

Juggling act pushes netball player to strive for excellence

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Sports Correspondent

Time is a luxury Faithmaria Lawrence does not have, with the national netball player having to frequently turn down invitations to meet family and friends because of her hectic schedule.

But the 20-year-old is not complaining, even as she juggles her university studies and six training sessions a week, besides running her home-based brownie business.

Far from leaving her stressed out, she feels her commitments have taught her valuable life lessons such as discipline, time management and determination to strive for excellence.

"With the brownies business and netball, I have to plan my time and know what I want," said the National University of Singapore student, who is pursuing a degree in business administration.

"When I do brownies and people give me feedback, it also shows me what I can improve on and how I can make them even better. And in netball, I also focus on my strengths and what I can give, and when I talk to my coach, she will tell me what I can get better in."

For Lawrence, her baking business is a journey of passion that began during the Covid-19 pandemic, when she started selling brownies to raise funds for charity as the volunteer work she was doing then was halted owing to the restrictions.

The good response prompted her to start the business.

While she initially accepted orders almost every week, she now takes orders once every two months because of netball and her studies, but baking remains an important part of her life.

"Just striving to be the best (in her endeavours) helps me to have the same mindset in whatever I do," said Lawrence, whose goal is to open her own cafe.

That dedication earned her a call-up to the team that are competing at the Asian Netball Championship, which takes place in Hong Kong from Aug 8 to 15.

Singapore return to the continental competition as defending champions, after ending a 10-year wait for the title in 2024.

The Vandas kick off their title defence at the Kai Tak Sports Park against the Maldives on Aug 8, before taking on Sri Lanka (Aug 9), Hong Kong (Aug 10), Malaysia (Aug 11) and India (Aug 12).

The top four teams from the round-robin stage will advance to the semi-finals on Aug 14, with the final scheduled for the next day.



National netball player Faithmaria Lawrence will be making her debut at the Asian Netball Championship.
ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH

The top two finishers in Hong Kong will qualify for the 2027 Netball World Cup in Sydney.

This will be Lawrence's first appearance at the Asian championship, an experience she is looking forward to with both excitement and trepidation.

In Hong Kong, she will be deployed in a new role in wing defence, having previously played mainly as a goalkeeper or goal defence. But she is relishing the challenge.

"I feel very inspired by all my teammates. They push me to my maximum and I hope I also push them to their maximum," said Lawrence, who has five senior caps and was part of the team who won the Asian Youth Netball Championship in 2025.

"It's a very exciting journey and finally a journey where I'm fully in Opens and not playing in both the Under-21s and Opens."

For Singapore head coach Tara Steel, the goal is clear – to retain their Asian title.

While they lost 52-49 to Malaysia in the 2025 SEA Games final and have not played against Sri Lanka since the Asian championship final two years ago, the Australian is optimistic about their preparations.

She said: "We want to show what this group is capable of, how we can put our best netball on the stage for Asia and also the world and continue to elevate our own expectations."

Steel, who was appointed head coach and technical director in March 2025, also reinforced her commitment to Netball Singapore by signing a two-year extension that will see her continue in those roles until Dec 31, 2028.

Noting that there is still unfinished business from the 2025 SEA Games loss, she also hopes to continue building on the efforts and initiatives to develop the sport here.

She said: "We've achieved lots of things from a programme perspective, and I'm excited by the ability to extend our programme."

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