

COLLEGE SPORT



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Positive spin for netballer

NETBALL

PRACTICE made perfect for Colleen Faleafaga at the national secondary schools trials.

The St Mary's College pupil benefited from the experience of trialling the previous year.

She missed the final cut in 2014 but received a more welcome phone call last week.

The year 13 schoolgirl was among four Wellington players to be selected for the 12-member New Zealand squad, joining the Wellington East trio of Mila Reuelu-Buchanan, Marcelle Parkes and Tiana Metuarau.

"Because I trialled last year, I kind of knew what to expect," Faleafaga said. "I've also grown in confidence from last year."

Faleafaga had also ticked most of the boxes during her 2014 season.

She made the Aotearoa Maori Squad that competed against the New Zealand schools side and later in the season was named in the tournament team selected from the national secondary schools championships.

Making the New Zealand team had been her main goal for 2015. "I've always wanted to wear the black dress."

However, she had some minor injury issues at the trials and was not certain that she had done enough to be selected. "I did have some self doubts and was nervous waiting to find out. The waiting was quite stressful."

Faleafaga's selection was also a reward for effort.

There has been an increasing emphasis on fitness at top level netball and with the secondary schools trials coming early in the season, Faleafaga had had to work hard to reach the required standard.

"We got some feedback after the trials last year and I was definitely

much fitter this year. I wanted to be as fit as possible and my trainer worked out a five-week programme leading up to the trials. It took in skills and drills as well, and was not just about fitness."

Faleafaga was also told after last year's trials that she was probably too short to play in the defensive circle and started playing at wing defence more often but made the national team as a defender.

"Wing defence was a good challenge but was still quite new to me and I'm more comfortable and confident at goal defence."

Faleafaga, who first played netball as a four-year-old, is the

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Colleen Faleafaga
 St Mary's College



oldest of six children and has three younger sisters and two younger brothers.

The family now lives in Melbourne but Faleafaga, who was the only one at secondary school when the move was made, chose to stay at St Mary's and lives with her grandmother, prominent netball administrator Elaine Wi, during the school term.

She still has plenty of family support at St Mary's, with three first cousins on the roll, including Lyric Faleafaga, who is a teammate in the senior netball team.

Secondary schools coach Julie Seymour was impressed by the progress Faleafaga and Parkes had made over the past year, after both

had netball unsuccessfully in 2014.

"It was so nice that they had taken on board the feedback from last year and kept working at their game," Seymour said.

"Colleen had definitely improved and was playing at the next level. She's a lovely reader of the game, has good timing and anticipation and has worked really hard on her fitness."

"She's not tall for a defender but we haven't got too many giants in the defensive circle."

"She had also experienced the trials before. It's such a nerve-racking experience and a mental challenge as much as a physical one."

Seymour said Parkes had had "a really strong trial" at wing defence. "The Australian teams always seem to have a dominant wing attack and Marcelle has the speed to close them down."

"She's athletic and physically strong as well. The game has become more physical and players need to be able to take the knocks."

"Marcelle is also able to attack the ball and has a great training ethic."

Reuelu-Buchanan also made the team last year and showcased her skills at the trials again.

"It was good to see Mila come through again and I think the competition in the midfield was even tougher this year," Seymour said. "She was really strong against Australia last year."

Metuarau, 14, is the youngest member of the squad. "We debated taking someone so young but she was one of the standout shooters," Seymour said.

"What impressed me was her maturity on the court. She coped mentally and you wouldn't know she was a 14-year-old."

"She was very accurate and not afraid to put up shots from anywhere and has variations in her game."



Fitness was a key factor when Colleen Faleafaga made the New Zealand secondary schools netball team.
 Photo: MAARTEN HOLL/FAIRFAX NZ

BRIEFS

ROWING
Robertson in world juniors

Hayden Robertson (Onslow) will compete at the world junior rowing championships in Brazil in August. Robertson, the silver medalist in the under-18 single sculls at the Maadi Cup regatta, has been selected as a travelling reserve and will form either a double or a pair with Jack Logas (Christchurch Boys). Thomas Cummack (Wellington College) was selected for the North Island rowing team, with Hutt Valley High School cox Lucy Bird, whose father, Andrew, was an Olympic and Commonwealth Games medalist as a cox.

AFL
Ah Kuoi soars

Wellington College's Utu Ah Kuoi was among three schoolboys selected for the senior New Zealand Hawks squad which played against an AFL academy side, from Australia, during Anzac weekend. Ah Kuoi also captained a New Zealand academy side which made a short tour to Sydney last month. Ah Kuoi's younger brother, Naitoa, also went to Sydney and was a member of the national under-16 squad which played in Wellington at the weekend. Other Wellington players selected for the under-16 AFL side were Mitchell Kempster (Hutt Valley), William Kring (Silverstream), Ish Perkins (Wellington College), Connor McGeough (Silverstream), Richard Faimalo (Porirua), Zac Vaughan (Hutt Valley), Shaun Hanning (Silverstream), and Sam Green (Wellington College).

JUDO
Double gold

Qona Christie (Wellington High) picked up three medals, including two golds, at the Oceania judo championships in Noumea. Christie, 16, won gold in the cadet women's under-52kg and also won a team gold. Alex Rivett (Onslow) earned a silver and bronze in the cadet division.

HOCKEY
First round

Hutt International drew 2-2 with the 2014 champions Wairarapa College in the first week of the boys' premier-one hockey competition. Wellington College beat Silverstream 6-0 and Scots had a 5-0 victory over Paraparau, with Rathkeale defeating Hutt Valley 3-0.

BASKETBALL
Court time

Four school students gained court time when the Capital Flyers beat the Taranaki Thunder in the national women's basketball championships at the weekend. The Flyers won 80-73, after the lead changed 14 times, to share the championship lead, with a 5-1 record. Tegan Graham (Wellington Girls') was in the starting five and Shalae Salmon (Wellington Girls'), Lyric Dixon (Wellington Girls') and Sarah Penese (St Mary's) all played for at least 14 minutes.

FOOTBALL
Grading pools

The first week of the premier-one grading rounds will be played on Saturday. Hutt Valley, Scots, Rongotai, Silverstream, Onslow and St Pat's Town will make up one pool, with Wellington College, Paraparau, Tawa, Wellington High, Kapiti and Hutt International in the other. The first three from each pool will contest the premier-one competition.

SQUASH
Junior open

Scott Galloway (Hutt Valley) will be the top seed in the boys' division at the Wellington junior open this weekend. It is also a selection tournament for the girls' world junior championship team, with Ellie Epke and Abbie Palmer the girls' top seeds.

Mixed fortunes for Town first XV

RUGBY

IT HAD BEEN a good news, bad news month for the St Pat's Town first XV.

The good news has been pre-season wins against St Bede's and Lindisfarne but less welcome was the broken leg suffered by experienced first-choice halfback Zac Donaldson.

Donaldson was injured late in the game against St Bede's. His leg will be in a cast for six to eight weeks and he could be out for the season.

Donaldson, whose father Glenn coaches the first XV, would have had a key role with the team and was also the goal kicker.

"It is a bit of a setback but we do have some cover," Glenn Donaldson said.

Willie Sauea, who made the Hurricanes under-16 tournament team last year, will play at half-back in the opening round of the First XV Festival this weekend, while Thomas Noble-Campbell filled the role against Lindisfarne.

Town are also likely to be without second five-eighth Korvarn Togiatama for the season, with a shoulder injury, and flanker Jack Nelson-Murray and centre Billy Proctor will be late starters because of injury.

Nelson-Murray will make a cameo appearance this weekend but Proctor is not expected to be fully fit till mid-June.

However, Town have plenty of experience on call and have backs - from 18 - 10 forwards and eight backs - from the squad that lost to national champions Scots College in the Wellington Premier-one semifinals last year.

Town had an early pre-season



Big prop Ben Aumua-Peseta will be a powerful presence in the St Pat's Town pack this year.
 Photo: KEVIN STENT/FAIRFAX NZ

win over Rathkeale, before beating St Bede's 29-22 and recording a convincing 20-12 over Lindisfarne last weekend. Town were up 20-0 before Lindisfarne scored two tries in the final quarter.

Town, St Pat's Silverstream and Wellington College will take part in the now annual First XV Festival for the next three weekends and will be joined by Scots for the final week, with Feilding High School replacing Scots in the first two rounds.

The first round will be played at Napier Boys, with Town meeting Gisborne Boys, Silverstream against Hastings Boys and Wellington College taking on the hosts.

The second round will be in Palmerston North, with the third-round games, on May 16, at the

Petone Recreation Ground.

Wellington College had an indifferent season last year, by their lofty standards, missing a place in the premier-one final for just the second time in 16 years.

They have lost pre-season fixtures against Tu Toa and Feilding this year and lost again at the weekend but produced a more encouraging performance when going down 32-24 against Hastings Boys, who are expected to have a good season.

"We are still in the trialling process and haven't yet been able to put our top team out," Wellington College coach Lincoln Rawles said. "We think there is plenty of talent there and they are going to get better."

"Hastings were pretty physical and have got some power but our

boys showed a lot of character."

Wellington will be led by experienced halfback Kemara Hauiti-Parapara, who is in his fourth year in the first XV squad. "He's going to be a very important cog," Rawles said.

"Last year we had a young and inexperienced pack and this year we lack experience in the back-line."

Wairarapa College, premier-two winners in 2013 and runners-up last year, are able to earn promotion to premier one this year, for the first time.

The grading games to find the four other premier-one teams will be held over the next three weekends, with Wairarapa and Bishop Viard in the same pool as St Bernard's, who might face a battle to remain in the top grade.

String of seconds has silver lining

ATHLETICS

YASHEEK ROSARIO must sometimes feel that he is running in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

The St Pat's Town sprinter is exceptionally quick but has barely won a race all summer.

The good news is that he is ranked among the top-four 100m runners in New Zealand for the youth (under-18) division and is the second-fastest 15-year-old in the country.

The bad news is that Nick Smith, the top-ranked youth sprinter, is the same age as Rosario and also lives in Wellington.

Which means that, although Rosario has lowered his best 100m time to an impressive 11.13 seconds, his reward has been an array of silver medals.

He was the runner-up to Smith in the 100m at the national secondary schools championships, the national under-18 final and the North Island secondary schools championships, and twice chased him home at the McEvedy Shield meeting.

"It did get a bit frustrating at times but I guess it also gives me more motivation," Rosario said.

Rosario rated his second in the youth 100m at the national track and field championships, in Wellington in March, as his best performance of the season. He recorded 11.13sec and

'It did get a bit frustrating at times but I guess it also gives me more motivation.'

Yasheek Rosario, about coming runner-up



relegated the talented Christchurch sprinter Jarvis Hansen to third. "I started a bit slowly but had a pretty good finish."

Rosario was also affected by a groin strain early in the season. "It got a bit frustrating, so I kept running on it and it took a while to come right."

"I thought I got quite a bit better towards the end of the season."

Rosario, who is coached by older brother Yarride, is now getting into his winter training, where the emphasis will be on improving his strength. "There will be gym work and running up steps and sand dunes."

His targets for the next track season will be to go under 11sec for the 100m and to record a top-three finish in the senior division at the national secondary schools championships.

He plans to do more work on the 200m.

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