



Time to unleash some tactics of our own

There's no question 2014 has produced the most intense ANZ Championship since the competition's inception in 2008.

As round 13 looms, the battle for a coveted spot in the finals series is still raging. While we are unfortunately now out of the hunt, it doesn't quash our hunger to keep our winning streak alive – evident in last week's thrilling 62-57 victory over the highly-rated Magic.

Starting at a 10-goal deficit early in the second quarter, we launched a phenomenal fight back, igniting the Steel faithful and banking our inaugural win at our new fortress ILT Stadium.

Steel captain Jodi Brown agrees the competition has reached new heights this season.

"I think this is the closest competition for finals places in the history of the ANZ Championship. This year has proven that on any given day any team can win and it's about who will sustain the intense pressure for the full 60 minutes," she said.

"As a player this is what you train for - to put yourself against the best in the business, week in and week out and be challenged every time you take the court.

"Each week you have to bring your 'A' game. Every team has different strengths and it's making this competition so exciting to watch – it's hard to pick all the winners each week.

"It can only be fantastic for our sport in general with the competition being so close. It's created interest and people want to come and watch which is certainly raising the profile of our sport in such a positive way."

The unpredictable nature of opposition teams means we certainly won't be underestimating the Mainland Tactix on Sunday, despite their position at the bottom of the points table. They've ruffled the feathers of several teams recently, with dynamic Malawi goal shooter Mwai Kumwenda the star of the show.

Head down to the Edgar Centre in Dunedin and watch the action unfold. It's time to Stand Behind the Steel.



Steel a Secret from ... Rachel Rasmussen

Which team do you look forward to playing the most and why? *Probably the Magic because I play my little sis Grace for ANZ 2014 game bragging rights.*

Do you have any secret party tricks? *No, not really, although my girls can sing with their mouths closed and sound pretty awesome! I might have to get them to teach me that.*

Who has had the most influence on your career? *I've been blessed by many influential people in my career. Definitely key*

people are my amazing parents Sam and Ruta, Moses and my beautiful girls Ruta and Priscilla and, of course, all the support and love from my brothers and sisters. I have had a lot of awesome coaches but key influences have been Auckland based coaches Paula Bayley, Judy Weston, Te Aroha Keenan and South Island coaching guru Georgina Salter with NZ21s and the Auckland Diamonds.

Growing up who was your all-time favourite player? That would have to be Bernice Mene defensively, and also Temepara Bailey (nee George). I have always had huge respect and admiration for her as a person and a player. I'm honoured to have played alongside her.

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Steel Yourself for ROUND 13

Ascot Park Hotel Southern Steel v EasiYo Tactix

Sunday 25 May, 7.20pm

More FM Arena, Dunedin

Broadcast Live - FOX SPORTS 2 (AUS); SKY SPORT 1 (NZ)

Umpires: Jono Bredin & Ann Hay, Reserve: Kristie Simpson

The Facts:

LAST MEETING: Round 8, 2014: Steel 77 def Tactix 61, CBS Canterbury Arena, Christchurch.

- The Steel lead head-to-head with 10 wins and three losses in 13 meetings.
- The Steel has won the past three meetings between the sides.
- The Steel is coming off their bye in Round 12. The Steel has a record of four wins and one loss following their bye in the ANZ Championship.
- The Tactix suffered their 10th loss of the season in Round 12 when they were downed by the Pulse 45-49 in Palmerston North.
- The Tactix are in 10th position on the ladder after 12 rounds and they look set to claim their 4th ANZ Championship wooden spoon. The Tactix finished 10th in 2010, 2011 and 2012.
- The Steel currently sits in 6th place on the ANZ Championship ladder with five wins and six losses. The Steel won six matches in 2013 and a win in Round 13 would equal that record. The Steel's most wins in a minor round is eight matches in 2009 and 2010, the only seasons the Steel has made the ANZ Championship Finals Series.
- The Tactix have the 7th best attacking record with 53.18 goals per match while they are the worst side defensively with 67.36 goals per match scored against them.
- The Steel is the most accurate side in the ANZ Championship after 12 rounds with a return of 89.4 percent while the Tactix are ranked 8th with 82.5 percent.
- Steel shooter Jhaniele Fowler-Reid is the most prolific shooter in the ANZ Championship after 12 rounds with 476 goals at 93.9 percent accuracy. Fowler-Reid was also the leading goal scorer last season with an average of 51.2 goals per match.
- Tactix shooter Mwai Kumwenda has shot 446 goals for her side this season, which equates to 76.2 percent of the entire goals the Tactix have scored this season. This is the largest percentage of any shooter for any side with Jhaniele Fowler-Reid (Steel) shooting 476 goals or 71.8 percent of the Steel's goals this season. Kumwenda shot 48 of the Tactix 56-goals in Round 12 against the Magic which is 86 percent of the teams goals scored.

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