



TAKE SIDES.



National Bank Cup Semi Finals Preview

Losses add extra edge to Sting v Magic clash

Qualifying in second spot has given the Waikato/Bay of Plenty Magic supported by Sleepyhead a new lease of life, coach Noeline Taurua said ahead of Friday's first National Bank Cup netball semifinal in Invercargill.

Buoyed by the prospect of the two-life system for the two top qualifiers, the Magic headed south confident of resurrecting their season and starting with a clean slate against the Ascot Park Hotel Southern Sting in the first of the playoffs. With both teams coming off last round losses, the match is poised to be tight and highlighted by the prospect of some tantalising individual match-ups. Both teams are brimming with talent and have a place in the final at stake.

The loser gets a second chance, playing the winner of Sunday's second semifinal between the Fujifilm Force and the Ballantynes Canterbury Flames on June 23 to find the other finalist.

The Magic have struggled to play to their potential this year but Taurua believes she has identified areas that need a slight tweaking as she searches for the elusive formula that will ignite the obvious talent in the team.

The Magic have effectively gone into camp for the match, taking three days to get to Invercargill with trainings interspersed at various stopovers on the way. "We have no fear going down there (Invercargill)," Taurua said. "There's more positives for us and if anything we play better away from home. At the moment we need team unity and hopefully it will pull us together even tighter." There will be a change of tactics for the match and probably personnel as the Magic look for more control.

"It's all about the timing, we've been trying to rush everything too much," Taurua said. "We still haven't worked out where we sit this year and once we get a sniff of that we will be away. Having two shooters available, controlling our own possession and tight defence will win this game."

Taurua said ball retention, rotation of the circle and high shooting percentages were the Sting's major strengths.

Coach Robyn Broughton was disappointed with the Sting's form when losing to the Flames last week and is looking for a big lift across the board.

“I wasn't pleased at all, we should have won it and we're better than that,” she said. “But that's history now. All the players need to lift their game, make sure they are on target, know where they are and use the skill that they've got properly. We made uncharacteristic mistakes last week. It was a dull performance and the player's had no fizz.”

Going on last week's form, Fujifilm Force and Ballantynes Canterbury Flames will be looking for more of the same after upset wins against the Magic and Sting respectively, in their sudden death semifinal on the North Shore.

The Flames are also quite happy to be playing away from home and historically have been the Force's bogey team.

Experienced co-captain Julie Seymour said mentally it was important the Flames had a fresh approach for the Force.

“Last week's match gave us the belief but you've got to be careful that you don't just expect things are going to happen. We have enjoyed the moment but now it's a clean slate again and if we don't win this week it's all over, so the right focus is important,” she said.

The Flames had great success against the Sting driving the ball through the middle but Seymour highlighted the Force's strong team defence which would go all out to nullify this aspect.

“Their forte is the zone defence and it goes right through the court so we will have to change our tactics a little bit,” Seymour said, “but you don't want to change too much because you want to be able to play your own game. We're quietly confident and back ourselves to have a real go at this.”

Force coach Yvonne Willering is happy her team has finally hit their straps and the emphasis is not just on maintaining last week's high performance level but improving on it.

Willering was surprised by the Flames upset result but couldn't deny the quality effort.

“We will need to be wary. Come this weekend, your past results count for nothing but it's another opportunity for us to show where we are at,” she said. “I am confident. We know we are at the business end and we have now actually shown what we are capable of so it's a matter of taking another step up from that.”

Semi Finals and Final Draw

	Team 1	Team 2	Venue	Date	Time
Semi A	Ascot Park Hotel Southern Sting	Waikato/BOP Magic supported by Sleepyhead	Invercargill – Stadium Southland	Friday 16 June	7:30pm
Semi B	Fujifilm Force	Fujifilm Force	Auckland – North Shore Events Centre	Sunday 18 June	1:00pm
Semi C	Loser Semi A	Winner Semi B		Friday 23 June	7:30pm
Final	Winner Semi A	Winner Semi C		Friday 30 June	7:30pm

Confirmed Shooting Statistics

		Round 7			Total		
Name:	Team:	Goals	Attempts	%	Goals	Attempts	%
Tania Dalton	Sting	22	23	96%	154	157	98%
Irene van Dyk	Magic	27	28	96%	251	272	92%
Jo Morrison	Diamonds	24	25	96%	102	117	87%
Shelley Norris	Flames	20	21	95%	128	150	85%
Te Huinga Reo Selby Rickit	Sting				15	18	83%
Catherine Latu	Force	27	30	90%	133	160	83%
Megan Dehn	Force	20	25	80%	119	144	83%
Belinda Colling	Sting	8	11	73%	118	146	81%
Arahi Wall	Magic				33	41	80%
Natalie Avellino	Sting	18	23	78%	127	158	80%
Maria Tutaia	Diamonds	21	28	75%	208	262	79%
Brigette Tapene	Force				22	28	79%
Lovila Paki	Shakers	21	28	75%	135	172	78%
Hayley Stockman	Flyers	5	8	63%	143	185	77%
Jamilah Gupwell	Shakers	29	34	85%	155	203	76%
Sonia Butler	Flames				44	60	73%
Anna Thompson	Flames				11	15	73%
Jade Topia	Flames	31	39	79%	141	194	73%
Angela Mitchell	Rebels				114	160	71%
Tanya Lund	Magic	15	23	65%	98	140	70%
Grace Rasmussen	Diamonds				24	35	69%
Lizzie Sandom	Rebels	21	34	62%	47	70	67%
Daneka Wipiiti	Force				80	120	67%
Katarina Cooper	Shakers				5	8	63%
Malu Fa'asavalu	Flyers	9	17	53%	48	78	62%
Anna Moleneaux	Rebels	6	9	67%	47	79	59%

Kiley Hikawai	Flyers	5	7	71%	36	64	56%
Amber Bellringer	Flyers	11	20	55%	11	20	55%
Kiri Adams	Magic				12	22	55%
Jessica Tuki	Rebels	6	13	46%	57	110	52%
Paula Griffin	Diamonds	2	6	33%	2	6	33%

For weekend results contact Jane Hunt, National Bank Cup Media Liaison on 021 107 0287.