

COLLEGE SPORT



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'Hardest decision I've ever had to make'

NETBALL

IT WAS the decision Marcelle Parkes hoped to avoid. The multi-talented athlete had to choose between softball and netball after her attempt to represent New Zealand at both sports this year foundered at first base. The Wellington East year 13 was selected for the Junior White Sox team to compete at the junior world softball championships and is also trialling for the New Zealand secondary schools netball team. However, a condition of being in the Junior White Sox, who will contest the world championships in Oklahoma City in August, was that from April 1, the players would not be allowed to play a winter sport. Parkes asked for dispensation to attend the national netball trials next week, but was turned down.

"I was hoping that I would be able to attend the netball trials [without affecting her softball prospects] because I might not make the [netball] team anyway. "I also think netball has really helped my softball." Faced with having to make a choice, she decided to go with netball this winter and has withdrawn from the Junior White Sox. "I was gutted," she said. "I had been working towards trying to make both teams for two or three years and it was going to be a great trip [with the Junior White Sox]. "It's been the hardest decision I've ever had to make. "Netball is definitely the harder road but I decided it's the one for me. I like a challenge and I love netball." Junior White Sox head coach Kevin Gettins sympathised with Parkes' dilemma but said softball



Marcelle Parkes had to make a choice between playing for the Junior White Sox at the world junior softball championships and seeking a spot in the national secondary schools netball team. Photo: ROSS GIBLIN/FAIRFAX NZ

and not engaged," he said. "We settled on a date by working backwards in terms of rehab for the most common injuries. "Fatigue is also an issue [when playing more than one sport]. Though these girls are very fit, they are only 16 or 17 and it can be quite draining mentally. "Would we have made similar conditions if it was not a world championship year? Probably not. But it is the world champs and we want to get all our ducks in a line. "But Marcelle is a great kid and she won't carry any baggage because of her decision." Ironically, Parkes, who will continue to play softball next summer, had to make her choice shortly after being named MVP at the national secondary schools softball tournament. "I wanted to finish off with a bang, before I made my decision, and thought that maybe they [New

Zealand Softball] would change their mind," she said. Meanwhile, Parkes is happy with her form on the netball court. "We [East] haven't played a lot of games but I've been training full on every day. I think my form is really good at the moment and I'm definitely the fittest I've ever been." Parkes, who also trialled for the national secondary schools team last year, has played mainly at goal defence at school level but expects to be tried at wing defence and centre at the trials. "I'm really liking wing defence at the moment and learning a lot more about the position. I've been working on wing defence with my mentor, Sandra Edge, and she has been amazing. She's had a huge influence on me. "I have to go to the trials confident and not doubt myself. "It's my last year and I really

want to make it." Five Wellington players were among the 24 selected to trial for the secondary schools netball side, the others being Colleen Faleafale, (St Mary's) and Parkes' East teammates Mila Reuelu-Buchanan, who made the team last year, Tiana Metuarau, and Tori Watt. Meanwhile, East will meet Newlands College in a televised match at the TSB Arena next Monday, in the second round of the college netball knockout competition. Newlands recorded a creditable 39-25 win over Palmerston North Girls' in the opening round and East had a 30-18 victory over old rivals St Mary's. Wellington Girls' earned a second round bye by beating lower North Island top seeds Manukura 38-26 in the first round and will play the winners of the East-Newlands clash in the third round.

Extra training pays dividends

KAYAKING

TESS ALLEN is paddling to Portugal. The Kapiti College athlete has forced her way into the New Zealand team to compete at the world junior canoe sprint championships in Portugal in July. Allen, 16, missed selection for a team that competed at a leadup competition in Sydney in February but impressive efforts at the national championships and the final trials earned her selection in the squad of six junior women. "It's always been a dream and a goal to represent New Zealand and I'm quite excited," Allen said. "It's my first year in the under-18 grade and I had another year to make the team. I thought I was more likely to make it next year - but I'm not complaining." Allen thought her chances this year might have gone when she didn't make the team to go to Australia. "The team was selected in December and missing out made me work harder. "I put in a lot of yards over the summer and did much better than I expected at the nationals." The year 12 student picked up five medals, including gold in the K4 200m and 500m, which also doubled as Oceania titles, and bronze in the K1 500m and 5km. "I wasn't expecting to medal in the individual events." The New Zealand squad will have three camps at Lake Karapiro in the leadup to the world championships and will spend five weeks in Europe. They will have three weeks training and competing in Hungary before heading to the world event at Montemar-o-Velho, in Portugal. Allen took up kayaking when

she was about 12, following older brother Jake into the sport. Initially, it was seen as assisting her surf lifesaving but has become Allen's priority since she was picked up three K1 titles in the under-16 grade at the 2014 national championships. She still competes in surf lifesaving, for the Paekakariki club, and made the finals in the under-19 ironwoman and ski race at the national championships last month. She has also played basketball and rugby but that stopped after she suffered severe concussion at a rugby sevens tournament in March last year. She had a week in hospital and was off school for two months. "It was a pretty bad concussion and took a long time [to come right]. It even affected my balance when I started kayaking again." Filling in time over the summer was not a problem for Allen, who was training six days a week for kayaking and also fitting in three training sessions for surf lifesaving. She lives in Raumati South and morning training sessions at the Porirua inlet meant she had to be up shortly after 5am. "I don't have time for a social life but I get to see my friends at school and a lot of my friends are also kayakers." Allen credits her coach, Mark Watson, for much of her progress. "He has had a big impact on my career. "We don't spend as much time training as some clubs but we do a lot of work on our technique and getting as much power as possible in our stroke and the results are proving that works for us. "He [Watson] also focuses a lot on how we should run the races."



St Pat's Silverstream paddler and first XV lock Tone Fauolo competing in the under-19 W1 250m at the waka ama championships.

Stream aim to leave rivals in their wake

RUGBY, WAKA AMA

MEMBERS of the St Pat's Silverstream first XV squad have already been making waves this year. The paddlers in the Silverstream W6 crew who won the under-19 250m sprint at the national waka ama secondary schools championships were all using waka ama and dragon boating as part of their preparation for the rugby season. Daniel Fiso, Tone Fauolo, Herewini Ammunson, Isaac Fa'alofo, Ivan Fepuleai and Tarquinn Alatipi were also members of the Silverstream dragon boating team, which won a fifth title at the Wellington dragon boat festival. Lock Faulolo and prop Fepuleai are two of the four forwards returning from Silverstream's 2014 rugby squad and Alatipi, who led the waka ama team, is expected to play a prominent role in the backline. Alatipi, who is likely to play at

second five-eighth, is better known for his rugby league exploits. He was a standout performer for the Wellington Orcas at under-17 level last year and was named the Orcas' junior player of the year. "He's keen to play for us this year and could be a special player," first XV coach Rob Ackerman said. The Silverstream XV suffered their only defeat in the premier one grade last year when Scots converted a last-minute penalty to win the final 21-18. The Silverstream squad then had to watch from afar as Scots went on to share the national secondary schools title and qualify for the Sanix tournament in Japan. Silverstream, who have contested the past four premier-one finals, have lost the bulk of their 2014 squad but seven have returned and should provide the nucleus of another strong team. Their pre-season programme has begun on a promising note, with wins over Tu Toa - who beat

Wellington College last weekend - and Wairarapa College, though a bigger challenge lies ahead, with a game against Auckland's St Kentigern College on Saturday week. Centre Losi Filippo, who made the New Zealand Barbarians side last year, will lead the Silverstream XV, with hooker Asafo Aumua vice-captain. "Losi is in a good space and has matured into a very focused young man and Asafo has been in outstanding form," Ackerman said. The Silverstream crew broke the previous race record when winning the W6 250m in 53.09 seconds at the waka ama championships at Rotorua's Blue Lake. It was a Wellington quinella with Tawa College runners-up and also inside the previous record. "We were very proud of their efforts," Silverstream manager Bjorn Agnew said. "With so many paddlers involved, they did very well to have the best six. "The 250m seems to be regarded as the pinnacle event, as it

'But we also did a lot of training off the water and our boys were used to training hard and had a good attitude to the work.' Bjorn Agnew Silverstream manager

is a straight line sprint and a battle of the strongest. "We selected what we considered were our top six paddlers but I worked out that we had had only seven training sessions in a waka ama and that's not really enough," Agnew said. "The waka ama training had to be fitted in with the dragon boat training and the skills are not as transferable as you might think. "They have to paddle on both

sides in waka ama and our boys aren't as efficient [as most of their rivals] at bringing the paddle over. "But we also did a lot of training off the water and our boys were used to training hard and had a good attitude to the work. "It's great preparation for the likes of rugby and fantastic for developing strength in the shoulders and back." Waka ama is growing in popularity and 95 schools and more than 1450 paddlers were involved at the nationals. "Numbers are increasing every year and a lot of schools are investing in infrastructure now," Agnew said. Wellington schools provided four of the eight finalists in the boys' under-19 W6 250m, with Tawa, who had two crews in the final, and Wellington College also represented. Tawa were rewarded with gold in the under-19 mixed W12, while Mana College's Marama Elkington took the girls' under-19 250m W1 title.



Kapiti College's Tess Allen will spend five weeks in Europe this winter, while representing New Zealand in kayaking.

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