

## Stepping it up

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Samoa wing defence Italia Tipelu makes no secret of her ambition to establish herself in the national side.

The Counties Manukau NPC representative is enjoying the challenges of international netball and is really making a fist of all the opportunities that come her way.

"I toured with the side last year to Singapore and really enjoyed the experience there playing against the likes of Botswana, Singapore, PNG and Sri Lanka," she said.

"I was involved with the development side first before stepping up last year, and so playing at international level has been a real challenge and good experience."

The confidently spoken youngster makes no secret when she pulls on the Samoa colours she means business.

"I'm a NZ born Samoan and really proud to represent Samoa and always reminded I am representing my family, parents, grandparents and village."

She admits singing the national anthem always brings makes her cringe and is always an emotional reminder of who she is as a Samoan woman.

Tipelu has demonstrated during the Pacific Cup Netball series she certainly has the goods on court, and takes no prisoners with her no nonsense approach.

Her work ethics and on court make her a standout, always mixing into everything no holds barred.

"I've been playing NPC netball for five years now, so when the opportunity came to trial out for Samoa, I was here in a flash," she said laughing.

Tipelu admits international netball is more demanding physically and mentally but is relishing it nonetheless.

"It gets tough but I'm really enjoying the whole experience."

The Film-Television and Politics graduate is thoroughly enjoying working under the helm of Linda Vagana and taking all the advice she can absorb.

"Having Linda as coach with all her experience and knowledge has been awesome. She's helped my game defensively and I've learnt and gained heaps from her."

With a World Series in Manchester to contest at the end of the year, she has her sights firmly set on representing Samoa and doing what she does best, mixing it up no holds barred.

