

Promoted captain to play her team

By ALAN APTED

Captain Laztoisa Leaso will be playing against her Papatoetoe Rangers 2 teammates when she turns out for Papatoetoe Rangers 1 for the start of Counties Manukau Regional Netball League's championship round at the Manurewa Netball Centre on Friday night.

The teenager has been elevated to the club's premier side after regular goalkeeper Marineta Lemalu injured her knee in a recent match against Aztec Premiers and is out for the rest of the season.

It's a cruel blow for Rangers 2 who beat Bombay 54-44 on Monday night for the right to play in the championship round.

The teams were level 13-13 after the first quarter. It was one-way traffic after that as Papatoetoe jumped to a 29-23

lead in the second quarter and never looked threatened.

Coach Vicki Morgan says Leaso has been in outstanding form and her presence and leadership will be missed.

Morgan and her charges are nevertheless thrilled with the progress they've made after starting the season ranked ninth.

"The girls are all really proud of their achievements as I am," Morgan says.

"We know that times are going to get a lot tougher and there is going to be still a very huge difference between ourselves and the top three teams.

"However, I'd rather be up in that level playing harder games and developing as players and a team.

"The girls are aware. In the next three weeks we hope to absorb the huge pressure we will face from Papatoetoe

► RESULTS

Division 1: Aztec 1 38 Papatoetoe Rangers 1 38; Mellons Bay 61 Timbertown Shelley Park 36; H&W United 51 Bombay 32.

Standings: Papatoetoe Rangers 1 18, Aztec Premier 1 18, Mellons Bay 12, Shelley Park 8, H&W United 5, Bombay 0.

Division 2: Papatoetoe Rangers 2 69 Pumaz 2 32; Aztec 2 52 Pumaz 1 39; Tuakau 60 Manurewa Rugby 57.

Standings: Papatoetoe Rangers 20, Manurewa Rugby 13, Tuakau 9, Pumaz 1 9, Aztec Premier 2 8, Pumaz 2 4.

Promotion/relegation: Papatoetoe Rangers 2 54 Bombay 44.

Draw: Papatoetoe Rangers 1 v Papatoetoe Rangers 2 (D1) 6.30pm; Bombay v Pumaz 2 (D2) 8pm at Manurewa Netball Centre.

Mellons Bay 1 v H&W United (D1) 6.30pm; Pumaz 1 v Aztec Premiers 2 (D2) 8pm at Otara Recreation Centre.

Aztec Premiers 1 v Timbertown Shelley Park (D1) 6.30pm; Manurewa Rugby v Tuakau (D2) 8pm at Rosehill College.

Rangers 1, Aztec Premiers 1 and Mellons Bay.

"But we will look to target Timbertown Shelley Park and H&W United and have closer games against them."

Leaso, centre Nicole Jenson, goal keeper Chanelle Campbell and goalshoot Alex McAllister have been Rangers 2's leading players.

Papatoetoe Rangers 1 and Aztec Premiers 1, who face Timbertown Shelley Park in their championship opener at Rosehill College on Friday night, shared division one honours at the end of the first round.

Both teams are unbeaten and their 35-all round one draw sets up an intriguing game.