

COLLEGE SPORT

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One week, two finals, for Scots double act

HOCKEY, CROSS-COUNTRY

TOM CAUGHLEY and James Preston will be rivals today and team-mates on Friday.

The versatile Scots College pair will be two of the leading contenders for the senior boys title at the College Sport Wellington cross-country championships at Trentham today.

They will then join forces when Scots meet Wairarapa College in the final of the first round of the secondary schools hockey competition on Friday.

Caughley and Preston both finished in the top 10 at the cross-country championships last year and showed they were in good form again when performing well at the Vosseler Shield last weekend.

Preston was runner-up in the men's under-20 and Caughley won the under-18 division.

Preston finished 16th at the national secondary schools cross-country championships last year and had a successful track season last summer. He was fourth in the senior 1500m at the national secondary schools championships, in December, and third in the under-20 800m at the national track and field championships.

He ended the track season with a flourish by recording a personal best of 1:54.52 when winning the 800m at the North Island secondary schools meeting.

Caughley and Preston also have

'We need to do a lot of work on our finishing.'

Scots coach Stuart Preston

key roles in the hockey first XI.

Caughley is a striker and a member of the Capital under-18 squad and Preston, who has usually played as a striker or inner, has switched to centre half, as cover for Lachie Paton, who will be out for some time with a hand injury.

Scots have four players in the Capital under-18 side, the others being midfielder and captain Sam Chandler, defender Lothar Krumpfen and goalkeeper Matthew Papesch. Paton was also in the squad but will miss the national under-18 tournament.

The premier one grading round suggested that the hockey competition will be particularly tight this year. Though Scots and Wairarapa got through to the final, both semifinals were decided by a penalty shootout, with Scots eventually beating HIBS and Wairarapa edging out Wellington College.

Scots and Wellington College had drawn their round robin match and the HIBS-Wairarapa clash had also ended in a draw.

"There looks to be very little between the top four or five teams," Scots coach Stuart Preston

said. "The sharp end of the season might come down to who can keep making those small improvements each week and who can take their chances."

Scots no longer have talented German striker Niki Weither but retained the bulk of their 2014 squad. Preston has been happy with their progress this year but wants an improvement in the conversion rate in the circle. "We need to do a lot of work on our finishing. We have had a lot of circle penetrations but the conversion rates needs to be higher."

Wairarapa, who won the premier one title last year, no longer have the richly talented Joseph Robertson but have already shown that they will be tough to beat again.

Scots, who equalised late in the match against HIBS, are already assured of *The Dominion Post* Trophy for the top Wellington team in the opening round, but it would mean more if they could also claim Friday's final.

Wellington College, who have been the premier one winners in four of the past five years, will build their 2015 team around an experienced year 13 group, comprising Logen Stent, Jayn Parbhu, Josh Symonds, Rory McNay and Nick Tweed, while the younger players include Capital under-18 rep Tim Schulpfen.

HIBS also have an experienced side, with nine year 13 players, and are led by head boy and centre forward Troy Johnson.



Wairarapa College midfielder Wills Taylor and Wellington College goalkeeper Sam Dearsley collide during a penalty shootout to decide their premier one match last weekend. Wairarapa went on to win and play Scots College in the final of the first round of the secondary schools hockey competition on Friday. Photo: MARGO BREMFORD

Teenage bowler gets rub of the green

BOWLS

SEAMUS CURTIN could become a poster boy for the next generation of bowlers.

The 14-year-old Aotea College pupil is evidence that the sport can capture the heart of youngsters.

Curtin competed in the open singles at the national championships as a 12-year-old and has now made his first New Zealand team, while in his second year at secondary school.

He is one of two bowlers selected in the New Zealand team for the Commonwealth Youth Games in Samoa in September.

He will contest the boys' singles and team with Ashleigh Jeffcoat (Hamilton Girls') in the mixed pairs.

The age range for the Youth Games varies from sport to sport and the bowlers have to be aged from 14 to 18.

The bowls team was announced last weekend, though Curtin had known he was in the team for more than three weeks. "But I had to keep it quiet."

He had been the youngest among a squad of five boys short-listed for the team and had spent an anxious day at school on the day that the players were due to be told whether they had been selected.

He had been "waiting all day" before the national coach, Dave Edwards, rang with the news he wanted to hear. "I was really excited - and celebrated with a sparkling grapefruit juice."

Making the Youth Games team had been one of Curtin's goals for 2015 and he rates it as the high point of his fledgling career.

It will also mean he will have to keep practising over the winter, a time when most greens are closed, and is grateful for the efforts of Plimmerton Bowling Club greenkeeper Charlie Hughes who will attempt to keep a rink open for Curtin to use.

Curtin, who does not have to worry about NCEA till next year, hopes to get in some practise most days in the lead-up to Samoa.

His major hurdle will be the speed of the greens in Samoa, which will be much slower than in New Zealand.

The Samoan greens are likely to run at 13-14 seconds, compared to 16-18 seconds in New Zealand. The figures refer to the time the bowl takes to stop moving after



Aotea College bowler Seamus Curtin will represent New Zealand on the international stage this year.

'I wasn't too bad at cricket but I quit cricket to play bowls. I had more fun at bowls and that's why I play it - because I have fun.'

Seamus Curtin

ment teams and Curtin's selection was evidence that he was making an impression at a national level.

He also won the singles title and combined with schoolmate Brady Amer to win the pairs at the College Sport Wellington championships.

There had also been some memorable moments for Curtin in 2014, most notably when combining with 19-year-old Lachlan Gordon to win the Wellington centre open pairs tournament. "I think I'm the youngest to ever win it in Wellington."

Curtin's efforts at the Kittyhawk tournament clinched his selection for the Youth Games. He was the top qualifier at the Wellington regional tournament and topped his section at the national tournament, to make the last 16, before losing in the first round of post-section play.

His long term goal is to make the Black Jacks, the senior New Zealand side, before he turns 25.

Edwards, who is also convenor of selectors for New Zealand Bowls, said Curtin's attitude, as well as his skills, had earned him selection for Samoa.

"He's truly committed and quite professional in his approach to the game," Edwards said. "He accepts coaching, is disciplined with his training and his work ethic is way beyond his years."

"He doesn't just stick to his age group and is prepared to challenge himself in the big pond. It was no mean feat [to make post-section play] at the New Zealand open and he performed really well at the Kittyhawk tournament, against quality players."

"Technically, he's very good and has a very sweet delivery."

"The greens are going to be quite a bit slower and he will have to push it a lot more but he is well set up [technically] to handle that," Edwards said.

leaving the bowler's hand.

"I will have to work on a different delivery and strategies [to compensate for the slower greens]," Curtin said.

He became interested in bowls through his parents, Con and Rachel.

"They took up bowls when I was very young and I spent quite a lot of time at bowling clubs."

"I started playing when I was 10 and liked it and got more competitive about it in my second season and really wanted to play a lot."

"I wasn't too bad at cricket but I quit cricket to play bowls. I had more fun at bowls and that's why

I play it - because I have fun."

Curtin also plays basketball and is a member of the junior A team at Aotea but bowls is "pretty much" his main sport. "I don't take basketball as seriously as bowls."

Curtin has made rapid progress as a bowler. He qualified for post-section play in the singles at the national championships in January, made the last 16 at the Kittyhawk under-21 singles last month and was selected in a North Island team that played the South Island in February.

The North and South Island teams had been chosen as develop-

Traditional rivals square off again

RUGBY

APPEARANCES can be deceiving. Wellington College won their opening premier one match last weekend by more than 60 points, while St Pat's Town suffered a first round loss.

But Town will still be favoured when the two sides clash in their traditional match at Evans Bay today.

The Wellington College squad would have been encouraged by their 64-0 victory over Hutt International which will find St Pat's Town a much tougher proposition.

St Pat's Town did go down last weekend but not before having a decent crack at removing the Moascar Cup from the Scots College trophy cabinet. Scots sealed a 37-32 win with a late try, in a game that produced 11 tries but only three conversions.

Town will be missing gifted fullback Siosaia Paese, who was concussed against Scots, but won't be lacking motivation when they take home advantage into one of the big games on the Wellington schools calendar.

The Town-Coll traditional dates back to 1885 and will be played for the 131st time today. It is Wellington's oldest traditional college fixture and one of the oldest secondary school contests in New Zealand.

Wellington College have dominated the past 20 years, losing just four games in that time, but one of the losses came 12 months ago, when Town ended a seven-year losing streak with a 19-17 victory.

Wellington College had a comparatively modest record in premier one in 2014 and struggled in the pre-season games this year.

However, they scored 10 tries against HIBS and the win helped erase the memories of their first round loss against the same opponents last year.

HIBS had been well beaten by Rathkeale three days earlier and were below their best. "They had had a torrid encounter against Rathkeale and some of their players were carrying injuries," Wellington College coach Lincoln Rawles said.

Rawles suggested that his team would need to lift their intensity by 40 per cent to match Town. "They [Town] are a physical side and have got some big ball carriers."



The Wellington College first XV perform the haka before the 2014 traditional game against St Pat's Town. Photo: KEVIN STENT/FAIRFAX NZ

"We haven't had the ideal start [to the season] and there have been a few injuries but it was really pleasing for the players to get on the scoreboard in such a positive fashion against HIBS."

"But we will get a much better idea of where we stand [in premier one] when we play Town."

Skipper and halfback Kemara Hauti-Parapara, who can also cover first five-eighth, will be a key player for Wellington College.

The year 14 is in his fourth year in the first XV, though he is not the oldest player in the squad. "He's been a cut above most of others we have seen in the position [this year]," Rawles said.

The Wellington backline also includes Toka Sopoaga, the fourth sifbler to play for the first XV, after Lima, Tupou and Zek.

The pack will be built around locks Adam Blackwell and Naitoa Ah Kuoi, flanker Jimmy Hewitt and front row forward Sitiveni Paongo.

The Town-Scots game produced some spectacular rugby, with neither side able to dominate for any length of time.

Scots supporter Peter Umaga-Jensen, who was named man of the match by the Sky commentators, and twin brother Thomas were a constant threat to the Town defence and big Scots prop Alex Fidow showcased his running and handling skills.

But Town were always in the game, largely through the efforts of their pack, who were particularly effective at scrum time and at the breakdown.

"It was a great game but at the end of the day, Scots took their chances," Town coach Glenn Donaldson said.

Donaldson was also ruing mixed results from the Town goal-kickers and some defensive lapses. "We had 47 missed tackles, while Scots missed 12, and you can't do that at this level."

"You have to go in low. We allowed them to run to us and to get their arms free and offload the ball."

"It was disappointing not to win but it's early in the season and we will be a better team for the experience."

"Scots have got quality players and a lot of teams won't win against them. But I think we have got one of the best packs in Wellington."

The Town loose forward trio of Hannon Brighouse, Jack Nelson-Murray and Kevin Fauatea were outstanding and hooker Penieli Poasa had a big game. "Penieli played exceptionally well and was my player of the day," Donaldson said.

Scots put the Moascar Cup on the line again on Saturday, against Rongotai.

Rongotai, who are aiming to return to the top four in premier one, began the competition on an encouraging note when beating newcomers Wairarapa College 26-17 last weekend. Silverstream, who lost their traditional against New Plymouth Boys' last week, opened with a 41-15 win over Tawa and meet Wairarapa on Saturday and HIBS take on Tawa.

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