



**Stymied:** Italia Tipelu of Counties Manukau can't intercept a pass to Western's Miriama Selby Rickit during their inter-provincial match.

# Counties keen to improve

Redemption is on the minds of Counties Manukau netballers as they prepare to face North in round three of the Lion Foundation inter-provincial championship on Sunday.

They need a worthy performance to boost their confidence after the 65-29 thrashing they got from Western in Palmerston North last Saturday.

Coach Winnie Hauraki says it was the worst performance of her brief representative career.

"There are no ex-

cuses," she says. "We were beaten by the better team."

"Western had the height and speed advantage. Their passes were so much crisper than ours. We knew they were going to be tough but we didn't really know how tough."

Western look destined to return to division one next season, Hauraki says.

Counties Manukau's plan against a Western side with several franchise players was to keep the score respectable.

They were behind 7-16 by the first quarter, 16-29 by halftime and 24-44 at the end of the third quarter. Then Western turned up the heat, scoring 21 points to Counties Manukau's five in the final quarter.

Hauraki says her players had no answers.

"We were like spectators."

"It was disappointing because Counties Manukau are used to being physical. They generally put their bodies on the line."

"But in that fourth

quarter we were guilty of ball-watching."

Western prefer a minimum of body contact, their players ghosting into position, she says.

"We definitely need to improve if we are to challenge North, the other team in our group looking to be promoted next season."

"We have to reduce our handling errors. Our passing was soft and a lot of that came down to decision-making under pressure."

Hauraki believes her players created a lot of

that pressure themselves. "Our passes spent so much time in the air it was easy for opponents to pick them off."

The players are disappointed and determined to perform better against North, she says.

The game at the North Harbour Netball Centre is on September 18 at noon.

Shooting statistics against Western: Merilyn Nordin 7/8 goals (88 percent), Ashleigh Timoko 7/13 (54) and Dannielle Steffany 15/21 (71 percent).

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**Stretched:** Counties Manukau's Megan Adler lunges to disrupt Western's Chantelle Ngaia during their inter-provincial match in Palmerston North.

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