

Exciting rule changes set for Cathedral City Lighter Fast Net Grand Prix

Fast Net action returns in January and this is your first chance to watch England's World Netball Series champions take to the court in the Cathedral City Lighter Fast Net Grand Prix. It will be a new experience for fans and teams as England Netball take the opportunity to trial rule changes to Fast Net to make the format even more exciting.

The rule changes that will be on show at the Grand Prix include; the nominated Head Coach for each side will be able to coach from the substitution box, even if a player is also present in the box. Goals scored outside the circle will be worth 3 points in normal play and remain at 4 in Powerplay periods. Perhaps the most anticipated alteration is in regards to the Powerplay themselves.

The general philosophy at the 2011 World Netball Series was for both sides to take their Powerplay in the third quarter and attempt to nullify each other. However, at the beginning of every match at the Grand Prix, teams will flip a coin with the winner selecting which quarter they will use their Powerplay. The loser of the coin toss must then select a different quarter in which to use theirs.

FIAT Netball Superleague General Manager, Andy Crook believes that the changes will make for an improved viewing spectacle; he said "Fast Net has proven to be an electrifying form of the game and the rule changes we are implementing for the Cathedral City Lighter Grand Prix are looking to increase the pace and the excitement of the contest. We have an opportunity to trial proposed changes in this competition ahead of the World Netball Series 2012 to be held in Auckland.

"The rule changes are designed to encourage shooting from outside the circle, as we have seen how devastating this skill can be when executed at the World Netball Series. The fact that a nominated coach can coach from the substitution box should encourage greater tactical influence on the game and the change in Powerplays will add a different dynamic and opens the format up to a new way of thinking."

There will be a thrilling weekend of Fast Net action as four northern teams contest the Manchester Conference on Saturday 7th January, with the four southern teams entering the competition on Sunday 8th January at the Surrey Conference.

The first chance to watch your England heroes in action will be at the Manchester Thunderdome as Northern Thunder, Loughborough Lightning, Team Northumbria and Yorkshire Jets do battle. World Netball Series winners, Emma Dovey and Laura Malcolm will be lining up for Thunder while England internationals Sophia Candappa and Rachel Shaw take to the court for Lightning and Jets respectively. Future England stars will also be on show as several players from the youth set-up will be in Manchester. The Jets have Natalie Haythornthwaite in their team and Kayley Moss could appear for Northumbria.

A day later and focus switches to the Surrey Sports Park as Celtic Dragons, Hertfordshire Mavericks, Surrey Storm and Team Bath go head to head. A smorgasbord of internationals will be on display as the likes of Rachel Dunn, Kadeen Corbin, Sasha Corbin, Pamela Cookey, Tamsin Greenway and Emma Thomas are set to compete.

The top two teams from each Conference then proceed to the Finals night on Friday 13th January, with Surrey once more the hosts. Tickets are still available for all three days action, with adult tickets priced at just £14 and juniors/concessions costing £12. With eight games to be played at each Conference session, this equates to less than £2 per match! Prices remain the same for the Finals night as four more monster clashes will decide the winner of the inaugural Cathedral City Lighter Fast Net Grand Prix.