

We ran a poll on our Instagram a few weeks ago, asking netball fans which country's netball journey they wanted to learn more about. And while the Silver Ferns and Proteas always draw attention for their grit and growth... the powerhouse that is Australia's national netball team, the Diamonds, still holds a legendary status.

Why? Because no matter who you support, everyone wants to know how you beat the best.

Let's take a look at the history of the Australian Diamonds — the world's most successful netball team — and the moments when they weren't on top, proving that even the greatest are constantly challenged.

A dynasty born from dominance

Netball has long been a part of Australian sporting culture. As one of the founding members of the International Netball Federation, Australia participated in the very first Netball World Cup in 1963. Since then? The Diamonds have gone on to become *the* benchmark in international netball.

They've won **12 World Cups** and **4 Commonwealth Games golds**, consistently finishing in the top two of nearly every major tournament. Australia is known for producing fiercely competitive athletes, with a national system that grooms netballers from grassroots through to high performance.

And yet — they've been pushed, they've been tested, and they've been beaten.

When the unbeatable were beaten

Even the most successful teams have had their moments of vulnerability. Some of the most iconic matches in netball history come from the rare moments where Australia were challenged (and even defeated) on the world stage.

1999 World Cup Final - New Zealand defeats Australia in Christchurch

A dramatic showdown on Kiwi soil. The Silver Ferns edged out Australia in a nail-biter, cementing one of the fiercest rivalries in sport.

2010 Commonwealth Games Final - New Zealand wins in double extra time

This match in Delhi is often dubbed one of the greatest netball games of all time. After two rounds of extra time, the Ferns clinched gold in a thriller.

2023 Quad Series - England defeats Australia 55-54

A game that made the netball world sit up and pay attention. England showed they weren't just contenders — they were game-changers.

2023 World Cup semi-final - England beats Australia for the first time at a World Cup

A historic win for the Roses. Australia had never lost to England in a Netball World Cup match — until that night in Cape Town.

2024 Constellation Cup - The Silver Ferns win the series 3-1.

Dominating the series with minor errors and pin point tactical play, the Ferns make history after a long anticipated win against the world's number one.

These moments aren't just losses. They're testaments to how far global netball has come, and how the Diamonds, despite their legacy, are never immune to pressure.

Notable Diamonds Coaches

These coaches not only led the team to major victories but helped define eras of dominance, style, and structure.

Norma Plummer (1994-1995, 2003-2011)

- A fierce tactician with unmatched knowledge of the game.
- Under her leadership, the Diamonds won the **2007 Netball World Cup** and **2010 Commonwealth Games gold**.
- She was known for her no-nonsense attitude and ability to rebuild squads — and later took her expertise to South Africa, coaching the Proteas.

Lisa Alexander (2011-2020)

- Oversaw one of the most consistent eras in Diamonds history.

- Coached the team to **gold at the 2014 Commonwealth Games** and **2015 World Cup** (on home soil in Sydney).
- Her tenure included **81 wins from 102 Tests**, and she was known for her strategic clarity and sharp rotation of combinations.

Simone McKinnis (former assistant coach, also head coach of Melbourne Vixens)

- While not a Diamonds head coach, McKinnis played a key role in talent development through her work in national pathways and SSN.
- Known for her discipline and emphasis on strong basics, she's a respected figure in shaping the next generation.

Stacey Marinkovich (2020-present)

- Took over after Alexander's departure.
- Led the Diamonds to **gold at the 2022 Commonwealth Games** and the **2023 Netball World Cup**.
- Known for her calm composure, player empowerment, and pushing for attacking variety and depth across all positions

Legendary Past Diamonds Players

These players are the icons; women who redefined their positions and left a lasting mark on Australian and international netball.

Liz Ellis (GK)

- Australia's most capped player at retirement (122 Tests).
- Captain from 2004 to 2007.
- A defensive titan who led the Diamonds to **three World Cup victories** and **two Commonwealth Games golds**.
- Her leadership and on-court aggression set the standard for goal keepers worldwide.

Sharelle McMahon (GA/GS)

- Known for her cool head, clutch goals, and signature leap.
- Scored the winning goal in the **1999 World Cup final**.
- Captain of the Diamonds in the late 2000s and a national treasure.
- Revered for her precision, humility, and role in bridging generations of players.

Catherine Cox (GS)

- A scoring powerhouse with over 100 Test caps.
- Renowned for her strong holds, long-range accuracy, and leadership.
- Played pivotal roles in multiple World Cup and Commonwealth Games campaigns.

- Her partnership with McMahon remains one of the most iconic in netball history.
- Currently a commentator for the Suncorp Super Netball League

Natalie von Bertouch (C)

- Midcourt general and one of the sharpest netball brains.
- Captained Australia to victory in the **2011 World Cup**.
- A master of transition play and the link between defence and attack.

Vicki Wilson (GS)

- Star shooter in the 1980s and '90s, captained the team during the 1995 World Cup win.
- Famous for her commanding presence and shooting under pressure.
- Later became a coach, mentoring the next generation.

Julie Corletto (GD/GK)

- One of the most reliable and versatile defenders in Australian history.
- Played with chronic injuries in the **2015 World Cup** and still helped the Diamonds win gold.
- Known for her courage and tenacity.

These Diamonds paved the way for the generation of netballers today. Not only did they lay the foundations for the standard of netball in Australia, they also continue to give back to the netball community post-retirement, and will be remembered as netball hall of famers.

Meet the modern Diamonds: tactical, tenacious, and evolving

Today's Diamonds squad is a mix of seasoned talent and emerging brilliance. While Australia continues to build on its tradition of excellence, there's been a notable shift: the style is faster and sharper, the match play is smarter, and the competition is tougher than ever.

Let's talk about some of the players shaping the present and future of Australian netball:

Kiera Austin (Melbourne Vixens) – GA/WA

Known for her smooth movement and smart decision-making, Kiera brings versatility to the frontline. She is not only a strong attacker, but is vital in the Diamond's midcourt defense.

After overcoming an ACL injury in 2021, she's returned stronger and more dangerous than ever. Her combination with Sophie Garbin (GS) is one of the most seamless in the game – this is because of their experience playing together for the Vixens in the Suncorp Super Netball League.

Jamie-Lee Price (Giants Netball) – C/WD

The daughter of rugby legend, Steven Price.

The engine of the midcourt. Known for her athleticism, pressure defence, and ability to shut down key playmakers. JLP brings the physicality of a defender with the composure of a true centre. She's become a defensive playmaker for the Diamonds, often changing the momentum of games with intercepts and hustle.

Paige Hadley (New South Whales Swifts) – C/WA

The veteran who wears her heart on her sleeve. Hadley's leadership, passing accuracy, and work ethic makes her the backbone of the squad. Hadley is known for her fitness and game IQ, earning her the vice captain role within the team.

Georgie Horjus (Adelaide Thunderbirds) – GA/WA

The rising star to watch. Known for her fearless feeds, deceptive speed, and

creative flair, Horjus's playing style adds an unpredictable edge to Australia's game. She's young, dynamic, and already making waves with her confidence under pressure. Horjus stands out because of her height; she is not the tallest in the circle, but players with the fearless nature of a two-meter-tall shooter.

Let's break down the DNA of Diamonds netball

Midcourt Control & Relentless Re-offering

There's a reason the Diamonds are always *in* the game. Their midcourt is built on control and consistency. **Hadley** and **Price** bring physicality, tempo, and footwork that create clean attacking channels. First-phase plays are timed to the millisecond. Their transition from defence to attack is brutally efficient — one clean take, and they're out of the back third before the other team can reset.

Even in tight contests, you'll see them fall back into triangles, keeping depth and width while patiently working through set-ups. It's calculated chaos, orchestrated like clockwork. The reason teams like the Diamonds stand out is that there are always two options to pass to. Players don't only work to get free when it's their turn, they work constantly to prevent held balls or out-of-court passes.

Sharp Attack with Dynamic Shooters

The attacking third has always been a weapon for the Diamonds — but lately, it's evolved. **Austin** brings a sleek, sweeping presence on the baseline, opening up pockets and dragging defenders out of position. Her feeds are smart. Her movement? Even smarter. When she has ball in hand she is confident in the shot and rarely misses.

Then there's **Horjus** — a hybrid attacker who reads defenders like a book. She plays off instinct, pulling defenders apart with quick offloads and perfectly timed cuts. Whether she's rotating into the goal attack role or stepping out to WA, her decision-making and composure is next-level.

Australian shooters don't sit and wait — they create the space. They re-offer, screen, switch lines, and shoot from anywhere inside the circle. And if it doesn't open up? No panic, just resetting the play.

Defence: Full-Court Pressure is the Diamond Standard

Defence is where the Diamonds are built different. Everyone defends, from shooters to keepers. Their goal? Win the ball *before* it hits the circle.

Price and **Hadley** shut down midcourt options with body-on-body pressure, while defenders like **Bruce**, **Klau**, and **Weston** hunt for the ball outside circle, pressure the second phase, and deny the feed with zone defense.

The backline is bold, stepping out to attack cross-court passes and doubling back to shut down post entries. And once they have the ball? They don't fumble. Clean offloads, structured resets, and full trust in the system.

It is worth mentioning that in their defensive structure, players have each other's backs... if a ball is saved from going out, or a defender flies for an intercept, there is always someone waiting to receive the toss back into court. This adds an extra element to the Diamond's defense – the element of surprise.

Discipline Meets Instinct

What really separates the Diamonds is their ability to **balance structure with spontaneity**. They play to a game plan, but they back their stars to break the pattern when needed.

They're a team that builds scoreboard pressure, not just with goals, but with *intensity*. Every phase is contested. Every pass is measured. They suffocate teams into making bad decisions, and are even more relentless when it comes to doing what needs to be done.

What we can learn from the Diamonds is that excellence isn't an accident — it's built on systems, consistency, and culture.

They show us the value of relentless effort in every phase of the game, trusting in structure while allowing space for instinct and flair. Their ability to execute under pressure, adapt mid-game, and maintain discipline at speed is what makes them world leaders. From grassroots to elite, the lesson is clear: success comes from the hard yards — in fitness, in fundamentals, and in building a team-first mentality where every pass, every intercept, and every reset has purpose.