

## AA Finals

Westlake Girls High School were crowned the 2024 Girl's 'AA' Secondary Schools National Champions at Fly Palmy Arena, Palmerston North on Saturday. Westlake beat St Andrew's College, Christchurch 97-69 to claim the C.A. Clarke and Stone Trophy for the third straight year joining Church College and Mairehau High School as the girl's schools to have enjoyed success in three consecutive years.

Kodee Williams-Sefo led the way for Westlake with 24 points and 13 rebounds while young centre Imani Rasmussen was also in double-double territory with 14 points and 12 rebounds. Emma Schroeder scored 14 points and Zenthia Stowers 18 while captain Amy Pateman, having missed the 2023 championship game due to injury, amassed 17 points.

Ava Jones was colossal for St Andrew's (StAC) with 32 points and 15 rebounds, Ophelia Powell scored 15 while Niamh Chamberlain contributed 11 points.

Jones made the opening three points of the contest as St Andrews forged and 15-2 lead inside the opening five minutes.

Five points from Pateman provided Westlake with some momentum and with Charlotte Mawston making a pair of baskets the StAc lead was trimmed to 15-11 at quarter time.

Williams-Sefo and Rasmussen combined to take Westlake into the lead and when Pateman drained a triple the defending champions led 26-22.

However, earning multiple trips to the foul line and with Jones showing deft footwork to score inside, StAC were just a point behind (33-32) with two minutes remaining in the opening half.

Those final seconds belonged to Westlake as they unleashed an 11-0 run to lead 44-32 at the interval.

Jones and Niamh Chamberlain countered a brace of baskets from Rasmussen and a triple from Schroeder but when Williams-Sefo converted from inside the Westlake lead was into the twenties (61-40).

Despite the deficit StAC produced another mini-run through Chamberlain and Jones to keep their hopes alive. However Westlake had one hand on the winners trophy when Zenthia Stowers twice converted from beyond the arc to give the holders a 75-48 three-quarter time advantage.

Jones continued to add to her impressive numbers in the final term but it was the collective strength of the Aucklanders that carried them to a hat-trick of titles and condemned St Andrew's to a third consecutive grand-final defeat.

**Westlake Girls High School 97** – Williams-Sefo 24/13rebs, Stowers 18, Pateman 17, Schroeder 14, Rasmussen 14/12rebs  
**St Andrew's College 69** – Jones 32/15rebs, Powell 15, Niamh Chamberlain 11

**Grand Final Officials:** Natasha Ah-Hing and Brin Watson

3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Play-off

**Tauranga Girls' College 98** – Pahlyss Hokianga 28, Areta Kahura 19, Kiritiana Patea 15, Jayla Teki 8

**St Peter's School, Cambridge 67** – Eva Jeffries 35, Regan Gallien 17, Macy Costello 11

**Girls All-Star Five**

Bailey Flavell – Takapuna Grammar school  
Eva Jeffries – St Peter's School – Cambridge  
Pahlyss Hokianga – Tauranga Girl's College  
Ava Jones – St Andrew's College  
Kodee Williams-Sefo – Westlake Girls High School

**Foot Locker Defensive Player of the Tournament:** Riley McCenaghan – Tauranga Girl's College

**Tournament MVP** – Kodee Williams-Sefo – Westlake Girls High School

*The C.A. Clarke and Stone Trophy is presented annually to the Secondary Schools Girls' Champions and was first awarded to Waimea College in 1969, played in Rotorua.*

*The final was played between the South Island winners Waimea College and Western Heights College; final score 31-26. The result was documented in the minutes of a N.Z. Women's Indoor Basketball Association Inc executive meeting, held on Monday, 1 September 1969.*

*The trophy is steeped in tradition as the donors (C.A. Clarke and Stone Ltd) were at the time producing aerated water and cordial, and had been doing so since 1883. It is believed that it was the only cordial factory in the world operating on geothermal steam. The factory was on*

*Tutanekai Street in Rotorua, now the site of the Novotel Hotel.*

*Mairehau High School won nine consecutive titles from 1972 to 1980. Church College of New Zealand won 22 titles of which 14 were consecutive from 1990 to 2003.*

In a pulsating 2024 Boy's 'AA' Secondary Schools National Championship game, a Grand-Final that had twenty-five lead changes, Christ's College eventually prevailed 91-88 against Napier Boys High School in a thriller.

The result was still in doubt until the final whistle but it was the play of Tama Isaac, with 3 seconds remaining, that settled the most exciting showpiece game of recent years.

With the scores level at 88 points apiece the Junior Tall Blacks guard converted a short range floater and for good measure converted the additional free-throw to put Christ's 91-88 ahead.

There was just time for Napier to get off a game tying attempt but the shot bounced loose and Christ's were able to celebrate a second championship in three years.

There were outstanding performances on both sides with Jackson Ball leading the Napier effort pulling down 13 rebounds to accompany a game high 35 points (4/9 3PG). The New Zealand U17 representative received fine support from Zoram Smiler (15 points), Manawa Karena (12 points), Maz Taylor (10 points) and Harry Keighley (9 points).

For Christ's Hoana Ifopo-Togia and Ihaka Cate scored 24 points apiece, Tama Isaac finished with 20 points and Boston Paerata 17.

Typifying the closeness of the contest the scores were locked at 80-80 with four minutes to play before Ball put Napier in the ascendancy (86-85) with 25 seconds left. Parerata made a corner three for Christ's only for Ball to tie proceedings at 88-all with just 8 seconds left.

With overtime looming it was left to Isaac to decide the contest - the Tournament MVP didn't disappoint.

Earlier Christ's made the better start forging a 22-14 lead – Ifopo-Togia quickly into double figures. Smiler had 8 points in the opening quarter, one shaded 27-20 by the Cantabrians.

Boston Paerata extended the Christ's advantage before a pair of threes from Maz Taylor trimmed the lead to 35-32 at the mid-point of the second period.

Allen and Ball combined for ten straight points for Napier before Cate had the final say of the opening half with a typically athletic finish – Christ's ahead 51-45.

Ifopo-Togia led all scorers at the mid-term with 18 points on 8 from 10 shooting while Ball topped the Napier points count with 14.

Napier grabbed the initiative at the outset of the second half with a 7-0 run to take the lead for the first time since early in the opening quarter.

In a pulsating third period, that saw ten lead changes, Ball and Allan combined for a trio of threes before Cate and Ifopo-Togia concluded the scoring in the frame. Napier ahead 69-68 with ten minutes to play.

The fourth period continued in the same vein as the third with the two teams trading baskets before Isaac made the game winning shot to enable Christ's to lift the Doug Harford Memorial Trophy for the second time.

**Christ's College 91** – Ifopo-Togia 24, I Cate 24, Isaac 20, Paerata 17

**Napier Boys' High School 88** – Ball 35, Smiler 15, Karena 12, Taylor 10, Keighley 9

**Grand Final Officials:** Brendan Douglas and Blake Rosanowski

### **3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Play-off**

**Wellington College 81** – Tyler Ngan 27, Troy Plumtree 13, Leevae Mcdonald 7, Joseph Mcdonald 7

**Rosmini College 100** – Chris Wyllie 26, Jameer Reed 21, Hunter Johns 13, Josh Wyllie 13, Mattie Dalton 11, Bart Jackowski 10

### **Boy's All-Star Five**

Troy Plumtree – Wellington College

Bart Jackowski – Rosmini College

Ihaka Cate – Christ's College

Jackson Ball – Napier Boy's High School

Tama Isaac – Christ's College

**Foot Locker Defensive Player of the Tournament:** Harry Keighley – Napier Boy's High School

**Boy's Tournament MVP - Tama Isaac – Christ's College**

*The inaugural New Zealand National Schoolboys' Tournament was played in 1968. The tournament consisted of the top four teams from across New Zealand (Otago Boys' High School, Mt Albert Grammar School, Nelson College and Tokoroa High School). They assembled in Palmerston North to play for the Doug Harford Memorial Trophy.*

*The Doug Harford Memorial Trophy is presented in memory of former New Zealand player Doug Harford who was tragically killed in a car accident in 1967. Harford was in his prime at the time of his passing having represented New Zealand the previous year.*

*Harford represented Nelson and the South Island until 1962 when he moved to Wellington and went on to represent Wellington and the North Island teams. He was a recipient of the Keith Carr Trophy for Outstanding Guard at the 1962 Senior National Championships and debuted for New Zealand the following year.*

*The trophy was purchased from funds kindly donated by the Harford family. Church College of New Zealand won 14 titles of which five were consecutive wins from 1984 to 1988.*