

**KICKRUN**

**OVER \$10,000 IN PRIZES TO GIVE AWAY**

**PLAY NOW!**

PROUDLY SPONSORED

Eligible entrants only. T&Cs apply

March 23 2025



Stuff

Kia ora, Aotearoa

SUPPORT STUFF

LOGIN

NZ NEWS / WORLD NEWS / QUIZZES / LIFE & STYLE / SPORT

Live: White Ferns need record chase to beat Australia in second Twenty20 [read more](#)

# Former WNBA player Ashley Joens shows her class in Taiuhi Basketball

Merryn Anderson

November 28, 2024 · 07:46am

Share



American stars as Whai stun Kāhu.

VIDEO CREDIT: SKY SPORT

It may have taken a while to get used to driving on the left-hand side of the road, but Ashley Joens hasn't had any trouble fitting in to the Taiuhi Basketball Aotearoa league.

Joens is one of the most prolific players in the New Zealand league this season, bringing her WNBA experience to the Tauranga Whai team.

Having played for the Dallas Wings, Las Vegas Aces and the Phoenix Mercury in the WNBA, Joens heard about the NZ league through her agent.

"I didn't even realise there was a league here but then I looked into it more," Joens admitted.

"I saw how good the competition was here, really good players in the league and thought it was a really neat opportunity."

One of the top things on her priority list was a gym she could access 24/7.



ADVERTISE WITH STUFF

**BAYLEYS**

Bay of Plenty

LICENSED UNDER REAA 2008

here!

Mt Maunganui, Tauranga

Large family living with great sheds

AUCTION

24 Johnson Road, Otakiri, Whakatane

A peaceful retreat in Bethlehem

AUCTION

8 Inlet Views, Bethlehem, Tauranga

ADVERTISE WITH STUFF

"I'm a little bit of a gym rat I guess, especially after a loss, or a bad game, you want to get shots up.

"Having that opportunity to get in the gym is a huge plus."



LIQUOR CENTRE

**3 Day Deals**

42.99 per 12 pack

Steinkla

STORAGE IN 1 LITRE BOTTLES

ADVERTISE WITH STUFF



Ashley Joens of the Tauranga Whai shoots and Esra McGoldrick of the Mainland Pouakai.  
JOHN DAVIDSON / PHOTOSPORT

All the time spent training is paying off for Joens, currently sitting second for the most points in the league with 228 points, averaging 22.8 per game. She's also top for offensive rebounds, with 36.

The 24-year-old's confidence has grown from her time with the Whai too.

"Just coming in knowing this is a really talented group we have here, but there's some way in which I can impact the game - no matter whether it's scoring, rebounding, playing defence, there's something that you always have to be able to do," Joens said.

"Coach Alex [Stojkovic] does a really good job at instilling confidence in his players, if you miss a couple of shots, the next one's going in. He just is always supportive, always encouraging and I think that goes a long way."

Tauihi has drawn talent from across the world, and Joens said it's a top level league.

"The competition here is really good, lots of really talented players, in that aspect I think as a professional athlete, you always want to challenge yourself and play at the highest level.

"To be able to come here and play with really talented players from all over, and then play against those players as well doesn't only help you as a player, but also kind of allows you to gain confidence knowing that you can compete at this level."

Joens can definitely see herself returning to New Zealand to play in Tauihi again.

"Adding the new team in next year from India, I think that will only add to it and just continue to see this league grow, and basketball in New Zealand in general."

The Indian Panthers will join Tauihi next year, with the hope to draw new players and audiences to the league.

There are two more regular season rounds left, and the Whai sit fourth on the ladder, but they're still in with a chance of making the finals after stunning leaders Northern Kahu in their last game.

"I think our confidence right now is really high, knowing we can't get distracted by what other teams are doing," said Joens of their finals chances.

"We have to be able to control the controllable and just go out and play hard, play our game and be true to ourselves."

Being part of the Whai community has made being away from her home of Iowa easier.

"I think the nicest thing so far has just been getting to know my teammates, and the people in the community here.

"Everyone's really nice, it's been a good transition, especially when you're away from home."

- Stuff

→ Share

#### MORE FROM STUFF





**How former Tall Black Dillon Boucher is making basketball more accessible**

By Carolyn Eniting



**'We're all playing for a spot': Ruby Tui weighing up Black Ferns potential**

By Merryn Anderson



**50 years of Polyfest: Meet the woman who's been to every one**

By Mildred Armah

**Shows The Value Of Your...**

search by your address to see your home's value instantly

Home Value Calculator - Sponsored Links

**Homes in New Zealand:...**

LocalPlan



**Banks In Tauranga That May Offer U...**

Savings Accounts | Search Ads



**New Solar Window Requires No...**

Solar Windows | Search Ads



**The Average Nurse Salaries in the...**

Sponsored links



**Pensioners Will Be Able To Buy These Electric Cars, See The...**

Electric Cars | Search Ads