



BNL BULLETIN

NATASCHA ONONO OVERCOMES THE ODDS

I met basketball through my U13 provincial Netball coach. She suggested that I was more suited to basketball than netball, that was when I fell in love with this crazy game and I never looked back. It wasn't long after, that I started officiating, not knowing the amazing journey it would lead me on.

Of course it wasn't all smooth sailing breaking into a male dominated arena. In 2013, I became the first South African woman to get my FIBA license. Taking 14 years to get it, when my male colleagues usually take 5 years. But that never stopped me from facing the challenge. And in 2017 I received my IWBF (wheelchair basketball) International License. Making me the first woman in Africa to hold both FIBA and IWBF International Licenses. Since then I have officiated in 7 African countries, United Arab Emirates, Belgium and Thailand. Being honored to officiate the best players across all aspects of the game.



But there is more we need to do. Why is it that I officiate a handful of Women's games each year in South Africa? We have to promote the Women's game from grassroots to professional leagues. I want South Africa to return to the powerhouse of Women's basketball in Africa that it once was. I want to officiate high level Women's games, week in and week out. Not just promotional games before the "real game" that follows.

At this time I also need to reflect on how far basketball has come over the years that I have been involved in. Upon my arrival at my first National tournament, I realized that I was accommodated in an all male dormitory, no one considered that a female needed accommodation.

I was always the only female referee. I only had male role models. Often having to overcome complications that were not on anyone's radar. Designated female change rooms, never! Now, whether at National Tournaments, Provincial leagues or BNL, I can look around and see female colleagues reaching great heights, positions of leadership in Basketball, female change rooms and more opportunities for success.



OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD

I started officiating in the Basketball National League in 2015 as a table official. In 2019 I was appointed as the Head of Table Officials, and my tasks included amongst others, communicating challenges between the officials and the league office. During this time, it also gave me the opportunity to share my knowledge and techniques of officiating at that high level. It has been an honour to be involved with the league for all these years, I look forward to continuing to serve at whatever level I am called upon. -

Selinah Manoheng (BNL Table Official)

OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

If you did not learn anything during a game, tournament or league you have just wasted your time. I have been officiating in the BNL since its first season, throughout these seasons I had officiated, I always made sure that I come out with new knowledge.

The BNL officiating team has made my experience as a table official amazing and with every game we continue to grow closer. Whatever I learn from the BNL, I make sure that I take it to other games, tournaments and leagues. Thanks to everyone who plays a parts in growing the sport because you encourage me to master my part.

- **Vuyiswa Manda (BNL Statistician)**



VALUABLE EXPOSURE

I started officiating at the BNL as a table official in 2015. It was my first ever big gig, and I was nervous when I worked my first game! Over a period of time, I got used to it, and we've been a great team with the ladies that I have been assigned to work with. Although, I started officiating at the Soweto Basketball League, being given an opportunity to be part of the BNL gave me great exposure which got me nominated to officiate in big international events like the Afrobasket qualifiers between SA & Zimbabwe, and the Eswatini International Invitational Basketball Tournament since 2017. I must say that my journey with the BNL has been real. -

Phumzile Manana (BNL Table Official)

