

# Meet the Telkom Netball League superstars

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Telkom is a proud sponsor of the Telkom Netball League (TNL), in partnership with Netball South Africa. The leading telecommunications company is steadfast in its stance on the topic of women in sports; which is that fair recognition of, compensation and support is important in elevating superstar athletes in the sport just as it is the norm for male counterparts partaking in any other sport code.

Telkom was recognised as Sponsor of the Year at the 15th annual Momentum G-Sports Awards 2020 – a commitment by the company that enables the continuation of the sports of netball and celebrates as well as supports the players behind the game.

The South African national netball team currently ranks fifth in the International Netball Federation (INF) World Rankings.

Meet some of the players with aspirations to one day put our country on the map.



**Sikholiwe Sne Mdletshe**

You are a phenomenal player, tell us a little about yourself.

I am Sikholiwe Mdletshe, also known as Sne. I am the oldest and only girl of 5 siblings. I was born in Durban but I grew up in a small town called Piet Retief in Mpumalanga, up until Grade 10 when I moved to a school in Middelburg.

Growing up, I always played sports. I was a very active kid and I did everything from soccer, athletics, cross-country and cricket. In high school, I really saw myself becoming a world class sprinter in the 400m hurdles or 200m, however, that changed and netball became my first love. And I have not turned back since.

I am currently doing my postgraduate diploma in general accountancy which is part of my journey to becoming a chartered accountant.

Outside academics and netball, I am a part of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation – furthering my aspirations of becoming an entrepreneur as well. I like taking part in multiple things to keep growing in all aspects.

### **What drives you to be who you are and do what you do?**

I would say that quite a few things drive me in the different areas of my life. In netball, I am mostly driven by knowing that my ability to play is a God-given gift and I want to use that to glorify God but also to encourage people that have gifts to use them.

In academics and other areas of my life, I'm driven by the urge to keep on growing holistically as an individual. A lot of the time kids that are good in sport are boxed and labelled as "just athletes" and I desperately want to change that to "I am more than an athlete" – and that pushes me to keep working.

### **What have you learned about yourself through being a part of the team?**

I have learned that I have the ability to find calm in the chaos – I really also try to find the calm side of things without even knowing,

### **What are your future hopes and aspirations?**

In the near future, I hope to complete my qualification of becoming a chartered accountant, also getting my business off the ground and growing as a well known brand.

I am excited that I recently got my maiden call up to the Spar Proteas and could get my 1st cap during the upcoming test match. This is a big achievement for me.

I hope to change the lives of girls in our communities through mentorship, guidance, sport initiatives and financial support – getting these girls through university or helping them to acquire the skills for the work environment.

### **How do you balance the multiple roles you fulfil i.e. work, family life, friends?**

For me, it's essential to always know what is happening right now and what is going to happen tomorrow. So I plan a lot – I have a daily planner, weekly schedule and also a monthly planner. Staying organised helps me balance everything.

But to be honest, I have had to sacrifice my social life in order to balance everything else, with that being said, if I have time I make sure that I spend it with my friends and family.

### **What kind of example do you want to set for your children?**

I want to be the example of someone who can't be boxed, I want my children to know that they can achieve anything and they can be good at multiple things at once if they set their mind on it,

### **How would you define today's woman?**

A force to be reckoned with. Women of today do not stand back – they challenge the what society says, go against the norms in order to rise and lift and inspire other women around them.

**How would you like to see the game of netball improving in SA?**

I think that netball is growing and doing so at a rapid pace, however, I do believe that as making the sport a professional sport, where players can be paid just to play all year round and focus on only that will take the sport to greater heights.

**What are some of your concerns as a woman and what do you think are the possible solutions?**

Not knowing what may happen if I go out – it is almost like a gamble with life because I can't feel safe or let my guard down in any situation.

I think one solution is men holding themselves accountable for their actions, reprimanding each other and engaging in talks on how to spread care and not violence because I don't think women can be any more careful of their actions.

**Which women inspire you to be a better version of yourself and why?**

- My mom (Lindiwe Dladla); she shows me everyday through her actions that I don't have to be defined by my circumstance. Her strength and resilience is one of the most amazing things I've ever seen.
- Amanda Dlamini – she is really one of the game changers in sport right now and inspires me to do the same.
- My female friends (most of them are much older than me) – they all challenge me on a daily to aspire to be the best version of myself and through their actions they continuously inspire me.

**How would you like your legacy to be remembered?**

I would like people to remember that I was 'more than an athlete', for them to remember a young kid that took any opportunity available to better herself in order to help and uplift those around her. I want my legacy to be about being a helping hand, a creator and cultivator of a community of gamechangers to come.

**What is your favourite quote and why?**

“God did not bring you to the deep waters to drown you, He brought you here because your enemies cannot swim” – Steven Furtick

This quote reminds me that God is always by my side and even through the times where I feel like giving up, I am reminded that I am not alone and all I have to do is keep swimming through it all and the rest will flow.



## **Jo Prins**

**You are a phenomenal player, tell us a little about yourself.**

I have been playing netball for 20 years. I started playing when I was five, but I grew up next to a netball court. My older sister played provincial and actually went to Singapore with the u/18 SA Team. But we got it from our momma. She played during Apartheid and they were SA champs, SASSA 1981, PE. My mom played centre.

**What drives you to be who you are and do what you do?**

When I was little I wanted to be Bronwyn Bock when I grow up. I really admired her growing up cause I could see my face reflected in hers. A beautiful and strong Coloured woman leading the Proteas. And I'll never forget meeting her when she awarded me my u/10 (I think) player of the year award. I looked up to her that day as she shook my hand and gave me my little trophy and to this day I still do. And that is one of the things that drives me. I want to be for younger girls, who Dr Bronwyn Bock Jonathan was for me growing up. I want them to see their faces reflected in mine. Play to inspire has always been something I've tried to do. This is more than just a game. It is apart of who I am.

**What have you learned about yourself through being a part of the team?**

The importance of integrity – I say what I mean and mean what I say. That is how you build trust in a team and trust is extremely important for a team to be successful. When the going get's tough, the tough gets going. The importance of working together as a team to achieve one goal.

**What are your future hopes and aspirations?**

Ever since I can remember, my dream was to wear the green and gold and represent my beautiful diverse country on the international stage and that dream has not changed.

**How do you balance the multiple roles you fulfil i.e. work, family life, friends?**

For me personally, balance is key. Being an holistic athlete is very important for me to achieve my best. Time management plays a vital role in being able to achieve that.

**How would you define today's woman?**

Bold, confident, self-reliant and fearless. Being a woman today means using your voice to empower others to create positive change and to celebrate your own success and be unapologetically you. There lies strength in your femininity.

**How would you like to see the game of netball improving in SA?**

I would love for there to be more competitive tournaments in the country where players can be developed and groomed for the international stage by providing ample opportunity for growth and high-level competition on home soil.

Just like male sports codes, it would be great for netballers to receive a steady income so we can leave our day jobs and be professional sportswomen.

The dream is for netball to be a professional sport in this country.

I would love for my dream as well as that of many other players' of being a professional netball players to be realised and for netball to get the exposure and recognition that it deserves in this country.

**What are some of your concerns as a woman and what do you think are the possible solutions?**

Looking back on 2019 and the past season, our SA sportswomen have achieved so much. Yet the gender inequality in SA sport is still evident. As a female athlete myself I am well aware of the equal hard work women put in and the equal sacrifices if not more sometimes that women have to make to be successful in their sport. Still the return and resources and the exposure and recognition female athletes receive are far less than that of our male counterparts.

Yes, we have definitely come a far way for women in sport in SA, but there is still such a far way to go. I call upon anyone that can have an impact or influence to please use it and back women in sport. We can always push the agenda more and what you invest and put in, you will get out. The future is female. If you want to be apart of the future, support women. The time is *now* to invest in and get behind women! The possibilities are endless for what women will achieve in sport.

The safety of women in this country is generally a concern. In September 2019, President Ramaphosa declared gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide a national crisis, but still in 2020 the news is filled with women and children losing their life die to GBV. The femicide needs to stop. The South African Constitution needs to be amended in order for any visible change to be made and more robust action ought to be taken in ensuring the safety of women. This issue needs more attention and action.

**Which women inspire you to be a better version of yourself and why?**

I am inspired by all women. I love women and have been raised by strong women. Being in a female dominated sport, I have been fortunate to constantly be surrounded by powerful and inspiring women my whole life. I've had the privilege of being coached by and as well as play with greatness and that has inspired me to always strive for greatness in everything I do.

**How would you like your legacy to be remembered?**



I want to be remembered to be more than just a netballer. My strength lies in not being able to be put in a box. I am 'more than' an athlete and anything people try to classify me as. What makes me feel good is making others feel good. I love empowering others and making them realise they're 'more than'. Especially women. I want every young girl to know that her voice can change the world. There is no limit to what we as women can achieve, especially together. If I could have just impacted one life in a positive way, that's enough for me.

**What is your favourite quote and why?**

"Good, better, best. Never let it rest. 'Til your good is better and your better is best." - [St. Jerome](#)

I apply this quote to all aspects of my life. I try to be the best I can be in all I do.



**Sasha-Lee Petersen**

**Tell us a little about yourself.**

I am Sasha-Lee Petersen, 25 years old, I reside in Cape Town and I am currently pursuing my honours in education at the University of Stellenbosch. I started playing netball at the age of six and I have loved it ever since.

**What drives you to be who you are and do what you do?**

I was raised by parents who wanted the best for me but who also wanted me to be successful, in whatever I set my mind to. I was never given anything on a silver platter, I always worked hard for what I wanted in life. I was raised to always remain

humble and never to take anything for granted. I have endured many failures in life but that has given me room to grow and to be better. I am grateful for all the sacrifices I've made and I am always open to learning.

**What have you learned about yourself through being a part of the team?**

Being part of a team has taught me that I am not alone in any situation. We all support one another and have each others backs at all times. Every single individual in the team has their own story and life journey and they all love netball just as much as I do. I've always made tremendous friends, playing in a team and these friendships can last a lifetime. Team setups also remind you that you cannot be selfish, and you have to put the next person first. Playing in a unit, with girls who have the same vision as you, is really amazing.

**What are your future hopes and aspirations?**

I hope that I can coach at a high level one day and help young girls in the netball community, achieve their dream. I hope that I can be a pillar of strength and hope to those who want to pursue netball one day and that I can change lives through doing that.

**How do you balance the multiple roles you fulfil i.e. work, family life, friends?**

Seeing that netball is not a professional sport in our country, being a student athlete, I had to learn how to balance everything. If I am not in the gym or on the netball court, I am spending time on my studies and spending time with family and friends. You have to make time for everything in life. Having a balanced in life is very important.

**How would you define today's woman?**

I would define today's women as powerful, strong, determined, resilient and beautiful. Women have come together and stood up for themselves, with regards to so many things in life. The societal stigmas that have been put on women are something of the past. Women are capable and are worthy of so much. They finally have a voice to speak up and say how they feel and for that they have been respected by many. If we genuinely support one another and stand together, we can be even stronger.

**How would you like to see the game of netball improving in SA?**

Netball in SA can improve by getting much faster and also using less whistle in games. We should adapt to the rules of the big leagues overseas. More development should take place and we should have more depth in the country as 2023 is approaching and we do not have many young girls coming through the ranks. Maybe a South African Invitational team should be made so that there are always girls coming up, to one day play for SA.

**What are some of your concerns as a woman and what do you think are the possible solutions?**

A concern for women could be that they feel as if they are not independent and strong enough to be alone and stand on their own two feet. Some women are also too scared to speak up and stand for what is right. This could be solved by, making a pathway for themselves and believing and doing things that they want to do. Women should not be scared to speak up and they should stand for something in life, even if it's not what anybody else believes in, as long as they stand for something.

**Which women inspire you to be a better version of yourself and why?**

Women like my mother, our director of sport at Maties (Ilhaam), many netball girls, Michelle Obama and Serena Williams. Being a woman of colour, it was never easy to just get to where you wanted, you had to work really hard. They have really inspired me to never give up and to reach for my goals and that the sky is never the limit.

**How would you like your legacy to be remembered?**

I would like to leave a legacy of strength, determination, perseverance and resilience. I would like to be a role model to many young girls and help them, in any way that I can. I would like to change many lives through playing and be a hope for many. However, I would like to leave a better player, but most importantly, a better person.

**What is your favourite quote and why?**

"Keep chasing that 1%" this means that anything you do in life, you can always push and give that extra 1%. When you feel like you can't, you can always go 1% more. Never ever give up in life and know that you can always give a little more each time.



**Didintle Dineo Wame Keebine**

**You are a phenomenal player, tell us a little about yourself.**

I was born in Mafikeng, raised in Zeerust and my home is in Midrand. I matriculated at Hoërskool Zeerust and recently graduated from the North-West University with a degree in psychology and sociology. I'm currently studying tourism and history for my PGCE in 2021. I love food and people, with all of my heart. I enjoy watching series, movies and I enjoy travelling. I'm also an adventurous person and a fan of exploring new things.

**What drives you to be who you are and do what you do?**

My dream and achieving the goals that I set for myself, whether long-term or short-term. Being selected for the 2019/2020 Protea squad is one of the things that motivate me even more because I know that I'm one step closer to my dream. It's a reminder of how far I've come, and where I am going. It's an indication that nothing is too hard or impossible for anyone.



who believes. The short-term goals help me better myself to become who I am meant to be, or who I aspire to be, both as an athlete and also as an individual.

**What have you learned about yourself through being a part of the team?**

My ability to adjust to unexpected events and my resilience. To be able to encourage my fellow teammates despite the hardships we get to face.

**What are your future hopes and aspirations?**

To be chosen for the Protea team and represent South Africa at the international level. To be one of the best coaches in the country. To help young ones with talent achieve their dreams and goals because it's possible.

**How do you balance the multiple roles you fulfil i.e. work, family life, friends?**

I plan out my days mostly on a weekly basis. This aids in guiding me on what to attend to and when. As an athlete, training is part of our everyday lives.

Planning things ahead makes everything a bit easier because with the little time one would have left, we are forced to do what one needs to do.

**What kind of example do you want to set for your children?**

The kind of example I want to set for my future children is love. To love the next person as they love themselves; something my grandmother and mother taught me. Love is the most powerful tool in the world, it heals, it comforts, it gives hope, it never takes away but always adds into one's life. The love you have in your heart is evident in how you carry yourself and how you treat others. Everything else that you do etc., will flow from the love you have in your heart. Another example is for them to have faith, to believe and to know that nothing is impossible or too hard for them. They can do anything they put their minds to, that they should never allow anyone to tell them they can't achieve anything, and if it comes to that, they should prove the nay-sayers wrong.

**How would you define today's woman?**

Powerful; being warriors of change.

**How would you like to see the game of netball improving in SA?**

I believe the game of netball In South Africa today is going in the right direction, providing more and more opportunities for players to showcase their talent. I believe we can still go deeper, to reach out to the townships and rural areas and identify those who can't support themselves.

**What are some of your concerns as a woman and what do you think are the possible solutions?**

It is the safety of the women and children in South Africa. We can tell ourselves and children to be safe, which we try to do, but with perpetrators always out to get us, it's scary as it is. Men of today need to take charge and stand up for the women and children of this country. They can do better. Women and children should be treated the way they deserve to be treated.

**Which women inspire you to be a better version of yourself and why?**

My mother and grandmother. When my grandfather passed away in 2005, who was the only father figure I had in my life, my grandmother switched to 2.0. The way she handled every situation, how she took care of the household and making sure that her children are raised well and still living in the right direction was amazing. I watched all the battles she fought

and how she overcame from a distance. The same with my mother, she fought the toughest battles; what she went through emotionally and physically, every single set-back one would think, and here she is today, stronger than ever. I am a double portion of who they are. Most importantly, their love for people, and their faith and belief in God. That inspires me.

### **How would you like your legacy to be remembered?**

That I was a person of influence, a person who caused change, a person who ignited the faith of those around me and made them believe in themselves, their dreams, and most importantly God.

### **What is your favourite quote and why?**

“You can do anything you put your mind to.” – It’s true, if you set your mind on something, you can achieve it. All you need is that little faith you have to take the first step and the rest will follow. I believe that if you can’t fly, run; if you can’t run, walk; if you can’t crawl, walk. No matter what, keep moving forward, you will make it.

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