



**INTENSITY:** Shannen Bartlett of the Stings is challenged by Izette Griesel and Tshina Mda of the Jaguars during their 2018 Brutal Fruit Netball Premier League match at Ellis Park Arena yesterday.

Picture: Muzi Ntombela/BackpagePix

# JAGUARS ROAR AGAIN

**Defending champions continue their winning start to Brutal Fruit title defence**

## SPORTS CORRESPONDENT IN JOHANNESBURG

THE GAUTENG Jaguars stormed through the opening weekend of the Brutal Fruit Netball Premier League unbeaten and looked as dominant as ever, pulling off a 51-43 win over the Southern Stings at Ellis Park Arena yesterday.

As predicted the much-anticipated showdown between the two sides started out as a closely fought clash. The teams were neck and neck in the first quarter, exchanging the lead on numerous occasions and reaching the first break with just one goal in it – the Stings leading 11-10 at that point.

The team from the Western Cape held onto that one-goal advantage heading into half-time 26-25 up. That's when a new game plan from the Jaguars kicked into gear and it showed

on the scoreboard with the defending champions finishing a quarter ahead for the first time at the end of the third, on 37-34.

Four unanswered goals at the start of the fourth meant the Jaguars opened up that small gap significantly before the Stings could respond. It seemed there was no coming back from that, with the Jaguars increasing their advantage to eventually win it by eight goals.

"We changed our plan after half way through. Our first game plan sucked," admitted Jaguars coach Jenny van Dyk after the game. "We tried something and it didn't work and so we had to change it. The girls were quick to adapt and it worked well. It was quite a tough match so I'm pleased with the performance."

Stings coach Annelie Lucas reckoned: "We couldn't keep up our intensity. It

was a very physical game so the girls just got beaten on the body, and the bodies got tired so they couldn't keep up with it."

Meanwhile, the North West Flames claimed their first win of the weekend. Last year's runners-up bounced back from a loss to the Stings on Saturday, with a 61-39 victory over the Limpopo Baobabs.

In the final game of the opening round, the Eastern Cape Aloes slumped to their second loss of the weekend, while the Gauteng Fireballs claimed their second victory. The Fireballs, who finished from start to finish to eventually take it 53-28.

"I think the difference for us was playing the ball instead of playing the man and losing focus," said Fireballs coach Dorette Badenhorst. "The Aloes

are a very physical team and you need to make sure that you work from them. They're a difficult team to play, but I think our shots were good. Talja [Venter] played really well. Her goal average was very high so that was the difference."

Aloes coach Des Neville said: "We were hoping our players would have settled after yesterday's game and some of the combinations did come through quite strongly today.

"We tried a few new things and some of those did pay off but it's just a matter of trying to keep that going for the whole game. We've got pockets of brilliance, but too many lulls and too many lows so if we can sort that out, I think we'll go forward from here."

## RESULTS WRAP

North West Flames **61-39** Limpopo Baobabs  
Gauteng Jaguars **51-43** Southern Stings  
Gauteng Fireballs **53-28** Eastern Cape Aloes

