

## As Ruth Aitken, leaves the Silver Ferns and heads into life with CoachForce, we asked Ruth for some words of wisdom from her coaching experiences

I have been incredibly privileged to lead the Silver Ferns for nearly 10 years and have always appreciated the support I have had from coaches around NZ (although I am not sure whether you have always agreed with what I have done at times!!)

Some of the key things that I feel have made a difference for me as a coach...

The importance of shared vision and clear communication – taking the players and other management with you and helping everyone buy into the notion that we are all part of something “bigger than ourselves”

A philosophy of continuous improvement and a desire to always keep “raising the bar” – both personally and within the programme. So for me that meant never settling with what I had done before ... I was always reading, talking, observing other sports and other coaches in action, to keep challenging the way I operated. I would then filter this new information to see what I felt was worth including, and what was not appropriate for my style or my team.

A commitment to working hard ... really hard! – but finding time to have fun along the way. I always want to win, but I also think it is important that at the end of a campaign (win or lose) that those involved can say “I wouldn’t have missed it for the world!”

While the Ferns have been a huge part of my life for the last 10 years, and I will miss the wonderful times we had together as a team - the excitement, the adrenalin, the challenge - I know they are in great hands with Wai and the rest of the Silver Fern management team.

I am very much looking forward to my new role as NNZ’s Coaching Director - and having the opportunity to meet more of you as I move around NZ supporting coaches & coaching programmes ... both at the game development and high performance level.

Ruth Aitken, ONZM,  
Silver Ferns Coach 2001-2011.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A  
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL**

**FROM YOUR COACHFORCE CREW..  
RUTH, ADRIENNE, SUE, LINDSAY, NOELINE &  
ROBIN MANIHERA (New Central North Island CoachForce  
appointment who will be starting in the New Year)**

## Lindsay Murdoch, Lower North Island CoachForce, represented her home country Scotland at the Touch World Cup, which was held in her home town, Edinburgh, earlier this year

5 days, 23 countries, 1 world cup and a trip home!!

After many months training and a nervous wait the call came through that I had made the Scotland Mixed Open team for the 2011 Touch Rugby World Cup. This was particularly special as the 2011 world cup was to be hosted in Edinburgh, my hometown in Scotland. So after the good news had sunk in the hard work had to start. I had 4 months to get ready for the tournament with the other 15 members of my team, oh and the coach, based in Scotland and me in Wellington. Some interesting skype, face



Lindsay (middle row fourth from right) with her team mates and the NZ Mixed Touch Team

Lindsay in action

book and e-mails followed during this time as team plays were being run through and sent to me on a weekly basis. With the help of a very understanding partner and friends, over the following weeks and months many sessions were spent around the parks of Wellington running through Scotland team plays..... challenging but awesome fun!

So at the end of May it was time to head over to Scotland to join my team for 3 weeks of training and games before the world cup kicked off. It was great to be in a familiar environment and finally catch up with the rest of my team in person. After a few team building sessions in the local pubs and weekend long training sessions it's like we had known each other for years!

World Cup time.....the Scotland team moved into their camp on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June and had an official shirt presentation that evening. Very special moment as it was one of the first times all 7 teams and management were in the same room (around 130 people), made me very proud to be representing my country on the world stage with the added bonus of being hometown as well.

The world cup kicked off on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June with our first game being at 7:40am!!!!!! We were in a pool with Wales, Ireland & Netherlands. We had a great start and won both of our games on day 1. Day 2 saw a loss to Wales in the morning which moved us into pool B for the next round which included Niue, USA, England and Guernsey. 2 wins and 2 losses in this pool was still enough to see us into the Cup quarter finals where we were drawn against New Zealand. After the longest and most exhausting 40mins of my life we were beaten 21-2 by the reigning world champions. It was an amazing experience to have played the best and also face the 'haka' at the start. Even the Scottish rain couldn't stop the team in black from putting on an amazing demonstration of touch. Unfortunately NZ went on to lose to Australia in the final but team Scotland were cheering them on all the way. Scotland mixed went on to win their next match which saw us finish in 7<sup>th</sup> place out of 19 teams in the mixed open division. Scotland as a team placed 6<sup>th</sup> out of 23 countries competing, overall a great result for a country that is relatively new to the sport of touch.

After an amazing but exhausting 5 days of international touch the final matches concluded and all teams made their way to the after tournament party.....details of which cannot be shared in this report..... followed by a very long trip home!

**In November, along with Dianne McTigue, CoachForce hosted a Coach & Umpire Development Seminar, then in December held Facilitator Training to bring up to date additional people to facilitate more Coaching modules around the country next year.**

Sixty Seven coaches and umpires descended on Dunedin for this year's Coach & Umpire Development Seminar during the weekend of November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

"Digging Deep" was the theme for this year's seminar; a reflection of what Cantabrian's have had to do over the past 15 months, and also a reflection of what we often have to do, as coaches and umpires of our game.

Our opening speaker was Nick Walls, who endured being trapped in the PGC building for 10 hours, on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. He told his story of survival and of the journey he has been on since this life-changing event.

Georgie Salter, Jo Morrison and David Palaamo combined to present practical sessions which enabled coaches and umpires to discuss the merits of working together at training sessions, and explored how this collaboration could lead into a more free-flowing game with better understanding from all involved.

Other presenters included Colleen Bond (working with the Umpires), Dame Lois Muir (working with the Coaches), and Hayden Croft from Otago Polytech (delivering a vision and technology session for all), as well as CoachForce's own Adrienne Morrin (Skill Acquisition) and Ruth Aitken (working alongside Colleen and the Umpires).

Evaluations received from this weekend reinforce the importance and value of bringing our coaches and umpires together in such a forum, and the number of people attending highlights the level of interest in events such as this.

These are typical of the feedback received after this weekend:

*"I learnt a lot and really enjoyed the presenters and content. Also enjoyed the interaction with other coaches and umpires"*

*"Good sessions that combined umpires and coaches seeing both sides of the game together – an important part of the game to be developed"*

*"I really enjoyed this weekend due to the topics of discussion, the presence of greatness and the ability to get to know others. I took a little bit from everything"*

**CoachForce would like to thank Dianne McTigue (NNZ Umpire Development Manager) for her involvement in planning and delivering this programme.**



## FACILITATOR TRAINING 2011

CoachForce spent two days in December working with a group of 20 participants identified from our Regions, looking at how to facilitate NNZ modules for coaches. This proved to be quite a challenge for most, as we moved away from the idea of 'coaching players' towards the idea of 'coaching coaches'

It was a very full programme to work through in two days, but with a focus on learning and obtaining as much information as possible, along with some great discussion and some curly questions, everyone went away with the satisfaction of a job well done.

These facilitators will be a huge asset in supporting the CoachForce team in the delivery of coaching modules in the future.



# COACHFORCE REFLECTIONS

With 2011 coming to a close. CoachForce would like to take the time to acknowledge Leigh Gibbs who resigned from her current role as Community Netball Manger in August. Leigh's tenure in coach development has spanned many years at Netball New Zealand.

One of the lasting legacy's of Leigh's tenure with NNZ was the implementation of CoachForce. At the time Leigh was Coaching Director and worked with SPARC to develop the CoachForce programme which was rolled out in July 2005.

In the six years CoachForce has been operating the programme has gone from strength to strength under Leigh's guidance. Coach development in New Zealand was under review at the time CoachForce was introduced and the initial group along with Leigh worked hard to bring a new look to coaching education in netball in New Zealand.

In the face of changing demands within sport in New Zealand Leigh's role changed twice, with her last role being Community Netball Manager. This appointment was recognition of her depth of knowledge and experience in many aspects of the game including player and umpire development.

Our mantra as CoachForce is to work hard, face challenges, appreciate diversity and have fun along the way. Leigh's nature, sense of humour and passion for netball will be missed at NNZ, however the special talent that she worked hard to develop in us all means her commitment to netball will always be visible.

CoachForce wish Leigh all the best in her new role with the Tactix.



Leigh at work in her role as Emerging Talent Selector, during the inaugural NZ Under 17 National tournament, Wellington

## COACH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES COMING UP

NNZ programme	Session Date	Venue	Open to	Application process	Application closing date
NZU21 Observer coach session	Sat 28th Jan 3:30—5:00pm	AUT Northcote, Auckland	All interested coaches	Please meet CoachForce in the foyer 15 minutes prior	Not required
NZU21 Apprentice coach	Sat 28th Jan – Wed 1st Feb 2012	AUT Northcote, Auckland	Senior club, senior secondary school or age group coach with the potential and desire to coach at a higher level. Have commenced Modules through the NNZ Coach Development Framework.	Send application form to Sue Harris: <a href="mailto:sueh@netballnz.co.nz">sueh@netballnz.co.nz</a>	Midday Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> December
NZSS Apprentice coach	Fri 11th – Sun 13th May	Auckland	As above	To be advertised in the new year	TBC
LFNC Apprentice coach	Sep –Oct 2012	Tauranga Concludes during Finals Week	As above	To be advertised in the new year	TBC