



# NETBALL PROTEAS AIM TO UPSET JAMAICA!

By SUNSPORT REPORTER

**SOUTH** Africa's netball team is in for a tough game at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, as the Proteas' first encounter tomorrow is with Jamaica, ranked fourth in the world.

Erin Burger, South Africa's most capped player, says it is a must-win game, as only the top two teams in each group will progress to the play-offs.

Australia, currently the world's best team, is in the same group.

The Proteas team is ranked fifth.

Burger (Tuks) is not one to let statistics get to her.

As far as she is concerned,

the moment they step onto the court the playing field is level, with South Africa's chances to win as good as that of Jamaica.

"We are realistic, as it is never easy playing against Jamaica. They have outstanding goal shooters.

"What makes it so difficult to play against them is their length. I stand to be corrected, but they are easily 1.90m or taller.

"So our challenge for

the duration of the game will be to make things as difficult as we can for them. They should be under pressure each time they get the ball in the circle."

Norma Plummer, South Africa's head coach, tends to often say in admiration that her team has "heart".

And Burger reckons being gutsy on the court is something that comes naturally to her and her teammates.

"South African athletes tend to be born with a never-give-up attitude.

When you play for South Africa you want to be at your best, as your country's honour is at stake," said Burger who is a coach at Tuks when she is not playing.

South African netball has really gone from strength to strength over the last two years. Whereas in the past the team tended to get "slaughtered" in games against Australia, New Zealand and England, the clashes are now fiercely contested affairs, with the goal difference seldom being more than five.

Apart from a sense of self-belief that Plummer has instilled in each player Burger credits the fact that South Africa got to play in the Quad Series as a major contributor to their improvement.

"Getting to play the top teams on a regular basis led to us getting used to the intensity of their games. We are also not intimidated by the physical approach of the players any more. We can give now as good as we get on the court.

"It also helps that more and more of us get to play internationally. Last year I played in Australia for four months.

"There is no such thing as an easy game in their league. In most of the games, the goal difference is two or three. I got used to playing in high pressure games."



Netball Proteas  
Erin Burger.

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