

# College Sport

## Briefs

### Champion found

Under-14 national tennis champion George Stoupe made easy work of the Wellington college title. The Hutt International Boys' School student dropped only two games on his way through the tournament, getting the better of his Hibs team-mate William Brownlie in the final. On the girls side, second-seed Christy Robinson from Samuel Marsden Collegiate took home the title after beating her school-mate Maggie Dai 4-0 5-3 in the final. The boys doubles went the way of Scots College's Finley Hall and Ryo Minakata, while Grace and Ivy McLean from Queen Margaret College won the girls.

### Early leaders

Wellington East and Queen Margaret have set out early markers in the open girls regional water polo tournament. Both schools are unbeaten through three games, with Queen Margaret conceding just one goal, while scoring 48. East's top team put a whopping 32 past St Mary's in round one on their way to 68 goals in their first three matches, although they only just squeezed past their second team 9-7 in round two. That second team will be looking to dethrone Queen Margaret on Thursday. St Pat's Town lead the boys competition with four wins from four. St Bernard's will be ruing their default to the table toppers in round one as they have won their next three matches to sit joint-second with Wellington College and Palmerston North Boys.

### NZ team named

Five Wellington judokas have made the New Zealand team to compete at the Oceania Judo Championships in Canberra in April. Alex Rivett from Onslow College and Qona Christie from Wellington High School will travel to the championships for the third and second time respectively, while there are three new members from the region. St Bernard's College pair Luke Pynenburg and Daniel Lloyd will be joined by Lucy Dunc from Sacred Heart as the Wellington debutants in the team. After the competition, all five will attend an international training camp, which is attended by Oceania's top athletes.

### NZ trialists

Four of Wellington's best netballers have been selected to trial for the New Zealand secondary schools netball team at the end of the month. Tiana Metuarau (Wellington East), Ainsleyana Puleiata (St Mary's), Renee Savai'inaea (St Mary's) and Julia Law (Kapiti) were among the 24 athletes chosen to attend the trial in Auckland, starting on March 31. Following the trials, a team will be selected to participate in the International School Girls Competition in Auckland from May 2-6.



Tawa College student Danielle Watson moves smoothly through the water on her way to winning five gold medals at the national canoe sprint championships.

PHOTO: JAN HILL

# Five-star effort from Watson

## Another big golden haul from kayaker

LIAM HYSLOP



Danielle Watson's medal cabinet will be bulging after another big haul of medals at sprint kayaking nationals. The 16-year-old Tawa College student added to her five golds from last year's regatta with another five this year at under-18 level. She won the under-18 K1 500m,

both under-18 K2 titles with Tess Allen, before combining with Allen, Gemma Woolcock and Farren McGregor-Smyth to take both under-18 K4 titles. She also added a bronze in the under-18 K1 200m and took silver in the open K4 500m with Allen, Woolcock and Kayla Imrie, finishing ahead of the Eastern Bay boat featuring Olympic champion Lisa Carrington. Watson said she was ecstatic to

have stepped up from the under-16 to under-18 grade so well. "It was my first year in the under-18s and I wanted to do well in the team boat races. In my individual races I was aiming to get a medal, so I was really happy to win one and come third in the other one." With such a hectic schedule to fit in over three days, she said getting the right fuel into her body was important to keeping her going. "It was pretty good, you just have to be smart around your nutrition and all that sort of stuff, but I managed it pretty well." Hectic schedules are something Watson has become accustomed to. She was part of Tawa College's national championship winning

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Danielle Watson

first XI cricket team last year, while also playing hockey during the winter. She plans to keep up all three as long as she can, even with increased kayaking training

during winter. The extra training will hopefully come with the draw of going to the junior world championships in Belarus, starting on July 28, which she has trials for this weekend at Lake Karapiro. "The aim is to make that New Zealand team and ultimately I'm trying to go to the Olympics. That's what I'm really looking ahead to in 2020." For now, it's hard work which is helping to keep her on top. "In the summer it's been all kayaking, so I've been on the water six times a week, in the gym twice a week and also going for a run a couple of times a week sometimes.

"I like it though, I like to be doing stuff. It's good to be working towards things and keeping active." One thing which has helped keep her motivated were the people at her Mana Kayak Racing Club. They were especially helpful at nationals. "It was a really good weekend for the club, we had really good results across the board and I think we have one of the best team cultures of all of the clubs there. "It's really important to have a good team spirit - having a good team around you means lots of support and it helps you perform better and not have too much pressure build up."

# St Pat's Town reclaim lead after victory over Onslow

CRICKET

St Pat's Town have retaken the lead at the top of Wellington premier youth cricket. They sit top of the table on 25 points after seven rounds, two points clear of the chasing brigade of Wellington College, Onslow Col-

lege and St Pat's Stream. Hutt International Boys' School have recovered from their shaky start to win their last three games and now sit six points back from those three teams in fifth place. Town went top thanks to a 47-run win over Onslow on Saturday. Opener Luke Georgeson hit 94

and 147 balls to lay a solid platform for his side, before Jed Wiggins and William Irving plundered quick late runs to amass a total of 261-6 off their 50 overs. Onslow were in trouble early in the chase, sitting at 19-3 after 10 overs, but Craig Turner (44), Chris Leitch (71) and Kayden Miller (45) led a strong fightback to get them

through to 157-5 in the 40th over. They lost a series of quick wickets to fall behind in the chase, eventually going down by 47 runs with a wicket still in hand. Hibs showed how good they could be at full strength with a win over Wellington College. Rachin Ravindra took 3-20 from his 10 overs to help restrict Wel-

lington to 189-9 in their 50 overs - including the crucial wicket of Devan Vishvaka on 71 - before hitting 68 to lay the platform for his side's win. Jesse Tashkoff finished off the five-wicket with 52 not out. Tawa College picked up their second win of the season, this time over Scots College, as Michael

Fenton blasted 121 off 80 balls to show why his side add a lot to the competition. Amelia Kerr, who has been given special dispensation to play in the boys' grade, scored 47 and took 2-32 in the match. Wellington College's second XI managed a win over Hutt Valley High School, while Stream were on a bye.

# Volleyballers, basketballers, netballers . . . and sevens stars

SEVENS

It is quite a feat to turn a bunch of volleyballers, basketballers and netballers into rugby sevens stars. But that is what has happened at St Mary's College, as Tuga Mativa and his best mate, Hurricane and New Zealand Sevens player Ardie Savea, coached a team full of first-time girls rugby players to beat the perennial girls rugby powerhouses of current national champions Hamilton Girls' High School and Feilding High School. To say St Mary's win at the Sir Gordon Tietjens Sevens in Palmerston North last month was a surprise would be an understatement. Not even co-captain Ainsleyana Puleiata thought they were that good. "I felt surprised when we won. Our team was new to rugby, it was our first season for nearly every single one of us, we pretty much all came from volleyball and netball."

The team produced outstanding results throughout the tournament. They kept regional rivals Paraparaumu College and Wellington East scoreless in their first two matches before beating Hamilton Girls' 19-14 in their final pool match. A comfortable 35-10 win in their semifinal against Tauranga Girls' setup a showdown with Feilding in the final. Mativa said it was a nervy final until they put the game to bed in the closing stages to win 19-7. "The girls just dug deep and came away with the win. "It was tied at halftime, then we scored and kept them out and scored with about a minute to go, we were pretty stoked with that. There were a lot of emotions from the girls." The key to their success was having talented natural athletes who had adapted well to techniques and strategies of sevens, Mativa said. "We emphasise a lot defence



The St Mary's College (Wellington) sevens team celebrates winning the open girls division of the Gordon Tietjens Sevens.

when we come to training. Defence always wins games. "A lot of our girls come from basketball and netball, so their skillset comes in quite easily and we don't need to teach them about pass and catch, so we just really

emphasised the defence. They were all amazing athletes and could all run the ball and were quick on their feet, so it was good to drill them on their defence." Their success had come as quite a surprise to a lot of other schools,

especially given the tournament was believed to be the school's first major rugby title, Mativa said. "I know when we played our first tournament last year a lot of the schools were questioning why St Mary's were in the tournament

with a bunch of netball girls playing rugby, so it was quite cool to make a statement. "I think it's the first one [major title] ever, they've always been strong in the other codes but rugby wasn't really their thing." Having Savea's expertise from his time in Gordon Tietjens' New Zealand Sevens team was invaluable, Mativa said. "Ardie's been a big part of it. We're best mates so it was easy for me to get him to help me out. I know he's a bit busy, but I asked him to come along for 15s and he came and did a few sessions and he told me he was keen to take sevens on with me. "So we've taken sevens on and he's been a great help to us and helping these girls. It's awesome, it's easy to coach with someone that you're really close with." Puleiata, her co-captain Lyric Faleafaga and Monica Tagoai made the tournament team, while Mativa praised their two "twin towers" in the forwards of Renee

Savai'inaea and Dhys Faleafaga. Lyric Faleafaga said most of the girls joined the rugby team to do something fun away from the pressure of their other sports, where making New Zealand teams is the priority. "It's a new environment and let us get away from the stress of our other sports." Both Faleafaga and Puleiata said the aim would be to win nationals at the end of the year, with most of the team committed to playing through the winter, so long as it fits in around their other sporting commitments. "We'll make it work," Faleafaga said. "Tuga and Ardie are quite versatile - they work around us, so if we have another sport on they will move the training days to another day. "We train every single day for sport, it's a full-on week but it's not too hard and if our schooling starts to drop then we're made to drop off the sports until it comes back up."

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