

Netball: Dubai A net Inter-Gulf title

Say cheese: The victorious Dubai A team pose with the winners trophy

Dubai A turned the tables on Abu Dhabi A to be crowned champions in the annual Inter-Gulf Netball Championship at the Hilton Hotel, Al Ain.



The Abu Dhabi team had won the tournament two years in a row, defeating Dubai on both occasions in the final.

This year, in the first semi-final, Dubai outclassed Bahrain A to win 15-6, while Abu Dhabi ousted their second team, Abu Dhabi B, 14-6 to reach the showpiece. Dubai A were never threatened in the final thought – and took full control of the game from the start to win 14-7. Dubai captain Olivia Flannagan said: *“It feels amazing because I have been in the Inter-Gulf tournament for two years and we lost to Abu Dhabi two years in a row.*

“So having beaten Abu Dhabi in the final it was almost like a relief that we got the trophy from them. It was really very exciting.” Going into the final, Flannagan accepted the team were tense but that they were confident of upsetting the defending champions. *“It was scary but the whole team had played well all weekend and I think we had confidence in each other and did not have any weak links in our team,”* she said. *“Each player was exceptional so we all were very confident in ourselves and when we went into the finals our team was much more in control and more relaxed than Abu Dhabi, who had a few issues in their team.”* Dubai had a great run in the tournament, defeating top teams including Kuwait, Fujairah and Al Ain, who they demolished 32-0, in the group stage. *“That was quite an achievement and just showed how good our shooters were,”* said Flannagan. *“Our shooters were amazing. They maintained accuracy throughout the tournament and they had great statistics. “I think our shooters were definitely the key. As a whole team definitely we were a lot stronger.”* Despite relishing the win against Abu Dhabi A in the final, Flannagan felt that their match against Abu Dhabi B was the toughest they faced.

“We had a bit of rocky game against the (Abu Dhabi) B team, we did not play our best against them.

“Our concentration slipped a bit. We were good but we did not connect in the game well as we did all the way during the weekend. But that was good preparation to play the Abu Dhabi A team in the final.

“Next year we can hopefully retain the trophy,” she added.

Over 220 players from all corners of the Gulf represented approximately 25 teams from Doha, Muscat, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Kuwait, Fujairah, Dhahran and Dubai.

RESULTS

Semi-finals: Abu Dhabi A bt Abu Dhabi B 14-6; Dubai A bt Bahrain A 15-6.

Final: Dubai A bt Abu Dhabi A 14-7