



Gideon Sam, Jenny van Dyk and Tshina Mda at the Netball League launch in Sandton yesterday.

Photo by Trevor Kunene



## Netball SA eyes World Cup

By MAXWELL RAMARU

SOUTH AFRICA'S bid to host the 2023 Netball World Cup is on track.

This was revealed by Sascoc president Gideon Sam during the Brutal Fruit Netball Premier League launch in Joburg yesterday.

Sam insists that Sascoc has rallied behind Netball South Africa (NSA) to ensure Mzansi gets the rights to host the global event.

Said Sam: "Women's sport has always been a priority. We believe that if we host this, netball will grow in the country. If we go play in others' territory it's not good for our sport. But let's be patient as this (bidding) goes through the process. Sascoc is 120% behind the federation (NSA)."

Sam hopes the Netball Premier League, scheduled to start on Friday (4pm) at the Ellis Park Indoor Arena, will help unite communities. Kingdom Stars will take on North West Diamonds in the opening match.

"Women in our country get the short end of the stick. If we can build a movement through netball that changes that, then we would have achieved something.

"Through the sports movement we have made people believe that we would be free one day and it hap-

pened. Now we have that freedom we are battling to get our sports movement to take the next step to build communities."

Sam hopes Ales from his province (Eastern Cape) will rise to the occasion this time to end the dominance of defending champions Gauteng Jaguars and Free State Crinums, who've won the competition three times. "My province must also win this competition. It can't be Free State and Gauteng all the time. They need to work hard so that we are never sure who will come out tops."

NSA president Cecilia Molekwane, meanwhile, was not sure how much the winners will pocket when the competition ends on 17 June. Said Molekwane: "We are still in the process of finalising the prize money. We will make an announcement in due course, something is in the pipeline. Let's play for pride and love of the game. If it means we will pay them in the end, we shall do so."

Jaguars captain Tshina Mda admits they feel pressure ahead of their opening match against Northern Cape's Diamonds on Saturday (11am). "There is pressure. We might not be three-times champions, but winning is addictive!"

