

Netballer Sindhu's dream comes true

National netballer Sindhu Nair's dream of representing Singapore became a reality when she earned her first international caps in May in a training tour in Sri Lanka.

The 22-year-old, who picked up the sport in primary three, will continue to live the dream as she prepares for the M1 Asian Netball Championships (ANC) at the OCBC Arena from Sept 1 to 9.

The goalkeeper said: "From a young age, I've always seen the national netball team and always wanted to be in the team. I'm very honoured and very excited to participate in the competition."

The jitters are present, but she believes that the experiences over the months and her teammates and coaches have taught her a great deal, which she hopes can help to channel her nerves into confidence.

She said: "I'm nervous about it, but I'm also very excited. My teammates and coach have helped to bring my performance up and taught me different things on and off the court, so I'm hoping to put that to use."

While she may be relatively new to the international scene, her participation in training tours in Sri Lanka and New Zealand last month has given her greater exposure.

In preparation for the ANC, the National University of Singapore law undergraduate has had to strike a balance between her school and almost-daily netball commitments.

This has not come without its sacrifices, but for Sindhu, her passion for the sport makes it worthwhile.



Sindhu Nair. TNP PHOTO: **ARIFFIN JAMAR**

She said: "It's definitely been challenging, but I knew what I was getting myself into... and I really have the passion for netball."

Sindhu, who was named the Most Valuable Player of her team, Swifts Netball Club – formerly known as SRC Barracudas – in this year's Netball Super League, is looking forward to the Asian meet as she hopes to keep improving.

She said: "We've prepared well for this and being in front of the home crowd will definitely be an advantage for us."

Besides Sindhu, three other newcomers – goal shooters Lee Pei Shan and Tan Xin Yi, and goalkeeper Ayshath Zaseela – are also in the team of 12.

National coach Natalie Milichich believes the newcomers have given her more options.

She said: "They're pushing for starting positions. I'm really confident with who I'm putting on the court. We've got at least two players in every position, which is not something that we've had previously."

"Preparations are going very well and there's a really good feeling on the team with lots of confidence around the stuff that we're doing."

Singapore are in Group C with Brunei and Pakistan in the 12-team tournament, which also includes the likes of Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Japan. Tickets for the ANC are available from www.apactix.com.

– **KIMBERLY KWEK**