

COLLEGE SPORT



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A man for all seasons

FOOTBALL

BEN SEARS is proving to be a man for all seasons.

Sears has been a substantial contributor to Hutt International's cricket team and is now doing his bit for the football first XI.

HIBS have a perfect record after the first round of premier youth football, gaining a significant buffer over their rivals.

They have conceded just three goals over five games and are on 15 points, five clear of Wellington College, who have had three wins and a draw, with Hutt Valley and Scots on six points.

Sears has been the team's leading scorer, with four goals, including a vital strike in the 1-0 win over Wellington College.

"Ben has been going really well," HIBS coach Brendan McIntyre said.

"He's quite a lanky kid and has an enormous stride."

McIntyre described the goal against Wellington College as "a beauty, from about 20 yards," but Sears did his best to deflect any uncredited credit.

"It was from outside the box but was probably a fluke and there was a lot of luck."

Sears also said playing outside team-mate Logan Archer in midfield made his job easier.

"Logan is probably the dominant player in the competition."

"Macca [McIntyre] also encourages me to get forward into the box and try to finish off but most of my goals have been tap-ins."

Cricket has long been Sears' No 1 sport – "I've always loved it" – but he enjoys football.

"I gave it up for a couple of years, to concentrate on cricket, and played a season of rugby as a year nine. But I missed it [football] and took it up again."

HIBS had never beaten Wellington College at football till last month and their first XI had failed to qualify for the top grade in three of the previous four years.

However, they finished third in the premier competition last year and their early results this winter, which have also meant they are likely to gain a place in the top 16 at the national championships, have raised expectations.

"We want to win the league now, that's the goal," Sears said.

"Macca is a really good coach and has lifted our confidence."

Sears, who is the sports captain at HIBS, also hopes that the cricket team can hit a couple of significant targets in the fourth term.

HIBS will play St Pat's Town in the regional Gillette Cup final and are seeking a third win in the

'I was quite small for a while and couldn't hit it [the ball] off the block. Getting a bit bigger has also helped my bowling and I have changed my action; it's less spaghetti-like now.'

Ben Sears



HIBS sports captain Ben Sears is making a significant impact for his school across two sporting codes.

Photo: ROSS GIBLIN/FAIRFAX NZ

premier one-day competition.

Sears, whose father, Michael, took 75 wickets for Wellington as an opening bowler, is the fastest bowler in the premier one competition and also opens the batting for HIBS and top scored, with 87, when HIBS beat Silverstream in the one-day final last year.

He has been the third highest scorer in the competition this year, behind team-mate Troy Johnson, and only two bowlers took more wickets at the 2014 national Gillette tournament.

"We have got an awesome [cricket] environment at HIBS, with Mark Borthwick and Paul

Brennan, and it's a lot of fun."

Sears, who bowls with real pace, has always shown promise as a cricketer but has begun to fulfil his potential as he grew bigger. "I was quite small for a while and couldn't hit it [the ball] off the block. Getting a bit bigger has also helped my bowling and I have changed my action; it's less spaghetti-like now."

Sears, 17, plans to continue with cricket, and probably football, after he leaves school. An excellence-level student, he will attend Victoria University next year.

Hutt International's impressive

start to the football competition means that two more wins – six points – over the final round would take them close to a spot in the final and seven points should make them safe.

However, the competition has been tighter than the points table might suggest. HIBS beat Kapiti 5-1 last weekend but won three of their games by a single goal.

Scots, who beat Hutt Valley 1-0 last weekend, are in fourth place but have had three draws and their only loss has been against HIBS.

"There are a lot of good teams in the competition and I just hope

we don't lose momentum over the break," McIntyre said. "But the players work hard for each other and that goes a long way."

McIntyre also praised his defensive line, which comprises skipper Callum Martin, at centre back, Alex Keown, brothers Josh and Mathew Springgay and goalkeeper Andy Heaps.

The second round begins on July 18, with HIBS taking on Rongotai while Wellington College and Hutt Valley clash.

Defending champions Hutt Valley lead the girls' premier competition, ahead of Wellington Girls', East and St Mary's.

Wellington College bounce back after disappointing final

RUGBY

WELLINGTON COLLEGE ensured that they finished a testing week on a good note when beating Rongotai College last weekend.

Wellington were playing their fourth game in eight days when recording a 39-24 victory in the traditional match.

It was an important boost for Wellington, as their next premier one game will also be against Rongotai, in a quarterfinal match

on July 25.

Wellington have been in the rare position of losing more matches than they have won this year but their effort against Rongotai was a sign that the team might have turned a corner.

They also deserved a credit for bouncing back after the disappointment of losing the Quad final three days earlier.

Wellington, who had not lost a Quad match since 2002, were beaten 6-3 by Nelson College.

However, Rongotai might be a

more formidable rival at home when they meet Wellington in the quarterfinal.

Rongotai had also had a tough game the previous Wednesday, when going down 22-15 in the traditional match with St Pat's Silverstream.

"We gave it everything we had against Silverstream and that game was played at a very fast pace," Rongotai coach Dave Meaclem said.

"We can't use that as an excuse for our Saturday performance, be-

cause Wellington had had a tough week too.

"But the Silverstream game took a lot out of our players and that was obvious on Saturday."

"We didn't play well and I don't think we will play as badly next time."

Though beaten by Silverstream, Meaclem was thrilled with Rongotai's effort in the midweek match.

"It was an amazing game and played at a frantic pace."

"Both teams contributed and it

was a real traditional, in every sense of the word. I think it was one of the best games of footy I've seen at college level."

"Silverstream did enough to win and though we were disappointed on Saturday, we have achieved one of our targets by getting a home quarterfinal."

Denny To'o, who has excelled for Rongotai at centre this year, will now switch his attention to athletics and will represent the Cook Islands, in the discus and shot put, at the World Youth

Games in Colombia this month.

The Rongotai pack has been led by loose forward and skipper Ezra Seiuli and Meaclem has been impressed by the form of loose head prop Tobias Makisi and year 12 lock William Heather.

Scots are assured of top spot on the premier one table at the end of round robin play but second place will depend on the result of the Silverstream-St Pat's Town traditional on July 22.

The two top placegetters will bypass the quarterfinal round.

Wellington to field solid under-17 squad

NETBALL

NATIONAL representatives Colleen Faleafaga and Mila Reuelu-Buchanan will spearhead the Wellington under-17 netball squad for the national championships, which begin in Mt Maunganui on Monday.

Both Reuelu-Buchanan and Faleafaga made the New Zealand secondary schools side this year, with Reuelu-Buchanan, who was also selected in 2014, the vice-captain.

They will be key performers for Wellington next week, though both players have had a heavy schedule and Reuelu-Buchanan has some injury concerns.

"Colleen is playing well but has had a lot of netball lately and Mila is carrying a couple of niggling injuries," coach Pelesa Semu said.

"Mila has been very good with her recovery and rehab work but we will have to manage her as we go."

The under-17 tournament is based on netball centres rather than provinces and 38 teams will take part, spread over eight sections, with Wellington, Hutt



New Zealand secondary schools representative Mila Reuelu-Buchanan will have a key role for Wellington at the national under-17 netball championships next week.
 Photo: MAARTEN HOLL/FAIRFAX NZ

'I'm excited about our team, though it hasn't been an ideal buildup, with a lot of chopping and changing because of injuries – but that's the nature of sport.'

Coach Pelesa Semu

successful in 2013. "I don't know much about the other teams but traditionally the Auckland teams are hard to beat and Christchurch have quite a big catchment," Semu said.

"But I'm excited about our team, though it hasn't been an ideal buildup, with a lot of chopping and changing because of injuries – but that's the nature of sport."

Experienced defender Tori Watt and Daphne Martinez were early withdrawals through injury

THE SQUADS

Wellington: Abby Collier (Wellington Girls'), Aliyah De La Mare (Wellington Girls'), Charlie Vailini (Upper Hutt), Colleen Faleafaga (St Mary's), Danielle Tafili (Sacred Heart), Eden Anderson (Newlands), Francesa Wotton (Wellington Girls'), Hine Apanui-Barr (Wellington Girls'), Mila Reuelu-Buchanan (Wellington East), Milan Lefaoseu (St Mary's), Ruby Stirling (Tawa).

Hutt Valley: Alicia Clegg (Heretaunga), Maddy Schrijvers (Hutt Valley), Nikki Piripi (Sacred Heart), Terese Toman-Wright (Sacred Heart), Grace Wilson (St Oran's), Rachel Jina (St Oran's), Keegan Sercombe (St Oran's), Justyce Harper (St Oran's), Abbey Russell (St Mary's), Natasha Ryan (Upper Hutt), Drew Brooking (Upper Hutt), Jasmyn Pamatautau (St Mary's).

Kapi Mana: Azaria Felagai (Aotea), Hetaomi Edwards (Bishop Viard), K-ci Felivai (Newlands), Madison McCleary (Aotea), Meleahina Kilimo-Lapana (Aotea), Hinemiri Tohiariki (Aotea), Kristina Phouphayly (Aotea), Sarah Talbot (Aotea), Cheynie Sisson (Aotea), Tyra Misky (Tawa), Allyson Tone (Bishop Viard), Parerima Wiki-Cummings (Tawa).

Kapiti: Kate Wagg (Kapiti College), Renee Marshall (Paraparaumu), Breahe McKay (Kapiti), Pania Mahu (Kapiti), Chenyee Law (Paraparaumu), Dana Jayne Mills-Albert (St Mary's), Maia Hall (Kapiti), Julia Law (Kapiti), Emily Malaulau (Kapiti), Ailish Akavi (Paraparaumu).

and have been joined by Lyric Faleafaga, who has a fractured wrist.

There will still be plenty of competition for the starting positions though Danielle Tafili has formed a good partnership with Colleen Faleafaga in the defensive circle and Semu has been impressed by the progress made at wing defence by Hine Apanui-Barr, who was added to the squad

when Martinez was injured.

Hutt Valley will be led by Alicia Clegg who usually plays as a defender but will be used at wing defence or centre next week.

"She's very talented," coach Barbara Bialy said.

"We have got a pretty versatile squad but haven't been able to fit in many training sessions around their club and school commitments," Bialy added.

Onslow hooping along

BASKETBALL

ONSLOW basketball coach Craig Freear wants his team to fly under the radar but his players are not making it easy.

Onslow, who failed to make the top four in the Pohlen Cup last year, have lost just one of their first six games in the boys' premier competition this year.

They share the top of the table with Hutt Valley High School, making it difficult to deflect claims that they are genuine title contenders.

"We have been trying to stay under the radar but have been quietly pleased with our progress," Freear said. "We are where we were hoping to be."

Onslow, who last won the Wellington premierships in 1999, finished sixth last year and were fifth in 2013.

The 2015 team is not replete with representative stars but has a strong core of year 13 players, the bulk of whom have been playing together for four or five years.

"Most of the team is back from last year, when they surprised themselves by qualifying for the nationals, and they gel well as a team," Freear said.

"One of our strengths is that we probably have a deeper bench than most of the other teams."

A few of the Onslow squad are also playing rugby this winter and both Shay Graham and Hayden Robertson are runner-ups.

Robertson, the quality up in the under-18 single sculls at the Maadi Cup regatta, will miss much of the basketball competition as he is at Lake Karapiro for a six-week training camp, before heading to Brazil for the world junior rowing championships.

Graham, a twin of Junior Tall Fern Tegan Graham, has been a North Island rowing representative but is equally at home on the basketball court.

Shay, who has been in the Onslow squad since year 9, has been the team's leading scorer, and the second-highest in the competition, with 154 points. "He [Graham] is a very good athlete and incredibly fit," Freear said. "He usually plays as a two or a three but he can play anywhere really."

Captain Matt Hawke has been another key contributor for Onslow and has scored 113 points while Jordan Fearnati, year 11 Luke Kelman and Lachlan Freear, who is around 2m tall, usually complete the starting five.

"But we can vary them and we do have some depth on the bench," Freear said.

BRIEFS

BADMINTON

Senior champs

Hutt Valley High School's Lik De Chun has won the Wellington senior boys badminton singles, beating Wei-Ming Lim (St Bernard's) 42-26. Onslow College's Pingkan Polak took out the girls' singles, defeating Wellington Girls' Lauren Phang 42-18.

Muhammad Naufilino, the runner-up in the junior boys singles, and boys junior doubles winners Shine Wu and Jaryl Loo are at Newlands College. They were originally reported as playing for Wellington College and Hutt Valley High School respectively.

SWIMMING

Records broken

Five meeting records were broken at the College Sport Wellington swimming championships last week. Outstanding Chilton St James year 9 swimmer Chilton St James set new times for the under-15 50m freestyle and butterfly. Her freestyle time of 27.42 was faster than that recorded in the senior girls. Maggie Burns (Marsden) set a new mark for the senior 100m freestyle and Chelsea Parker (Kapiti) and Macy Burns (East) also broke records in the under-15 division.

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 Where sports stars unfold

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