

# IRELAND VS NETHERLANDS

OFFICIAL GAMEDAY PROGRAMME



FIBA  
WOMEN'S  
EUROBASKET  
ISRAEL - SLOVENIA  
QUALIFIERS



**FIBA WOMEN'S EUROBASKET 2023 QUALIFIERS**  
**NATIONAL BASKETBALL ARENA, DUBLIN**  
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27TH 2022**

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# WELCOME

I'd like to welcome all of you to the National Basketball Arena for the final international of 2022, as our senior women host the Netherlands in FIBA Women's EuroBasket 2023 Qualifiers. The backing our international teams have received from our supporters at games has been wonderful and I know it has meant a lot to the players and coaching staff.

Our senior women's team really impressed during the summer, they achieved a series win over Estonia and put in fine performances against Portugal, with some new players coming into the fold. I'd like to congratulate Sarah Hickey and Ciara Bracken on their call-ups for this FIBA EuroBasket game, they are an illustration of the success of our international pathway, with both having come up through the Irish underage set-up. It will be a proud moment for them, their families and friends, as well as their clubs and coaches, who have all played vital roles in their journey to their first international caps. A word also for Bridget Herlihy, who is also set to make her FIBA EuroBasket debut, having played in the summer friendlies.

On behalf of Basketball Ireland and the Board, I'd like to thank head coach James Weldon, his staff and players, for all their endeavours so far in this FIBA Women's EuroBasket 2023 Qualifiers. I look forward to watching the team's game against the Netherlands today and away against Czech Republic in February 2023, as we conclude the qualifying campaign.

It's great to have Knights Basketball and NEIC Trojans in attendance for the game, two new clubs who were formed in 2019 and 2022 respectively. Both clubs will have a team taking to the court at half-time. It's wonderful to see a new club based in the North-East inner city Dublin, who have an academy for 7-12 year-olds, along with U14 teams. The Tallaght-based Knights now impressively boast four teams competing in the league, along with two development teams who are to join the league next season. I'd like to praise the hard work and dedication of the volunteers to bring both these clubs to fruition and commend the input from Basketball Ireland Development Officers, who've provided support in their formation and operation. The clubs have added a wonderful resource for their local communities.

Today's game is live on TG4, while our InsureMyHouse.ie National Cup finals will once again be broadcast free-to-air on the station in January. I'd like to thank our broadcast partners for their excellent coverage of the sport and for their continued support. I would also like to thank our commercial partners Gotham Drywall, Kappa, Molten, Intersport Elverys, CFM and Pinergy.

Finally, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our opponents, Netherlands, as well as FIBA delegates and match officials.

**John Feehan**  
**Basketball Ireland CEO**



# WELCOME

I would like to welcome everyone to the National Basketball Arena for this game with the Netherlands, our last home contest of this FIBA Women's EuroBasket 2023 Qualifiers Group I campaign.

The team really impressed in the two-game Gotham Drywall Series victory against Estonia during the summer, picking up a pair of wins. Hopefully that will help inspire them to further success in our last two games of the qualifying campaign, this weekend against the Netherlands and next February, when we travel to the Czech Republic.

I'd like to welcome all from the Dutch delegation and hope that they enjoy their visit to our country, having been excellent hosts when we played them in Amsterdam a year ago.

Finally, I would like to wish the players, coaches, referees, table officials and all other support staff the very best of luck.

PJ Reidy,  
Basketball Ireland President



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# IRELAND

**43 | BRACKEN, CIARA**  
**3 | CLARKE, MICHELLE**  
**5 | FINN, DAYNA**  
**41 | HERLIHY, BRIDGET**  
**42 | HICKEY, SARAH**  
**8 | HUIJSDENS, RACHEL**  
**13 | MELIA, CLAIRE**  
**34 | O'CONNOR, ÁINE**  
**44 | O'REILLY, ORLA**  
**11 | THORNTON, EDEL**  
**14 | THORNTON, HANNAH**  
**16 | TIERNAN, SORCHA**

## STAFF:

COACH: **WELDON, JAMES**  
ASSISTANT: **HAYES, Jillian**  
ASSISTANT: **LIAPAKIS, Ioannis**  
TEAM MANAGER: **GEANEY, DOLORES**



Ciara Bracken



Michelle Clarke



Dayna Finn



Bridget Herlihy



Sarah Hickey



Rachel Huijsdens



Claire Melia



Áine O'Connor



Orla O'Reilly



Edel Thornton



Hannah Thornton



Sorcha Tiernan

# NETHERLANDS

**VAN DEN ADEL**, Natalie  
**CORNELIUS**, Laura  
**DRIESSEN**, Noor  
**TREFFERS**, Kourtney  
**WESTERIK**, Laura  
**FLEUREN**, Kiki  
**GUIJT**, Janine  
**DE JONGE**, Lisanne  
**DE Kleijn**, Marlou  
**VENNEMA**, Iris  
**BETTONVIL**, Loyce  
**FOKKE**, Ester  
**JORRITSMA**, Julia  
**KLERX**, Jacobine  
**KUIJT**, Karin  
**SLAGTE**, Zoë

## STAFF:

COACH: **BARENNES**, Julie  
ASSISTANT: **BONNAN**, Aurelie  
ASSISTANT: **MCDOWELL**, Molly  
TEAM MANAGER: **FOOLE**, Lia



36-year-old Frenchwoman Julie Barennes is the Dutch head coach.

Barennes carved out a 13-year professional career in France, before moving into coaching in 2017 with club side Basket Landes.

## FAST FACTS

Netherlands will be without one of their key players, Emese Hof.

Hof is averaging 11 pts, 12 rebs and 3 assists in FIBA Women's EuroBasket 2023 qualifying.



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# TOP PERFORMERS



PLAYER AVERAGES



CLAIRE MELIA

POINTS

13

REBOUNDS

7

ASSISTS

4



DAYNA FINN

POINTS

6.5

REBOUNDS

6

ASSISTS

0.5



EDEL THORNTON

POINTS

9.5

REBOUNDS

0.5

ASSISTS

4

FIBA WOMEN'S EUROBASKET 2023 QUALIFIERS

# COACHES CORNER

**How important were the summer games against Estonia & Portugal in terms of this international window?**

These summer games were vital for our preparation, as this is the top tier of basketball in Europe. We've had to transition to playing the top teams in Europe from playing in the FIBA European Championship for Small Countries. It was vital that the players got to experience the step up into the pro level before the European window against the Netherlands.

**Bridget Herlihy made a lasting impression on her international debut against the Estonians, does she bring a different dimension in terms of her skill set and how you can utilise her strength inside?**

Bridget has proved to be a good fit for the team, she is very talented and a leader on the court. Her strength inside is one aspect of her game which we used to good effect in the summer games, but she also brings many more attributes to the team. The Dutch will obviously be aware of her threat inside and it is our job as team management to find new and inventive ways of exploiting any perceived Dutch weakness, by playing to her and out team's strengths.

**There's a lot of new faces in this squad for Irish basketball fans to get excited about. It must be fantastic for you as a coach to see these young players such as Sarah Hickey and Ciara Bracken pushing on?**

It is great to see such talented players coming through the ranks. Many of them have experience in the Irish underage structure and again the step up to international level at senior level, playing against most-if not all-professional players, playing week-in week-out in the European leagues is a fantastic opportunity for them. The mix of experience in the team is essential to help their transition. It is indeed exciting to be a part of the process and an exciting time to be involved in the Irish senior set-up.

**JAMES WELDON**

**Does that increase the importance on the likes of Edel Thornton as captain to help them settle in and understand what needs to be done to compete at this level and drive standards?**

As I just mentioned, the experience of players like Edel who has played at the highest levels in college in the USA and has been a standout for her country, is so important to help them settle in and understand what needs to be done to be successful at this level. The competition for places helps drive the standards set by the team management and the fact that there are so many players coming through that are competing for places, makes these young players hungry to keep learning from the more experienced players and it is great to watch the more experienced player sharing their knowledge.

**The Netherlands enter this game missing Emese Hoff through injury, that was a pretty significant blow for them. How do you feel they will adjust to that loss?**

The Netherlands are an impressive team with many professionals to lean on when needed. Emese is of course, a significant loss as she is playing professionally in the EuroLeague and being the top centre in Spain, last season, but equally they have an impressive and very experienced extended panel to rely on and I have no doubt they will more than compensate for her loss.

**There's a Dutch connection in the Ireland squad in the form of Rachel Huijsdens, will you be using her knowledge of Dutch to get an insight into their calls?**

We will use every connection we have to try get an insight into their calls. Rachel is another very talented Irish player who has come through the Irish underage ranks, club and school structure and I'm sure any insight she has on the Netherlands that she will share with us with as we try to plot our way to victory over this extremely talented Netherlands team.



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# DEVELOPMENT



## NEIC TROJANS

After years of persistence, and trojan efforts to grow the game of basketball in Dublin's North East Inner City, September 2022 signified a landmark occasion, as for the first time in history, the long-standing dream of having a basketball club representing the NEIC/ Dublin 1 community, finally came to fruition.

The club currently consists of an academy for children aged 7-12 years old, along with two U14 teams, both of whom are competing in the Dublin leagues.

Based primarily in Larkin Community College and St. Laurance O'Toole's Recreational Centre, the basketball club is ingrained in the community and has generated strong links with local schools and youth organisations.



## KNIGHTS BASKETBALL

Knights Basketball was established in September 2019 by parents from the Kilnamanagh area. They've grown and developed in three short years from an academy to a club. This September Knights Basketball entered their first four teams into the league, with another two development teams getting ready for next season.

The league team training and games are held in Colaiste De Hide School, where they have a full size court and changing facilities for both home and away teams. Both gyms have played a huge part in getting the club started.

The club is very humbled to be chosen as a nominee for the Philip Preston Sport award which takes place at the 39th Tallaght Person of the Year Awards. To be nominated this award in a few short years is a reflection of all the hard work put in by all the volunteers and players.





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## GET TO KNOW - BRIDGET HERLIHY



Let's give everyone a taste of who Bridget Herlihy is, tell us a little bit about your upbringing and your Irish connections.

I was born and raised outside of Boston, Massachusetts, in a town called Braintree, with my parents and younger sister. My aunts, uncle, and grandmother on my dad's side all lived relatively close to us, and we would always meet up for holidays, birthdays, and other family celebrations.

Both of my grandparents grew up in Ireland, and though I never met my grandfather, my nana was able to teach me about my Irish background and what life was like for her growing up in the Aran Islands. I also had many friends in school whose parents immigrated to the US from Ireland, and they became a second family to me as well.

**What's your earliest basketball memory?**

I remember when I first started playing basketball when I was in second grade (7-years-old) and we used small basketballs and shot on 8-foot hoops. I can't imagine I was any good, but that didn't stop my parents from waking up at 7 in the morning on their weekends to watch me play.

**What sportsperson inspired you most when you were growing up?**

I was a big fan of the Boston Celtics growing up and my favourite player was always Kevin Garnett. He was a post like me, so I always looked up to him.

**When did playing for Ireland first enter your thoughts/become a possibility?**

Sue Moran was coaching at St. Joseph's in Philadelphia while I was at Villanova and she actually got my dad in contact with James Weldon. Since my dad already had his Irish passport, I was eligible to get mine as well.

**You made your debut against Estonia in the Gotham Drywall Series and it was a dream debut in many respects...you almost had a triple-double. How proud of a moment was that for you and your family?**

Very proud. I was proud that I was able to play hard on an international level and that I fit in well with this team, after only playing with them for a few weeks. Both of my parents were very proud of me as well, but my dad was especially emotional imagining how proud my grandparents would have been.

**How have you found the transition from college to the professional ranks and now international level?**

I have had to change several aspects of my game since starting my professional career. I have been put into situations where I have to be more aggressive and a bit more selfish offensively, which is something I was not used to in college. The international level so far has reminded me of the level and type of basketball I played in college, where every member of the team has to gel well into the system and know how to play their role. The biggest similarity between the three levels and my favourite part of playing basketball is that the team always ends up feeling much like a family after spending so much time together.

**Are any of your family making the trip to the National Basketball Arena to support you today?**

My mom and sister wanted to come, but they won't be able to make it; they'll watch online. Luckily my dad will be there supporting me in person.

**What are you looking forward to most about your competitive bow?**

I am looking forward to reuniting with this team and continuing building on the momentum we ended with at the end of the summer.

**How much do you know about the Dutch team? Have you had the chance to watch back our previous meeting in the FIBA Women's 2023 EuroBasket qualifiers?**

I know that this is a strong team that gave us some trouble at their place last year. I do however, like our chances in this game at home and would love to come out of the weekend with a win.



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You currently play in Sweden – what's your favourite aspect of life there?

My favourite part about living in Sweden and playing in this team is getting to meet so many kind and genuine people. Everyone I have met has been extremely welcoming and has made me feel comfortable and at home, despite not even understanding their language.



# HEAD 2 HEAD

# 60 82

12TH NOVEMBER 2021

“ ”

THERE WAS SOME OUTSTANDING DEFENSIVE PLAYS, BUT I JUST THINK WE'RE KIND OF DISAPPOINTED. WE WERE LOOKING AT THE FIRST QUARTER AND WE WERE KIND OF LIKE 'WOW', BUT THEN WE WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT WE WEREN'T CLOSER, YOU KNOW WITH FIVE MINUTES TO GO IT WAS A 15, 16 POINT GAME.

— JAMES WELDON



## SCORES

Q1: 31-10 (31-10)

Q2: 15-15 (46-25)

Q3: 15-20 (61-45)

Q4: 21-15 (82-60)

## TEAM LINE-UPS:

**NETHERLANDS** – LISANE DE JONGE (0), NOOR DRIESSEN (5), ROWIE JONGELING (3), JACOBINE KLERX (0), RICHELLE VAN DER KEIJL (2), JANIS BOONSTRA (9), LAURA CORNELIUS (14), MARLOU DEL KLEIJN (9), EMESE HOF (11), KARIN KUIJT (6), KOURTNEY TREFFERS (18), LAURA WESTERIK (5).

**IRELAND** - MICHELLE CLARKE (2), GRÁINNE DWYER (6) DAYNA FINN (9), MAURA FITZPATRICK (4), RACHEL HUIJSDENS (0), ANNA KELLY (0), SARAH KENNY (0), CLAIRE MELIA (16), HANNAH THORNTON (2), EDEL THORNTON (15), SORCHA TIERNAN (5), AINE O'CONNOR (1).

# A<sub>TO</sub>Z RACHEL HUIJSDENS

**A – Action: If you could be a superhero, who would you be?**

X-Men's Jean Grey – her telepathy and telekinesis could prove very handy on a basketball court.

**B – Breakfast: Your go-to meal in the morning?**

The bog standard bowl of Fruit 'n Fibre.

**C – City: Favourite city to spend a weekend?**

For the food, sun and architecture it would have to be Rome.

**D – Dutch: What player in The Netherlands squad are you looking forward to playing against?**

Kourtney Treffers

**E – Education: What was your favourite subject in school?**

Has to be a tie between Biology and German.

**F – Fact: Something very few people know about you?**

This could get my citizenship revoked, but I can't go near an Irish breakfast – the smell of fried eggs makes me queasy.

**G – Goals: Tell us something you'd like to achieve in basketball?**

To dunk!

**H – Hero: Who did you idolise growing up?**

Freddie Mercury – I had a bit of an obsession with Queen and still do!

**I – Ingle: What's the best piece of advice that Mark Ingle has given you?**

"Shoot the ball!"

**J – Joker: Who's the funniest in the squad?**

There are a few characters in the squad but Áine O'Connor's endless supply of little known facts, makes for great entertainment.



**K – Keyboard: How long do you spend on social media each day?**

Anyone who knows me will tell you I'm a bit of a social media-phobe, so not much.

**L – Languages: How many languages can you speak?**

Two well, two not so well.

**M – Music: What are you listening to at the moment?**

Nothing specific really – whatever's playing on the radio when I'm driving.

**N – Number: Why do you wear your jersey number? (does it mean something to you)**

The #8 jersey comes back from my midfield Gaelic playing days!

**O – Outside: Who you trusting to make a 3-point shot to save your life?**

Sharp shooter Mimi Clarke

**P – Phobia: Do you have an irrational fear?**

Of all my teeth falling out – I've had a few strange dreams recently.

**Q – Quirky: Who has the most questionable fashion sense?**

I think Mimi's purple crocs could be considered questionable!

**R – Roomie: Who's the worst person to share a room with on away trips?**

Sorcha Tiernan, she forgets about the oranges she's bought until they start to rot and stink out the wardrobe!

**S – Shapes: Who's the best in the squad for a boogie?**

Dayna Finn can bust out some moves.

**T – Talent: Do you have a hidden talent?**

My ability to make a packet of chocolate digestives vanish....in one sitting.

**U – Under Pressure: Who in the squad would you not get in a car with?**

We are all excellent drivers (but don't ask us to parallel park).

# SOCIAL SCENE



## X – X-Ray: Have you broken many bones?

Thankfully no broken bones to date.

## Y – Youth: Where did you grow up?

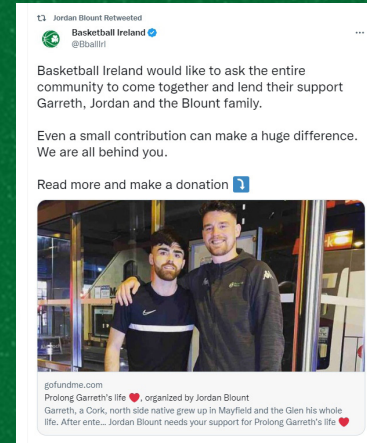
Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath.

## Z – Zoo: What zoo animal are you most like and why?

According to one of those online quizzes I'm a vampire bat. Initially I was offended however apparently they're very social creatures.

**"This could get my citizenship revoked but I can't go near an Irish breakfast - the smell of fried eggs makes me queasy."**

**- Rachel Huijsdends**



There was an amazing show of support from the basketball community for Garreth Blount, brother of Ireland men's international Jordan Blount.

Over €135,000 raised to date.

We continue to wish Garreth and the Blount family well.

Another congratulations to all those who recently completed our 'Women In Leadership' and 'Youth Leadership' programmes.

IWA-Sport and Foróige were among those to take part in and help facilitate these opportunities.



Our own Online Learning Manager & North West Development Officer Niall McDermott was announced as the winner of the 'Rising Star' category at the Learning Pool Awards 2022.

Give Niall a wave if you see him around the Arena today.



## BLAST FROM THE PAST LINDSAY PEAT

**If we could take you on a bit of a trip down memory lane, where did your basketball journey begin? And what are your earliest memories of the sport itself?**

It began with my mother sending me over to a newly formed basketball team across in our local recreation centre in Artane. A school friend's brother was setting up a team and had told my mam about it and the rest was history really.

I played with ABFRC basketball club under Pdraig Kent for maybe two or three years before moving on to play with Mark Ingle and DCU Mercy or Mercy Coolock as we were know then. I remained there for my entire basketball career moving up through the ranks and owe a lot to both coaches and clubs in helping me on my way.

**When it got more competitive, what aspect of the sport was it that you found really compelling?**

I absolutely loved the speed of the game and working under the pressure of having such little time and space to make a move; create a play; find a pass; stop the opposition; steal a ball; run a fast break. Just everything about the game, though basketball is regarded as non-contact is such a physical sport, just ridiculously fast and skillful (not that I was haha!) You cannot but admire players with skill; creativity and intelligence.

**You didn't represent Ireland at underage level, but at that time you were combining basketball with GAA and soccer, later with rugby too. Do you think that really helped shape you as a player who saw each sport a bit differently?**

I wasn't ready and didn't deserve to if I am honest. I was a player who was fiery and competitive and couldn't control those emotions and to channel them in the right way to warrant a call up. Plus the competition at underage level was ridiculous with the likes of Michelle Fahy; Juliet Murphy; Kate Maher; Denise Walsh; Susan Moran to name but a few. When I did make my international break I was 26 I think and it was one of the proudest days in my career.

In 2009 I was juggling international basketball and inter county football and played two matches in one day when we played Luxembourg I think in the NBA and flew to Kildare to line out for Dublin (well maybe 40 secs I think) in the All Ireland quarter final against Kerry. I had stopped playing football and basketball when I changed over to rugby but I took so much from each sport and the people and players I met across each who were essential to help that transition. Plus I think having to get over disappointment and starting a fresh each time with new players; new sport and new coaches I was able to adapt and feel on some level comfortable with making mistakes and not being good enough but knowing that hard work and knowing my work on's I was going to get there. I would hope this comes under the umbrella of growth mind-set.

**Dayna Finn is a current example of a dual sport athlete in the squad. Is that more difficult than ever to achieve, when you think about the level of detail that goes into any elite level sport in the modern era?**

Dayna Finn is an exceptional basketball player and Mayo inter county footballer how she is juggling both is a credit to her especially now in this day and age. Being an elite athlete is a full time job considering you now have so many areas to look after both from a team perspective and individual. We have nutrition; S&C; prehab; rehab; individual work on's; fitness; team previews and reviews the list is endless. So hat's off to Dayna it is certainly not easy.

**We've two potential debutantes today. First appearances at senior level are always special. What do you remember about getting your first call up and playing your first game for Ireland?**

They are one of the most special days in your career but often hard to absorb. You have so many emotions going on but I thankfully had so many experienced players around me and a coach in Maeve Coleman who instilled confidence in me. I just made sure I worked hard; did my job and got the basics right which to be honest, is strange for me because I was more often than not so pumped for a game, I would try and force it. I think it took me so long to get into an international jersey I didn't want to let it go or let myself or anyone who took a chance on me down.



# SIGNATURES

**If you could go back and give some advice to that Lindsay Peat, or in fact any aspiring Ireland international, what would you tell them?**

Believe in yourself. There will be players better than you but aspire to be as good as them if not better than them. Work hard; be kind to both yourself and others and never forget to enjoy it, it is a privilege that not many get to experience.

**How different is the game from the one you grew up with and played so successfully with DCU Mercy and Ireland? Is there anything that stands out?**

The game never evolves that much it is more about the coaching styles and the players selected to play that style however what probably has evolved is the overall quality of the athlete as they are exposed to a more advanced overall elite environment. We at DCU were ahead of our time and would have been one of the first teams to have Graham Byrne as our S&C coach.

**There's obviously a great feel-good factor about women's sport at the moment. There's been international success in several different sports in the last couple of years. Attendances at events and matches are on the rise, what do you put that down to?**

It is a joy to see and long may the success continue with records being broken especially in women's sports. I think if I am honest it is a combination of a number of factors. Greater investment leads to greater facilities and attracting more experienced coaches'. Experienced coaches' leads to better quality of players which increases the standard of the game.

The increase in standards of the game leads to greater interest from supporter's which leads to greater media exposure which leads to greater visibility and changing the way we view female athletes and Women in sport. We now have role models to the next generation and the next generation after that of elite female athletes. All these areas help one another and also advocates of Sport being the voice for female athletes and their sport.

We have come such a long way but I must take opportunity to thank all those who gave their time to me and to so many other athletes when Women's sport wasn't really a thing shall we say. So many volunteers are owed a huge debt of gratitude for all the time they give to players; teams and clubs in whatever capacity that might be in coaching; refereeing; table officials; managers and many more.

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