

# Porirua netballers on learning curve

**KRIS DANDO**

Mila Reuelu-Buchanan says she is loving the national netball league competition, despite enduring a bumpy ride personally.

The midcourter is a member of the Central Zone team with fellow Porirua players Jermaine Howard-Vallance and Colleen Faleafaga. Central have a four-win, two-loss record going into a break in the competition, and lie second in the table behind Northern. Central have two more games – including one at Te Rauparaha Arena on Sunday – before a final between the top two sides on June 26.

“I’m really enjoying it overall – there’s some older and experienced players in the group and Yvette [coach Yvette McCausland-Durie] is great,” she said.

“There’s quite a few girls from Palmerston North, so we Wellington players are adapting to their style and vice versa. We’re a fit bunch and hard workers and we’re hungry to win.”

Reuelu-Buchanan said the competition had been a rollercoaster because her own form dipped. She said her lack of consistency led to a drop in confidence, but supporting teammates from the bench was something players had to get used to in this environment.

“I’ve overcome that fear of not starting games and I’ve got some of my mojo back now.”

Assistant coach Frances Solia said the team was hitting its straps and a two-week double bye had not come at the right time.

Some of the younger squad



Central netballers after a recent team-building session at Porirua’s Adrenalin Forest. Back row, from left, Sheridan Bignall, Jermaine Howard-Vallance, Api Taufa, Mila Reuelu-Buchanan, Colleen Faleafaga, Karin Burger, Tiana Metuarau, Talia Hullena and Renee Te Rini. Front row kneeling, from left, Renee Matoe, Kimiora Poi and Emma-May Murray-Fifita.

members were finding the constant diet of training challenging, but were adjusting well, she said.

McCausland-Durie organised inter-squad matches to decide who would make the match-day team, a tactic that was paying off,

Solia said.

“It’s our point of difference and means we have no set team and positions are always up for grabs,” Solia said.

She said the Central players see the national league as a

chance to push for places in the Pulse, and playing televised matches also helped with motivation.

Central lost their opening two matches, by one point and three points, but had gelled well and

would push hard for a top-two finish, Solia said.

“It’s an exciting competition and I love seeing where this team is going and how they’re coping with the next level up from participation netball.”