

COLLEGE SPORT



with **Tim Barton**
email: tim.barton@dompost.co.nz
(04) 474 0123



Twins Tegan (Wellington Girls') and Shay Graham (Onslow College) will be representing different schools in the premier one basketball finals on Friday.
Photo: KEVIN STENT/FAIRFAX NZ

Graham twins chase basketball double

BASKETBALL

THIS would be a family double with a difference. Twins Shay and Tegan Graham have a good chance to win a Wellington basketball premierships this week, but with different schools. Shay is the leading scorer for the Onslow team that will meet Newlands in the boys' final on Friday night and Tegan has topped the scoring for the Wellington Girls' side that will be favoured to beat St Mary's in the Sharp Cup final.

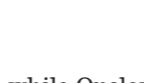
co-ed schools to make the boys' final, the only other recent instance being when Mana College beat Hutt Valley in 2010. The Graham twins, who inherited their love of basketball from their father, Steve, were born in the United States but moved to New Zealand when they were 2. The pair are academically able and there is a chance that they could both be back in the US next year, on college basketball scholarships. Tegan was a Junior Tall Fern last year and has attracted interest from several universities. Shay is also looking at his options. "I'm looking at what's out there," Shay said. "It would be really cool to get to the states for university. It's a matter of whether they want me and I'm good enough to go. "My academic work is a big thing for me. I'm keen to study engineering and leaning towards civil engineering." Shay's sporting interests are

not confined to basketball. He has made a mark as a rower and played rugby for the Onslow First XV this year. He was selected for the North Island under-18 team rowing team last year, has been a medallist at the Maadi Cup regatta and won a North Island title. His rowing prowess attracted interest from Ivy League universities in the US but he decided that his heart lay with basketball. "I decided I was a lot more passionate about basketball and that as a rower my commitment was to the people in my crew, as much as the sport. "It was hard to maintain that commitment after the school rowing ended. "I was talking to universities [about rowing] but they all said I needed a reasonably significant improvement in my erg time, and that's not easy to do. "But I'm glad I did four years as a rower. It's a tough sport but it

taught me a lot and improved my basketball game so much. "You learnt to work hard and I was so much fitter in the pre-season." Graham had not played rugby for a couple of seasons but decided to return, in his final year at school, and played at lock for the First XV, in premier three. "It was a lot of fun and we had a good season, losing our semifinal by one point." The Onslow basketball squad also includes Hayden Robertson, who has missed much of the season because of his commitments to the New Zealand rowing team that competed at the world junior championships. It would have been difficult to predict a Newlands-Onslow final leading into last weekend's semifinals, which saw the two top qualifiers beaten in overtime. Newlands, who had lost six of their 10 previous games, edged out top qualifiers Hutt Valley 107-106, with less than a second remaining,

'I decided I was a lot more passionate about basketball and that as a rower my commitment was to the people in my crew, as much as the sport. It was hard to maintain that commitment after the school rowing ended.'

Shay Graham



while Onslow beat Wellington College 89-82. Newlands are now seeking another form reversal, after a 97-58 loss against Onslow on July 24 and

losing 103-65 on August 7. "We have beaten them [Newlands] three times this year but they have three really good players and it will be a tough game if we can't shut them down," Shay Graham said. "Zyrus Grace shot some crazy clutch three-pointers against Hutt Valley and Danan Swanson is a good shooter. We also need to contain Corey Le'aupepe. He's a big centre and very aggressive. If we can keep the ball out of his hands, we should be a good chance. "We have got a very deep bench and a lot of good players." Onslow have seven year 13 players in a squad of 12 and their starting lineup usually comprises Graham, skipper Matt Hawke, Jordan Feunati, Luke Kelman and Lachlan Freear, with Thomas Peoples and Conon Franklin also playing significant roles. Graham scored 233 points in the round-robin games, just five fewer than New Zealand under-16 rep Tegan Samu (Scots), who

FINAL DETAILS

Friday, ASB Centre
8pm Wellington Girls' v St Mary's
8pm Onslow v Newlands

topped the premier scoring table. Hawke was sixth on the list with 178 points. The win over Hutt Valley was a special result for Danan Swanson. The Newlands skipper was playing his 50th game for the team, took his points tally for the school to over 1000 and sank the winning basket. "It was an amazing game and we had a good shooting night, with 12 three-pointers," Newlands coach Landyn Swanson said. "I felt for Hutt Valley, who led by about 19 points at one stage. "But we kept hustling in defence and the end of the match was like a movie, after we had been down by four points with about three seconds left."

Town, Scots face off again

RUGBY

SAME teams, same venue, different prize. St Pat's Town and Scots College will meet in the Hurricanes schools final on Saturday, less than three weeks after contesting the Wellington premier one final. The winner this weekend will earn a spot in the national top four, a relatively rare achievement for a Wellington school. Scots were the 2014 joint national champions but only four Wellington teams have made the national top four in the past 15 years and Town will be making their first appearance in a Hurricanes final.



St Pat's Town loose forward Kevin Fauatea on the burst against Scots, with Connor Fitzsimons in support, in the Wellington premier one final.
Photo: ROSS GIBLIN/FAIRFAX NZ

HURRICANES FINAL

St Pat's Town v Scots
Porirua Park
Saturday, 1pm

front row, in the last two games. "He [Fidow] did a great job again [against Gisborne] but took a bit of a knock and is struggling at the moment," Tiatia said. Thomas and Peter Umaga-Jensen teamed up in midfield against Gisborne, with Connor Garden-Bachop, who missed much of the season with a shoulder injury, at fullback.

"Peter and Thomas played a major part in our revival and Connor produced one of his best games of the season. He played exceptionally well." The Scots squad is also scheduled to back up on Monday in the annual quadrangular tournament with St Kentigern, Lindisfarne and St Andrew's. The Moascar Cup will be at stake when Scots play St Andrew's on the first day, as the match has been designated the challenge played against a team from outside the Hurricanes region. St Andrew's were semifinalists in the Crusaders competition but also have a game on Saturday, against South Otago High School, in the South Island final of the Co-ed cup. Bishop Viard, who took the Wellington premier two title last weekend, with a 27-24 win over St Bernard's, play Feilding High School in the Hurricanes Co-ed Cup final, in Palmerston North on Saturday. Aotea beat Wainuiomata 30-29 in the premier one girls final last week.

Wellington Girls' combining talents

NETBALL/BASKETBALL

WELLINGTON GIRLS' will mix 'n' match in Palmerston North next week. Three players - Caitlin Grice, Lyric Dixon and Tegan Graham - will play for both the netball and basketball teams at the lower North Island tournaments. The netball tournament begins on Monday and there will be some overlaps once the basketball begins on Wednesday. The respective coaches, Emma Weenink (netball) and Steve Graham (basketball), have already done a lot of homework on how the players can be split, to give the two teams the best chance of qualifying for the national tournaments. They also want to show that it is possible to play both games at a good level while at school. "We want to challenge the opinion that girls have to specialise early," Weenink said. "We want to get the best results

for both teams and also ensure that the week is still really enjoyable for all the players. "Both teams want to qualify for the nationals and Tegan, Caitlin and Lyric are large contributors to both teams. "We have been planning for this for some time and have tried to make sure that the players are really fit, eating the right food and sleeping well. "There is a risk [that it won't work out] but the girls are fit and healthy and there have been no overuse injuries," Weenink said. Grice and Graham also played in both tournaments last year, taking part in the first three days of the netball, in Hastings, before going to New Plymouth for the basketball, but can play a bigger role this year, with both tournaments in the same city. In addition, there will not be a clash if both teams qualify for the national tournaments, as they will be held in separate weeks. The netball team showed they

were in good shape with a 38-28 win over top qualifiers Wellington East in the final of the Wellington regional tournament on Monday night. That reversed the result of their round-robin clash a fortnight earlier, when East won 32-29. "It was a fantastic win and great to see all the combinations working," Weenink said. The one injury concern from Monday's game was a rolled ankle suffered by wing attack Fran Wotton. Wellington Girls' also reached the final of the national knockout tournament in May, before going down to a powerful Mt Albert Grammar side. However, the squad will know there is no guarantee that they will claim one of the five qualifying spots for the nationals in Palmerston North. Wellington Girls' also claimed the Wellington regional title last year but missed out on the nationals when beaten 27-25 by East in the playoff for fifth at the lower North Island tournament.

East went on to finish fourth at the nationals, while St Mary's (7th) and Newlands (14th) also qualified. East and St Mary's, in particular, will be strong contenders again next week, though the lower North Island tournament has become increasingly competitive. Meanwhile, the Wellington Girls' basketball team will contest the Wellington premier one final for the fifth successive year when they meet St Mary's on Friday. Both teams had comfortable semifinal wins, Wellington Girls' beating Hutt Valley 86-45 and St Mary's defeating Newlands 73-49. Wellington Girls' have retained all the key players from the squad that finished second at the nationals last year and will be firm favourites against a talented but young St Mary's team. St Mary's beat Wellington Girls' by one goal in June but Wellington Girls' reversed that result with a 73-43 victory in their top-four game this month.

HIBS face testing opening day at nationals

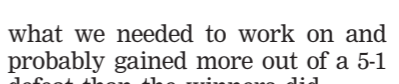
FOOTBALL

WELLINGTON football champions Hutt International will get an early test of their worth on the national stage on Monday. HIBS will meet defending titleholders Sacred Heart, from Auckland, on the opening day of the national secondary schools championships in Nelson. Sacred Heart lead the premier one grade in Auckland this year, with just one loss from 13 games. HIBS and Wellington College are the two Wellington teams in the top 16 at the nationals, with

Hutt Valley, Scots and Rongotai in the second 16. Wellington College are in the same pool as Mt Albert Grammar, Hamilton Boys' and Napier Boys', while Nelson College and New Plymouth Boys' are the others in a testing pool for HIBS. HIBS notched their first Wellington football premiership with a 3-1 win over Wellington College last week, less than a fortnight after Wellington had won their round-robin clash 5-1. "We had learnt a lot from the previous game," HIBS coach Brendan McIntyre said. "We knew

'Our boys stuck to the game plan.'

Brendan McIntyre



what we needed to work on and probably gained more out of a 5-1 defeat than the winners did. "Our boys stuck to the game plan in the final and put the opposition under pressure. "They [HIBS] are a talented side but their real strength is their team spirit and the way they work

for each other." The standout players for HIBS had included centre back Callum Martin and key midfielder Logan Archer, while Jack Miller and Ben Sears had tested the Wellington defence. "Callum was excellent and Jack worked tirelessly and was a real thorn in their side," McIntyre said. St Mary's also recorded a first premiership when beating Hutt Valley in a penalty shootout in the girls premier one final. St Mary's scored two late goals, after being down 2-0, to take the game to penalties.

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