, she will return to the

Super Club tournament in New Zealand with the Jaguars next month.

After they received entry to the prestigious tournament last year by lifting the Brutal Fruit Netball Premier League title, they were stunned by their opponents, earning only one victory on tour.

On this occasion, they will use their Premier League prize money and rely on other funding to get there, but Van Dyk felt they had a lot more to learn and it was worth making a return.

"It's a hectic tournament, and you can see they play their league twice as long as ours ... you can feel that pace on court," she said.

"For us it's important to really just try our best to improve on last year's performance."