

Netball May Be The Fastest Growing Sport in The World

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Netball has always been a popular sport for women, particularly in schools where girls can get involved from a young age. However recent statistics from Sport England's Active People Survey show that netball has become the fastest growing team sport in England with 156,000 women participating each week, so this could soon be spreading throughout the rest of the world!

With more funding being put into netball as a result of events like the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, schools and clubs are able to improve their facilities. Alison Marriott, a teacher from Henlow School said, "We were thrilled to receive a grant towards improving our netball provision, this has had benefits for students both in lessons and extracurricular activities." One company working nationwide in the UK as well as internationally are Netball Court Specialists who build sports facilities for schools, colleges, universities and clubs. Contractors like this are helping to improve access to a range of sports for young people in school as well as members of the general public.

Members of Manchester Netball Club described netball as, "A sport based on teamwork, coordination and balance which allows women to enjoy the social side of staying active." Many worldwide governing bodies offer variations on the traditional game which means people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can get involved in recreational and competitive netball. With clubs and leisure centres completing resurfacing projects to transform old sports surfaces into new netball courts, more people than ever have the chance to join a team. Martin Wilson from Elsfeld Sports Centre commented, "We have seen a rise in young women in our local area looking to take part in netball, this meant we decided to renovate one of our sports courts to cater for the demand."

It is thought that health benefits and extra opportunities have all helped to contribute towards increasing participation levels in netball, not only in England but on an international scale. Australia and New Zealand currently hold the top two world ranking positions, and around 220,000 Australian girls aged between 5 and 14 participate in netball. A number of African and Caribbean countries also hold places in the top 10 world rankings which highlights the global scale of competitive netball.

There are many schemes available which give women the chance to play netball in their local area and even develop their skills up to a higher competitive standard. Organisations like Netball England offer sessions at varying levels for all abilities. Find out more about opportunities to play, coach and volunteer by visiting <http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/get-inspired/23160672> for inspiration to get involved in netball today.

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