

St Pat's duo sign off in fine style with more Maadi gold

MATT ATKINSON
ROWING

St Patrick's College (Town) duo Daniel Ward and Josh Ngaia won gold in the boys under-17 double sculls at Maadi Cup last Friday.

Ward and Ngaia, both 16, won the race by just over a second on Lake Ruataniwha in the central South Island.

The year 13 students are accustomed to success, having won gold in the under-16 double sculls at Maadi last year and bronze in the under-15 double two years ago.

Ngaia said they went to Maadi with gold in mind.

"We went down there in good form after winning North Islands," he said.

"So we were pretty confident going there."

The boys expected their biggest challenge to come from Nelson College, winners of the South Island championship, but it was North Island runners-up Huanui College from Northland who set a blistering early pace.

"Huanui came out a lot faster than we expected. They had a big lead on everyone," Ngaia said.

It was not until the middle of the race that they started to haul Huanui back in, he said.

"They held a comfortable lead until the one kilometre [mark]. Then we started making our move and eating away at the lead."

Ward said the plan was to take control of the race early, but Huanui changed that.

"We wanted to get out in front and hold the lead the whole way."

"However, we had to use our intuition and adapt to what was happening."

With 400 metres left they made their move and caught the Huanui crew with 200m to go, he said.

"They saw us coming and couldn't hold us off after leading for so long."

Once Ward and Ngaia had the lead, they were not going to give it up.

"From there we pushed it out [the lead]," said Ngaia.

For both boys this was their fourth and final Maadi Cup and they were understated in celebrating their final regatta.

"We were pretty stoked," Ngaia said.

Ward had missed out on another medal earlier that day, finishing fourth in the under-17 single sculls.

Ward said that gave him extra motivation for the latter race.

"I got well beaten by third place and was disappointed to miss out."

"But that helped me because I really wanted to make the double count."

For both boys the cherry on top



St Pat's Town rowers Joshua Ngaia, left, and Daniel Ward celebrate winning the under-17 double sculls at the Maadi Cup. PHOTO: STEVE McARTHUR/ROWING CELEBRATION

of rowing at that level and then maybe get a trial next year."

Wellington schools were also represented on the podium by the Onslow College duo of Olivia Clark and Constance Stirling, who claimed a bronze medal in the girls

rowers. That's all there is to it, really."

The Wellington College crew of Henry Beasley, Connor Moore, Andre Loveard, Fergus Murray and cox Liam Stevens won gold in the under-17 quad sculls and bronze in the under-18 quad sculls.

Ward said that gave him extra motivation for the latter race.

"I got well beaten by third place and was disappointed to miss out."

"But that helped me because I really wanted to make the double count."

For both boys the cherry on top



The Sacred Heart College volleyball team play Whakatane High School on their way to a ninth place finish at nationals. PHOTO: JULIE MAREE PHOTOGRAPHY

St Mary's set sights high after strong displays

CHELSEA McLAUGHLIN
VOLLEYBALL

St Mary's College is aiming for gold next year after placing fifth at the national secondary schools volleyball championships.

The senior A team played nine games over six days at the tournament in Palmerston North last week to achieve its best ever result.

Coach Siata Pritchard said the team had a tough draw but knew they were capable of doing well.

They had qualified for the tournament in division two, after losing to Sacred Heart College in the recent regional final, but strong results saw them move into division one.

"We recognised that our team was very good and we expected that if it was an error-free game we could have won the regionals," Pritchard said.

"We knew that the team was special and very skilled, and they had the capability of doing well in division one."

By the third day they realised they had a chance of making the quarterfinals.

"Each day was opening windows of opportunities that the girls hadn't thought much about. It was all new ground from last year."

They lost their quarterfinal to Mangere College by three sets to one, then beat Waimea College in the five to eight cross-over round, and Rangitoto College in the play-off for fifth and sixth.

Pritchard said they had a point to prove against Wellington champs Sacred Heart during pool play.

Beating them was the highlight of the tournament.

"Each day was opening windows of opportunities that the girls hadn't thought much about. It was all new ground from last year."

Coach Siata Pritchard

"It was the best game for the team and it was really exciting. That was a key game because it was reversing the result from a month ago."

"We went down to them 3-1 in the [regional] final, and to turn it around to 3-1 to St Marys, I'm sure the girls were elated."

Most of the girls had to balance other sporting commitments on top of twice-weekly training with Pritchard and head coach Gali Pritchard, college sport and league games weekly.

The hard work paid off for Leni-Lia Moananu, who was one of only two Wellington-based players to make the tournament team alongside Sacred Heart captain Danielle Tafili.

Only two St Mary's players are year 13 so most of the team will be retained next year. Pritchard believes they have the talent and attitude to achieve an even better result. "Having placed fifth, it's like winning nationals is a realistic goal."

They will have tough competition after Christchurch's Burnside High School beat Tauranga Girls' College to win the title for the second year in a row.

Scots lose by smallest of margins

LIAM HYSLOP
TENNIS

Losses do not come any narrower than the one Scots College suffered in the national secondary schools tennis final.

They didn't drop a game their three round-robin matches or semifinal, setting up their third national final in as many years against Saint Kentigern College.

The Auckland school had a similarly perfect record heading into the decider, so it was unsurprising the tie ended 3-3.

Unfortunately for Scots, St Kent's won one more game to take the title on a 52-51 countback.

If one Scots player or doubles team had won one more game, they would have been crowned national champions.

For year 12 Joshua Snowdon-Poole, it was a tough way to end the tournament.

"It was pretty disappointing because we were training for that for a while and it is kind of just taken from you a little bit."

"We can't do much about it - we've just got to try come back next year and win it."



The Scots College tennis team which narrowly lost the national secondary schools final to Saint Kentigern College.

The team had prepared all tournament to face St Kent's, who they beat in last year's final to gain revenge for losing the 2014 final to them.

Snowdon-Poole said their rivalry with St Kent's had become fierce after three-straight finals against each other.

"It's a tense rivalry, one that has been made in the last three or four years."

"It's pretty serious stuff, but it's good competition and you get over it in the end."

No 1 Felix Humphries played through a stress fracture in his foot without telling the rest of the team, Snowdon-Poole said.

"He did it before the tournament and didn't tell us. It was pretty brave of him. It was a stress fracture, so I think he can play through it but it must have hurt."

The consolation from this year's tournament was that most of the team would be back for another crack in 2017, Snowdon-Poole said.

"Felix is year 13, so that was the last one for him and it was pretty gutting. But myself, Finley Hall, Ryo Minakata and Milo Benn will all be back."

Snowdon-Poole singled out No 3 Hall for praise after playing "really good tennis" at nationals, while No 5 Benn was also very good, he said.

The younger quartet will travel to Australia in the upcoming school holidays to gain experience in a couple of ITF junior tournaments.

They are a close knit team who train together most days, Snowdon-Poole said.

"We try support each other as much as we can until we get out on the court and play each other - then the rivalry starts."

St Kent's also got the better of Wellington schools in the two other grades. Kapiti College lost their girls' semifinal to the Aucklanders, while Hutt Valley High School also fell at the same stage to the same opposition.

East made to work for hat-trick

TOURNAMENT WEEK

Wellington East Girls' College have won their third straight national secondary schools softball title.

They did it the hard way at the tournament, only qualifying third for the semifinals after losses to Sacred Heart College (4-2) and Alfriston College (2-1) in the round-robin.

But their finals experience took over in the knockout stages as they beat Aotea College 4-3 to progress to the final.

Alfriston beat Sacred Heart 14-4 in the other semi, but were no match for East in the final as the Wellingtonians won 6-2.

East pitcher Nikita Hiroki was named Most Valuable Player and top pitcher and was joined by outfield team-mate Emily Plunkett in the tournament team.

Aotea pitcher Jaenin-Koko Latau was also named in the tournament team alongside Sacred Heart's Dallas Potter and Bailey Robertson, and Tawa College's Amber Wairau.

In the boys' competition, St Pat's Town were the best Wellington finishers in fifth as Mount

Albert Grammar School claimed the title.

Tawa College's Andre Burridge and Rongotai College's Tobias Makisi made the tournament team.

FUTSAL

St Pat's Town were the top Wellington finishers at the senior boys' futsal nationals last week.

They lost to eventual champions Kavanagh College (Dunedin) 3-2 in the quarterfinals. Rongotai College, Onslow College and Scots College filled out the next three positions respectively.

Wellington College were a disappointing 17th, although Jaro Langer earned the Golden Boot award thanks to his 18 goals.

Wellington Girls' College reached the final of the senior girls' competition before losing 5-0 to Mount Albert Grammar.

Onslow College's Francesca Grange claimed the Golden Boot in that competition with 22 as her side finished sixth.

Hutt International Boys' School (HIBS) were third in the junior boys' tournament.

CRICKET

Melie Kerr gain starred for Tawa

College as the two-time defending national champions made it safely through regional qualifying.

Kerr hit an outstanding 108 off 79 balls in the Wellington final as her team reached 154-1 from their 20 overs against Sacred Heart at the Basin Reserve last Wednesday.

Tawa then produced a good allround bowling performance to dismiss Sacred Heart for 110 with three balls to spare and set themselves up for a crack at a nationals three-peat later in the year.

In the five matches of the regional tournament, Kerr scored 245 runs at an average of 142.5. She also took seven wickets at 5.14.

HIBS finished third at the junior boys' national tournament with three wins and two losses.

BASKETBALL

The Rongotai College junior basketball team won the national 3x3 tournament over the weekend, travelling to Auckland as the only Wellington representative and beating some of the best schools in the country. They won all 10 of their matches, including a win over powerhouses Rangitoto College 20-9 in their semifinal.

They went on to beat Rosmini College 13-8 in the final.

College Sport Wellington
Where sports stars unfold

Major Sponsors:
THE DOMINION POST
WelTec

FUJI XEROX
APEX print+design
NZCT
Wellington Community Trust

SPORT NEW ZEALAND
SPORTS DISTRIBUTORS
Keep Up With Newstalk ZB WELLINGTON 89.3FM
Infinity foundation Limited
THE LION FOUNDATION