

60 SECONDS WITH AN ENTREPRENEUR... STEPHANIE KARVELIS

Role: Chief Operating Officer

Company Name: Netball Scotland

Sector: Sport

Base: Emirates Arena, Glasgow

Purpose: For Netball in Scotland to be a thriving, world-class sport.



Tell us a bit about your business? Netball Scotland provides and delivers Netball as a sport from grassroots to international level, as the National Governing Body. We cater for all ages and stages, and are purpose driven to create a fairer and equal society for women and girls.

What's been your biggest challenge to date? I joined Netball Scotland in August 2021 – right after the height of the pandemic. It is fair to say that the aftermath and recovery of Covid-19 has disproportionately affected women and girls, and in particular Netball in Scotland – a female dominated, indoor contact sport. We were one of the last sports to return following the lifting of restrictions, so we continue to navigate and create opportunities for players, officials and spectators to return to court.

How has SE (or any other support organisation in the Scottish ecosystem) helped you on your journey? Scottish Enterprise has personally helped me as I began in this role through the Principally Women programme. The network and ability to have a safe space with like minded and capable women to share learnings and experiences with has been invaluable.

What's been the highlight of the last year for you? We recently welcomed our third child into the family (that is what you do when you start a new job, right?!), so that has definitely been a personal highlight. Professionally, challenging myself in a new role, new organisation in an ever-changing climate has been very rewarding.

What's your favourite thing about being an entrepreneur? I love putting ideas into action. They might not always come off – but the biggest risk is not trying.

What's the best thing about being an entrepreneur in Scotland? The networks. Because Scotland is relatively small, the connections are wide and big. Everyone knows everyone through someone – and it is a real asset.

What's the best piece of advice you ever received? I don't think there is anything specific, but I make a point of learning from everyone I meet. It might not always be what you should do, rather what to avoid!

What advice do you wish you hadn't listened to? I always listen to advice. The key is to reflect and understand if that advice is relevant for you, or if the person giving it is trying to justify/validate something for them.

What has been your proudest achievement since starting your businesses? Since joining Netball Scotland I am proud to have written and introduced a sustainability approach for the business. We are the first sporting body in Scotland to do this, and first in Netball within the UK to make a long-term commitment with a strategic partnership.

Is there anything on your business bucket list? So much! I feel like I am at the start of my career, so I am excited to continue learning and achieving as I go. Big ticket items for me though, include making a tangible difference and growing the sport to give back to the wider community. Watch this space!

Who's been your biggest supporter? My (now) Husband. We only married a few weeks ago due to pandemic delays, but he has always encouraged me, challenged me to think bigger and listened to me offload!

How do you care for each other's wellbeing at work? I pride myself on having authentic conversations. This means when something isn't right, it is easy to spot. Really important to see the person as a human first, and employee second.

How do you start your day? I love a bowl of porridge in the morning with fruit and nuts. Mornings are always chaos in the house with three kids under 5, but a happy morning is when we are out the door on time.

What do you do for fun after a busy week? Weekends are probably busier than the week in our house. We try and squeeze as much family time in as possible around our work commitments. We love a walk with coffees and babycinos in search of sunshine.

What's the best business book you've read? I really enjoyed Shoe Dog by Phil Knight and am currently reading The New Hustle by Emma Issacs. Very different books – but equally inspiring.

Any office pets? No.

What's your best tip for achieving a good life/work balance? The best thing you can do is rephrase the term work/life balance to life/work balance. We should prioritise life around work, and not the other way.

What would you say is the secret to success? Believe in what you do.

What's your big dream? I honestly can't answer that. I am only 34, so I am still figuring out what the future holds for when I return from maternity leave.

How would you like to be remembered? I want my legacy to be meaningful and have made a difference for the health and wellbeing of people in the community.

Where can we find out more about your business? www.netballscotland.com /

[@NetballScotland](https://www.instagram.com/NetballScotland)