

# College Sport

in association with the Massey University Journalism School

## Marco hits the mark for WC

LIAM HYSLOP

A dramatic late goal sealed Wellington College the P1 hockey title and vital momentum heading into the national tournament.

Marco Brown scored a golden goal with 40 seconds left of extra time in Friday's final against Paraparaumu College at the National Hockey Stadium. The scores were level at 1-1 after normal time and stayed that way after the end of the first period of extra time with the teams down to nine aside.

It looked as though the match was headed for a shoot-out as neither side could find a way through in the 7v7 second extra time, but Brown stepped up when needed to spark jubilant celebrations with his team-mates and their supporters.

For coach Chuni Bhikha, it was a fitting finale to the competition.

"There were times when we were in control and there were times when Pram were in control and they certainly had us worried in extra time when they had a couple of penalty corners, but we managed to ride that through."

Wellington came into the final as underdogs, having lost four times to Paraparaumu this year, including a 6-1 drubbing two weeks before the final.

But Bhikha said that scoreline was misleading, with simple errors to blame for a lot of the goals. It also meant the pressure was on Paraparaumu to perform in the final, as they came into it



Wellington College and supporters celebrate their extra-time win over Paraparaumu College.

PHOTO: MARGO BREMFORD

with an unbeaten record from the round-robin.

"They'd beaten us consistently and well and I think the pressure was on them. We were able to lift our game to that level where it was almost like we turned the tables a bit and did put the pressure back on them."

"We did a few different things

strategically, but the biggest thing for me was their composure and discipline throughout the game that got us through that second lot of extra time."

It won't be the last time Wellington meet Paraparaumu. They are set for a sixth clash of the season in pool play at next week's Rankin Cup national tournament

in Hamilton. Joining those teams in pool F will be Tauranga Boys' College and St Patrick's College, Silverstream.

"We're in a reasonably tough pool," Bhikha said.

"We played Tauranga Boys' in pre-season and lost 1-0. They're tough, aggressive side. They play in the local men's competition up

there and will be a tough nut as well."

The aim would be to make the top 16 and then take it one game at a time. They will have to play the tournament without one of their best players in Devanand Bhikha, Chuni's son, who fractured his collarbone in Friday's final. Injuries have not been uncommon for this team this season.

"Throughout the season we've had plenty of injuries with our senior players. One of our vice-captains was out for six weeks with a wrist/arm injury, and a couple of others as well."

"The team has been through a lot of adapting throughout the season and that has helped bring them together."

"They've learned really quickly how to play for each other when we're without key players and I think all of that - as much as you want your 16 all the time - ironically it's helped develop some mental toughness and character in the boys to be able to play without them and still be confident about our gameplan."

Heretaunga College and Wairarapa College will be the other teams from the Wellington competition competing at the national tournament.

At the girls' tournament in Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, St Matthew's Collegiate (Masterton), Queen Margaret College and Samuel Marsden Collegiate.

St Matthew's won the girls' P1 Wellington competition, beating Queen Margaret 1-0 in the final.

## Comeback kids are back in Town

LIAM HYSLOP

St Patrick's College Wellington's first XI was happy just to be back in premier youth football.

The team had battled away in the second-tier division one for the last two seasons, so had set their early goal as making it back to the top flight.

But with that achieved, they then went on to shock the division, winning last Wednesday's final 2-1 against two-time defending champions Hutt International Boys' School.

It was the first time since 2004 they captured the Trevor Rigby Cup, when current All White Kosta Barbarouses was in the squad as a 14-year-old.

The magnitude of the win was not lost on captain Sam Wright.

"Our goal at the start of the season was just to make the premier division because the last couple of years we have missed out, so it was pretty amazing [to win it]."

The team was swamped by fans after the final whistle, with a healthy Town crowd travelling out to the neutral venue of Petone Memorial Park last Wednesday.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime game for most of us," he said, referring to noise created by their raucous fans.

"There was a bus that went out and the atmosphere was amazing."

The game was level at 0-0 at halftime before Manyumow Achol

**"It was a once-in-a-lifetime game for most of us."**

St Pat's captain Sam Wright

opened the scoring early in the second 45 minutes.

"We got more confidence [from the goal] and scored another [to Liberato Cacace]," Wright said.

"With a few minutes to go they scored a goal to bring it to 2-1, but we managed to hold out for the win."

Town are also back in the top division for nationals, which will be played at Park Island in Napier next week.

The draw was reasonably kind to them as they avoided some of the heavyweight schools.

They have St Peter's College (Auckland), Lincoln High School and Tauranga Boys' College.

Wright said they would be focusing on their own game, with not a lot known about their opposition.

"Ideally, we'd like to initially make the round of 16 and then go from there, I guess."

They will be joined at the national tournament by Hibs, Tawa College, Wellington College and Scots College.

Meanwhile, Wellington Girls' College and Hutt Valley High School will meet in the Wellington girls' final tonight.

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