

# College Sport

in association with the Massey University Journalism School

## Making a splash: Clareburt's rapid rise

SEAN NUGENT

Capital swimmer Lewis Clareburt has continued his rapid rise after he won eight gold medals at the New Zealand Age Group Swimming Championships last week.

The year 13 Scots College student dominated the 16-18-year-old field at the championships held in Kilbirnie, doubling his medal tally from the same event last year.

In doing so, Clareburt, 17, broke the national age record in the 400m individual medley (IM), previously held by Rio Olympian Bradlee Ashby, with a time of 4min 21.69secs, and equalled Danyon Loader's near 25-year-old record in the 200m freestyle, clocking in at 1:51.70.

He set Olympic B standard times in both the 200 and 400IM, the first step towards possibly qualifying for the 2020 Olympics.

It has been a quick ascent for Clareburt, who in early 2016 did not have any Olympic B standard times, national age records, or Wellington open records.

Now he is far and away the best swimmer in his age group, and continues to improve. At the age group championships alone he set eight personal best times from his 10 events, knocking 3.3 seconds off his 400IM time and 2.64 seconds in the 100m butterfly.

Not only is Clareburt a star swimmer, but he has also recently been added to the New Zealand Black Fins open training squad for surf lifesaving. This comes after his excellent performances for the junior team at the World Rescue Championships in the Netherlands last September, where he won six medals, including one gold.

Ironically, he took up surf lifesaving only because he was struggling in the pool.

"I had a rough patch in swimming," he said.

"I hadn't grown and I wasn't doing that well so I decided to join surf because it was fun. I did it for the enjoyment of getting away



Lewis Clareburt broke one record and equalled another at the New Zealand Age Group Swimming Championships in Wellington last week.

PHOTO: BW MEDIA

from the pool and catching some waves."

However, he said swimming was still his prime focus. While the Olympics are still over the horizon, Clareburt remains dedicated to his swimming, and trains 10 times a week - eight in the pool and two in the gym.

He gets up each morning at 5am and trains from 5.45am to 8am before heading to school, which Clareburt said can be hard.

"It's pretty tough sometimes, especially at the end of term when all your internals start to pack up, but my teachers help me through it. Sometimes I'm tired in class and

find it hard to concentrate, but you get used to it," he said.

Despite the success, Clareburt is kept grounded by his coach Gary Hollywood. "I want to try to keep expectations low and not put him under too much pressure," Hollywood said.

"We're not chasing gold medals

or records, it's just about trying to achieve his potential, and we've got no idea what that is."

Hollywood said Clareburt's performances have improved dramatically since he was made a carded athlete by High Performance Sport New Zealand.

"The three key things they've

been able to help us with is nutrition, strength and conditioning, and the lifestyle manager who is always available to talk with Lewis if he has any concerns. It's added a lot of value to what we've been doing."

Next week Clareburt heads to the NZ Open Championships in

Auckland, where he will face the man he took the record from, Bradlee Ashby. "I just want to see if I can go and beat him," Clareburt said.

From there, Clareburt hopes to be a part of the team heading to the Commonwealth Youth Games in the Bahamas in July.

## Main's mental toughness pays off

LAREE TAULA

St Oran's College footballer Emma Main shows just what can be achieved on the football field when passion, motivation and mental toughness are combined.

The 17-year-old, who has played in her first XI since year seven and the Upper Hutt club's women's team since she was 14, was identified in 2015 as a player of great promise and was selected for the under-17 New Zealand development team.

Just a year later she represented New Zealand at the Under-17 World Cup in Jordan.

"It was an amazing feeling to be there, and to win against the host team," said Main.

Main has been playing football since she was four. So what influenced her to start playing?

"I don't know, I guess it wasn't too girly, and my Dad wanted me to play."



Former Football Fern Sarah Gregorius, right, shares her insights with Emma Main as they prepare to play for Upper Hutt this season.

PHOTO: LAREE TAULA

**"You have to love the sport. You're not going to go far if you don't enjoy yourself while you're there."**

Emma Main

other role models had played a big part to her success.

"My Dad comes to almost every game I play in Wellington and Mum comes to as many as she can. Dad yells a lot at me from the sideline. I don't really like it at the time but afterwards I'm glad. I understand he's just giving me good advice."

She cited the important contributions of her Upper Hutt coach, Wendi Henderson, and fellow player Sarah Gregorius, both former Football Ferns.

Main believes that to be a great footballer you need both passion and motivation.

"You have to love the sport. You're not going to go far if you don't enjoy yourself while you're

there. You have to have a lot of mental strength on and off the field, but, of course, you also need the physical strength to do your part."

Emma said her family and

"I look up to people like Wendi and Sarah a lot. They help me because they know what I'm going through."

Gregorius, 29, like Main also a wide forward, only recently retired from the Football Ferns and returned to her home club of Upper Hutt for this season, which starts on Saturday. She scored 25 goals during her 82 international years for New Zealand over six years.

Gregorius started playing football at about 11 she recalls. "It was a social thing at first and I fell in love with the sport after that."

She advised Main, and other young girls, that it was important to figure out early on what you're playing for.

"Instead of waiting for external validation, make it an internal thing. Know why you're playing and who you're playing for."

When asked what made a great footballer, she said: "It's one thing to be a good player but to be a great player is hard work."

## Historic shield to make a comeback

CRICKET

Wellington's high school cricketers have extra motivation to win the Wellington qualifying round for the New Zealand Secondary Schools Cup.

The winner of next Monday's final will also claim the Heathcote Williams Shield, which has been sitting in the New Zealand Cricket Museum at the Basin Reserve for the last 30 years.

The shield was originally awarded in 1908 by the founding president of the New Zealand Cricket Council, EH Williams, and was originally played for by all schools in New Zealand.

The inaugural winners were Christchurch Boys' High School. It became a challenge shield from there, going in and out of popularity for the next 80 years before it was retired to the museum in 1987.

An initiative between Cricket Wellington, College Sport Wellington and the museum has seen it revived, with the winner of this week's competition to then defend it at every home game, along the same lines as rugby's Moascar Cup.

A set of playing conditions and rules will be drawn up over the winter, with the first challenges coming when the cricket season resumes at the end of the year.

The qualifying competition was meant to start on Saturday, but Wellington's weather delayed it until Monday.

Hutt International Boys' School, St Pat's Town, St Pat's Stream and Wellington College were all winners on the first day.

Yesterday's second day saw Stream roll Onslow for 41 before winning by eight wickets, while HIBS were 83-run winners over Town to go top of pool A.

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