

SPORT



ON THE ROAD

Tough task for Breakers to win without home advantage

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BOXING

Video reviews help Pettaway's prep

American boxer does his research on Kiwi opponent Joseph Parker, writes Ben Strang.

If you got a look at Jason Pettaway's computer search history, there would be a lot of YouTube and plenty of Joseph Parker on the list.

American heavyweight Pettaway has immersed himself in videos of Parker's previous bouts in preparation for their fight in Auckland on Thursday night.

The hope was to find a plan of attack against the increasingly impressive Kiwi but there was little weakness revealed in all that tape.

"I actually started studying his

YouTube and

everything before

this fight actually

happened," Pettaway

said during a visit to

Hamilton Boys' High

School yesterday.

"I've looked at a

few of his tapes,

watched and done

my homework.

"I haven't really

seen a lot of

weaknesses and I

haven't seen him

really get hit yet, so

I'm looking forward

to seeing how he reacts

when he does get

hit. I definitely want to

fight my game plan I

have prepared for and

not really worry about

trying to land a big shot.

"I know he's training

hard, he's in good

shape and he's ready to

fight, so I'm just

looking forward to the

fight and hoping every

round is a war."

Of all the Parker

videos Pettaway has

been watching, one of

the least useful was

Parker's most recent

fight against Brazilian

Irineu Beato Costa Junior.

Pettaway was critical

of the big Brazilian in

the fourth round

knockout, and said

not to expect a similar

performance on

Thursday.

"My thoughts on that was, the guy just kind of stood right there in front of him and really didn't punch back," Pettaway said.

"He didn't try to counter whenever he did punch, so I really don't have much to go by off of that fight."

Pettaway told a packed college hall at Hamilton Boys' High School that his speed, jab and counter punching were his strengths, and he hoped to use those against Parker.

He said it would be exciting to see how his speed stacked up against Parker, who is known for his mobility and handspeed in the ring.

"I expect him to be the aggressor and come to the fore, so I just plan on sticking to my game plan that we worked on in camp and going from there.

"I'm quite eager and look forward to seeing how his speed matches up to my speed."

Fighting in front of a packed crowd cheering on their hometown hero in Parker will be a new experience for Pettaway, but he is giving those heading along little reason to root against him.

Pettaway is a quiet, friendly man, happy to talk about his amateur career and his business interests back home.

He owns a barber shop in Ohio, aptly named Upper Cuts, which has given him the freedom to focus on boxing these past two years.

In fact, heading to a barber shop will be Pettaway's final preparation for Thursday night's fight.

"I'm actually going to a barber shop on Wednesday.

"I found a good shop close to Queen St, so I've got to be clean when I get into the ring."

Staying clean by the time he gets out of the ring will be another challenge.

"I haven't really seen a lot of weaknesses and I haven't seen him really get hit yet, so I'm looking forward to seeing how he reacts when he does get hit,"

Jason Pettaway on Joseph Parker



School visit: Jason Pettaway gave tips to up-and-coming Hamilton Boys' High School boxer Niko Nicholson during a visit yesterday.

Photo: Bruce Mercer/Fairfax NZ

NETBALL

Tairi out for season in another blow to Magic



Aaron Goile

The Waikato-Bay of Plenty Magic have been served another bitter injury blow, with midcourter Courtney Tairi to miss the rest of the Trans-Tasman Netball League season.

Scans yesterday confirmed Tairi had ruptured her left Achilles tendon, the 26-year-old suffering the injury in the fourth quarter of the Magic's opening-round 45-44 win over the Thunderbirds in Adelaide on Sunday.

Tairi was assisted from the court, able to hobble to the bench and, unusually for an Achilles injury, did not show much pain, actually smiling several times while on the floor and during the remainder of the match.

But the outcome is devastating news for the three-cap Silver Fern, who is in

Out of action: Courtney Tairi will miss the rest of the Waikato-Bay of Plenty Magic's season after rupturing her Achilles tendon in their round one win over the Thunderbirds on Sunday.

Photo: Getty Images

her second season at the Magic following two years at the Southern Steel and three at the NSW Swifts before that.

Tairi, who had been named this season's vice-captain, is no stranger to serious injuries, having torn the anterior cruciate ligament in her right knee in 2012, after doing the same to her left knee in 2007.

"I'm absolutely gutted to be out for the season," Tairi said.

"I was really looking to build on the great season I had with the Magic last year.

"But that's sport and I have no doubt the team will handle this setback, just as well as they've handled the other injuries we're managing at the moment.

"I'll be giving the girls my full support and passing on as much knowledge as I can from the sidelines."

The Magic are already without usual captain Casey Kopua for at least the initial rounds of the competition as she recovers from her knee injury, while fellow defender Kelly Jury is coming back from a ruptured Achilles of her own.

Tairi, who will undergo surgery on Thursday, was a constant at centre for

the Magic, albeit often without a heavy presence on the game. Youngster Sam Sinclair is set to step into the middle and will provide more than decent cover, while coach Julie Fitzgerald will consider who to bring into the squad as a replacement.

"I really feel for Courtney and what she's having to come to terms with right now," Fitzgerald said.

"But we have such a strong team culture and bond, and we'll make sure she gets all the support she needs. Her contribution to this team is invaluable both on and off court, and we'll continue to use her leadership.

"We seem to be having more than our share of injuries at present but we can't control that or dwell on it.

"What we can control is how we react and we'll be even more determined to play hard for our injured players."

The Magic play the NSW Swifts at Mt Maunganui next Monday night, with the Swifts coming off a 68-62 win over the Southern Steel in Invercargill on Sunday night.

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CRICKET

Part-timer Devcich spins Northern to win

Aaron Goile

Northern Districts have gone to the top of the Plunket Shield table after taking out their match against Central Districts in Whangarei by 43 runs yesterday.

In what was an exciting last day at Cobham Oval, the hosts prevailed with 3.5 overs to spare after the Stags gave their target of 348 a decent nudge.

Starting the day on 23-1, CD needed 325 more runs off 97 overs at a required rate of 3.35 and, with Greg Hay (98) and Will Young (56) settling in for a lengthy partnership of 107 in 32 overs, they frustrated the home side's attack.

But it was a star turn by part-time spinner Anton Devcich which got the SkyCity Knights back on top.

He got Young caught and bowled then in his next over had Tom Bruce caught behind by BJ Watling, before soon after getting the big wicket of Hay, lbw for 98, and went on to take career-best figures of 4-46 off 15 overs.

When Doug Bracewell, Bevan Small and Ben Wheeler all fell cheaply, CD were 233-8 and in trouble, though there were fighting stands for the final two wickets.

Gutsy captain Kruger van Wyk (62) put on 49 with Ajaz Patel (23no), as the visitors kept themselves in with a chance, with the required rate climbing to above a run-a-ball.

But when left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner had van Wyk caught behind with 66 still needed, the match was ND's for the taking.

Devcich had bowled less than 10 overs since dislocating his shoulder, on tour with the Black Caps in the United Arab Emirates in December last year, but had the ball coming out nicely yesterday, having been brought into the attack to try something different on a pretty flat wicket.

"It's always good to have a bowl and get into the game, and try and affect the game," Devcich said.

"I got a few more [overs] than I was expecting.

"You're always in the game on day four, I guess. The pitch started to get a little bit of turn there and it was a little bit dusty. You take a wicket and it's quite hard to start on as a batter.

"So we always thought if we get a wicket or two, we could go through them."

Devcich deflected praise towards Santner, who trucked down 33.1 overs and bowled with what stand-in captain

SCOREBOARD

NORTHERN KNIGHTS v CENTRAL STAGS

Scoreboard at the completion of the four-day match at Cobham Oval, Whangarei yesterday:

CENTRAL STAGS
Second innings (target: 348 runs)
(Resuming on 23-1)

D Meiring b Baker	22
G Hay lbw b Devcich	98
W Young c & b Devcich	56
T Bruce c Watling b Devcich	14
K van Wyk c Watling b Santner	62
D Bracewell c & b Santner	1
B Small lbw b Devcich	5
B Wheeler c Wilson b Kuggeleijn	8
A Patel not out	23
A Mathieson c Devcich b Santner	11
Extras (lb 1, wd 1)	4
Total (for 10 wickets, 106.1 overs)	304
Fall: 2-61 (Meiring), 3-168 (Young), 4-184 (Bruce), 5-209 (Hay), 6-212 (Bracewell), 7-219 (Small), 8-233 (Wheeler), 9-282 (van Wyk), 10-304 (Mathieson).	
Bowling: G Aldridge 15-6-50-1 (1nb), S Kuggeleijn 16-2-48-1 (2w), J Baker 9-3-18-1, M Santner 33.1-10-70-3, J Boulton 18-3-71-0, A Devcich 15-3-46-4.	

Result: Northern won by 43 runs.

Watling called "attacking control".

"Although he only got three wickets, he probably deserved five or six, he bowled bloody well," Devcich said. "Kuggeleijn [Scott Kuggeleijn] had a good energy spell after tea as well, which caused a lot of pressure.

"Everyone chipped in and it was a good team effort."

The win was a fine way for Watling to celebrate his 100th first-class match.

"It was Flynny's [Daniel Flynn] 100th last week, so I knew I was one behind him, so I knew it was coming. Obviously a special moment, to play 100 first-class games is quite a lot of cricket, for us Kiwis," Watling said, adding that the achievement did make him feel old at 29.

"Yeah, well I think the whole ND team makes me feel a bit old, except for Graeme [Aldridge]," he quipped.

The win takes ND to 66 points, though Auckland (61) will be at least tied with them after their match against Canterbury once their bonus points are taken into account. CD are sitting in third place on 50.

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CRICKET

Strewth Kiwis, we'd love to have your Baz

Duncan Johnstone

Black Caps skipper Brendon McCullum has got the Aussies wishing he was Australian.

Our cricket-mad trans Tasman neighbours are still trying to digest Saturday's gut-wrenching World Cup loss in Auckland where McCullum's leadership and bravery helped New Zealand to a dramatic one-wicket win that sees them sit top of the table.

A day after the *Herald-Sun* ran a full back page, declaring: "Dear New Zealand, now that you have something else to talk about, can we finally forget about the underarm thing? Yours sincerely, Australia", the *Daily Telegraph* ran a story headlined: "Why we wish Black Caps captain Brendon McCullum was an Aussie".

Coming soon after being named New Zealand sportsman of the year, the glowing tribute from across the ditch is an accolade almost as big.

It listed McCullum's six best attributes: Brains, aggression, brawn, bravery, leadership, and versatility. The brains department was explained

by his decision to use spinner Daniel Vettori to halt Australia's early batting onslaught.

As for his aggression, the paper said "McCullum's brashness as a leader and a batsman is more in line with an Australian characteristics", and quoted former Black caps skipper Stephen Fleming admitting the Kiwi public were "uncomfortable with it at first".

He might be small in stature but he has brawn as the Aussie's noted with his pummelling of the Poms and his quick-fire 50 at Eden Park, rocketing the Black Caps out of the gate with his master-blasting from the opening batsman's role.

As for the bravery, well even the Aussies had to admire the way he bounced back from being hit in the arm by a Mitchell Johnson thunderbolt to carry on with his search for boundaries.

Discussing leadership, the paper went to one of Australia's greatest captains, Ricky Ponting had this to say: "Brendon is always trying to take the game forward, and I think that is rubbing off on the rest of the side. They have plenty of quality players, but there is also a bit

more belief in themselves. That's backed up by the way they went about the run chase against England — there was something very Australian about how they went about peeling off a small total. Brendon was trying to stamp himself and his team on the tournament with the way he came out and batted. To see your captain come out and play that way would have been a really powerful thing."

As for versatility, they pulled out an old story that's doing the rounds again. Overseas writers have suggested he could have played for the All Blacks, noting that in 2000 he kept Dan Carter on the bench as he starred at youth level as a No 10.

That's probably a stretch, though the way he is playing right now, maybe the struggling Crusaders wouldn't mind him turning out in red and black. Fairfax NZ

Blazing away: Brendon McCullum's devastating form in the Cricket World Cup has the Australians wishing he was one of theirs.

Photo: Photosport

