



**SUNCOAST SPINNERS**

# Media Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

## **Suncoast Spinners National Wheelchair Basketball Tournament attracts over 150 players**

The Suncoast Spinners Wheelchair Basketball T23 Tournament, the biggest tournament of its type in the country, saw the magic of sportsmanship combined with fierce competition return to the Sunshine Coast in the first tournament to be held since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The event took place at Caloundra Indoor Sports Stadium over three days this weekend (Friday 13<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023), with over 150 players in 18 teams coming from throughout Australia competing across three divisions.

The competition was fierce, but it was the social aspect of everyone coming together again that everyone said was the highlight.

With Paralympians and former-Paralympians playing in the same tournament alongside players with a disability and able-bodied players of all levels is part of what makes the Suncoast Spinners Tournament unique.

Suncoast Spinners President and former Paralympian player Bridie Kean said Spinners T23 was a display of highly competitive games combined with spectacular sportsmanship, saying the tournament had a huge positive impact on the sport.

“It’s pretty unique to have a tournament where we have both legends of the game such as Liesl Tesch and retired Aussie Gliders playing on the next court to one of our local Spinners members who is just starting out the game. It creates such an amazing environment where new players can learn and meet absolute legends of the game. Everyone is there for the same reason – to play our great game.”

The Suncoast Spinners Tournament, like the club’s social wheelchair basketball programs is open to people of all abilities as part of it’s reverse inclusion program,

“It was another great highlight is seeing family members playing sport together. Father and son combination Matt and Drew (just 8-years-old) Rhoden were a force for Morayfield Spinners in B grade. Drew has a physical disability and Matt does not have a physical impairment, but both use a wheelchair as their sporting equipment to play wheelchair basketball together.

Suncoast Spinners head coach James Hill said the tournament was an absolute success.

“The annual tournament hosted a great display of newcomers, experienced players and everyone in between,” James said.

“A particular standout aspect from the weekend was the number of women participating with three dedicated teams.”

There were 46 female players across the tournament, with the three women’s teams included Gliders Alumni competing in A Grade, Division 1 which included dual paralympic medalist, former Gliders captain, Suncoast Spinners president and mum Bridie Kean, Shelly Methason, Sammy White, Annabelle Lindsay, Leanne Del Toso and Liesel Tesch, 7-times Paralympian and now NSW MP. The National Women’s Devils Under25 were also there coached by National Wheelchair Basketball Coach Developer and Devils team coach Jana Mizens. The Suncoast Spinnettes women’s team was also playing in B Grade.

Bridie said “while A Grade Division 1 saw many retired Australian women’s national team players return to the court, the Under 25 Australian Women’s Basketball squad “the Devils” competed in



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Division 2 – which begins their 2023 campaign as they prepare to play for a Gold Medal at the upcoming U25 Women's Wheelchair Basketball World Championships. B grade also saw a first for women's wheelchair basketball with local team Suncoast Spinners entering the first ever Sunshine Coast women's team into the competition. It was the first competition for many for many of the "Suncoast Spinnettes", but certainly not will be the last."

### The Suncoast Spinners T23 National Tournament medal winners included:

- A Grade Division 1:
  - Gold – Brisbane Bullets
  - Silver – Rockhampton Rockwheelers
  - Bronze – Gliders Alumni
- A Grade Division 2:
  - Gold – South Australia
  - Silver – Rockhampton Rockwheelers Green
  - Bronze – Suncoast Spinners
- B Grade:
  - Gold – Suncoast Spinners
  - Silver – Toowoomba Bushrangers
  - Bronze – Fraser Coasters

### Other Tournament Awards included:

- A Grade, Division 1:
  - Most Valuable Player (MVP): Anabelle Lindsay – Gliders Alumni
  - All Star Five: 1. Tige Simons – Hot Wheels; 2. Anabelle Lindsey – Gliders Alumni; 3. Brant North – Hot Wheels; 4. Eithan Leard – Brisbane Bullets; 5. Sam White – Gliders Alumni
- A Grade, Division 2:
  - Most Valuable Player (MVP): Campbell Message – Suncoast Spinners
  - Encouragement Award: Farhan – Demon Wheelers
  - All Star Five: 1. Campbell Message – Suncoast Spinners; 2. Laura Davoli – Devils; 3. Brianna Bloomfield – Rockhampton Rockwheelers White; 4. Shaun Whitebread – South Australia, and 5. Farhan Ahmed – Demon Wheelers
- B Grade:
  - Most Valuable Player (MVP): Kim Sparks – Toowoomba
  - Encouragement Award: Drew Rhoden – Morayfield Spinners –8-years-old Drew was also the youngest player in the competition
  - All Star Five: 1. Rohan McDonald – Suncoast Spinners; 2. Megan Loneragan – Suncoast Spinnettes; 3. Lincoln McDougall – Suncoast Spinners; 4. Kim Sparks – Toowoomba Bushrangers; and 5. Lachlan Bloomfield – Rockhampton Rockwheelers
- Referee Award - Riley Spicer
- Team Award – Fraser Coasters
- Mandy Fooks Sportsman Award – Liesl Tesch
- Face Plant Award – Soraj Habib



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James said the Suncoast Spinners were proud as a regional club to continue to present this national tournament which offers such a great opportunity to compete for all participants. “We are also really proud of our Suncoast Spinners playing group to achieved record-breaking results, with medal placings across all divisions, with two of our members Jashar Keetley and Mitchell Duncan also playing in the Division 1 Gold winning team, the Brisbane Bullets,” James said.

Bridie said the Suncoast Spinners T23 was made possible by the incredible volunteers who organised, refereed, scored and assisted with the delivery of the tournament.

“Run completely by volunteers, the Spinners T23 is the biggest, and likely most passionate wheelchair basketball event in Australia and a fantastic way to kick off Queensland’s Year of Accessible Tourism.”

For more information visit the Suncoast Spinners website – [suncoastspinners.com.au](http://suncoastspinners.com.au) - or following them on Facebook @thespinners and Instagram @suncoastspinners.

**ENDS**

For more information please contact Michelle Smytheman on 0408 401 198 or email [michelle@reflectedimage.com.au](mailto:michelle@reflectedimage.com.au).