

Team NZ sailor makes tough call

by Emma Lyons

Team New Zealand sailor Matthew Mason was in two minds about whether to travel to Italy for America's Cup duties or stay in Auckland for the birth of his second child.

In the end, Italy won as he felt he had a responsibility to the team and to his country.

"We can decide not to go but I'm not getting any younger and we are learning a lot over there which is important to the team," says Mason.

Mason's wife Jodine is eight months pregnant and due on October 10. Mason is due home three days earlier.

"I find it testing at times with Matt being away but I am used to it because that's our life now, but it does get quite emotional," she says.

The couple have been married for two-and-a-half years and have a one-year-old daughter Emma.

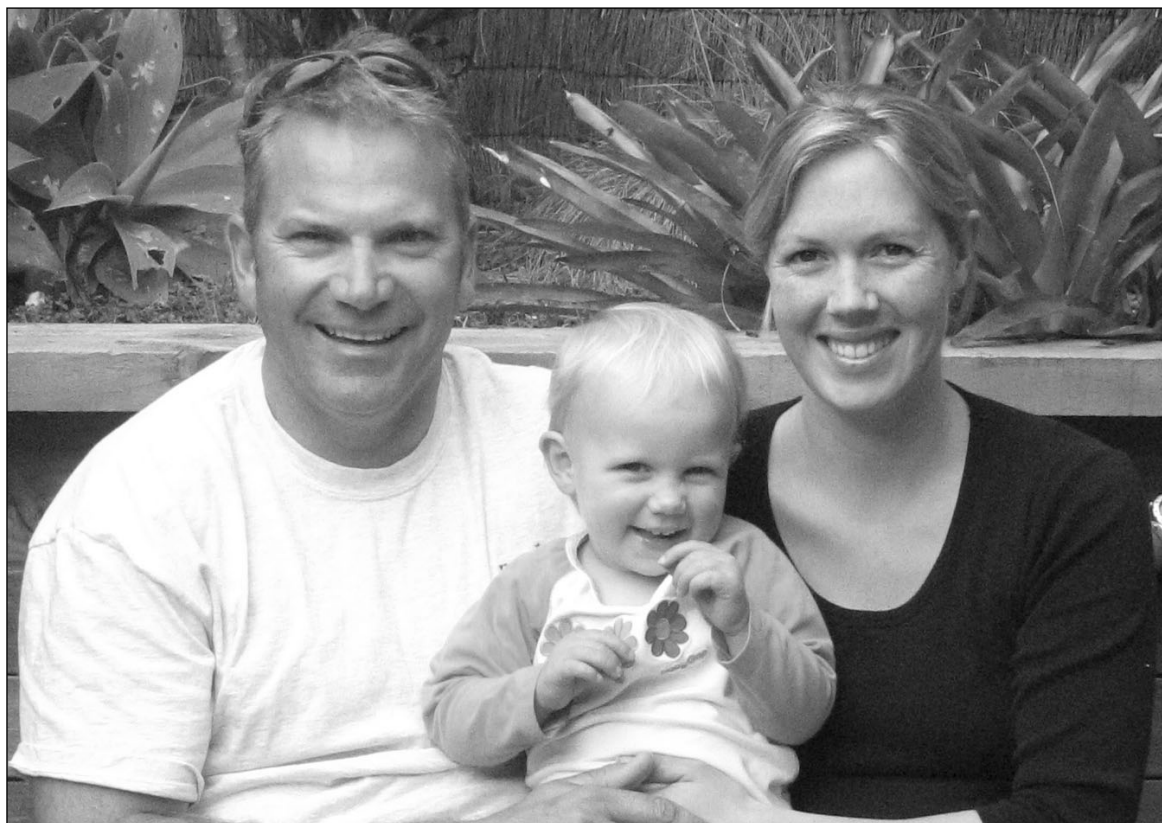
Team New Zealand is currently in Sicily as part of the build-up for the America's Cup.

Mason grew up in Te Kuiti and went to school in Whangarei.

His family then spent two years cruising the Pacific Islands while Mason studied by correspondence.

"Dad built a boat when I was young and we always lived around water," says Mason.

He began sailing for Team



PICTURE PERFECT: Team New Zealand's Matthew Mason with wife Jodine and daughter Emma.

New Zealand in 1992 in San Diego and has been part of the team since as the mastman.

"I love doing this for my country. There is always such great support and it was amazing to win the cup in 1995.

"It took a few weeks for it actually to sink it and there were plenty of sore heads for a long time afterwards."

Other team mates have

selected not to go on these trips abroad because of commitments, but Mason says it's all part of the job, and his wife agrees.

"I support his decision because it's our life and he is very committed to the team.

"If the baby comes early or he doesn't make it home I have my Mum who will be with me for the labour and my Dad and

friends to help with Emma."

In April next year the team will move to Valencia in Spain and the couple is looking forward to the change, and the food.

"I like change, travel and different cultures and I'm looking forward to meeting our friends over there," says Jodine.

"I also can't wait for the food," she says.

Warriors coach needs a miracle

Ivan Cleary's appointment as New Zealand Warriors head coach sits uneasily with me. No doubt Cleary is more than capable of coaching a rugby league team, but it will take something special to steer the Warriors to premiership glory next season.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realise the head coaching role is a poisoned chalice.

John Monie, Frank Endacott and Mark Graham all floundered in their efforts.

Then came Daniel Anderson, coach extraordinaire, who took our boys to within centimetres of the big prize. Had the curse been lifted?

No. Soon it reared its ugly head, the wins dried up and 18 months later he was history.

His replacement, Tony Kemp, didn't have much of a chance. Inheriting a side that had lost its winning formula was a poor place to start.

Kemp could do little but watch from the coach's box in his flashy pin-striped suit, as his troops crumbled around him. After a little over a season on the job, Kemp was dumped to pave the way for Warriors golden boy and 2005 assistant coach Ivan Cleary.

The former Warriors dependable kicking style and steely defence at fullback in 2002 took the team to a previously unthinkable minor premiership, and a grand final appearance. However, I feel the dreaded curse will strike again and undoubtedly I will be writing about a new Warriors coach this time next year.

Warriors fans always harbour a bitter resentment towards any Warriors coach who can't consistently win. I, for one, don't want to resent Ivan Cleary this time next year when he fails to get the results we desperately crave.

His coaching credentials hold him in the good stead having taken the Sydney Roosters reserves to premiership success last year. But he is about to step up to coaching at a completely different level.

Warriors fans are not looking forward to next season with any expectation or excitement for one simple reason. The club has lost too many quality players this year to give it a hope of winning the 2006 championship.

The task facing Ivan Cleary is huge. I'm praying for a miracle and maybe, just maybe, Ivan's the one to bring it.



Aaron Lawton is an AUT Bachelor of Communications student

Aussie absence means bright future for Kiwis

by Paul Halton

New Zealand women's soccer team has a better chance to qualify for the 2006 World Cup in China and it has Australia to thank.

Australia, which traditionally always beats New Zealand, has moved to the Asia confederation, making New Zealand the favourite to gain the automatic Oceania qualifying spot for FIFA tournaments.

Michelle Cox, a former international and the new head of women's soccer, is optimistic about the future.

"It's a great chance for some young players coming through to play in these important events. Hopefully it will act as an incentive to keep them playing the game," she says.

Losing players to other sports had been one of the main problems facing women's soccer.

"There was good support at ground level but as they got older they found there was nowhere to go."

Now players have the chance to represent New

Zealand at the Under 20 World Cup, in Russia next year.

Cox says these tournaments are a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and believes the players will be up to the challenge.

"We've got a great pool of players. There are some awesome players at the 14 to 15 year-old level like Annalie Longo and Renee Leota. They'll be ready for when these competitions come around."

Women's soccer is being restructured and reviewed on and off the field. NZ Soccer will be taking general submissions until September 30 and recommendations will be made in January next year.

One problem being addressed is finding suitable opposition for the top women players, says Cox.

"It's not like Germany who can just pop over the border and play France. It's expensive for us to play internationals. One option is to play men's teams."

Off the field the review looks at marketing and raising the profile of women's soccer.

AUT free skier aims for victory

by Claire McMahon

When he is not an acrobat on skis Matt Field can be found cycling around Wanaka preparing for the 2005 Spring Festival at Mt Ruapehu.

Last season Field came second overall at the festival but this year he is hoping for a win.

Regular trips to Mt Ruapehu from the age of four got him interested in skiing.

Eighteen years later it is a full-time commitment for Field and he openly admits that skiing has impacted most areas of his life.

"It has affected everything from uni to my girlfriend. And I have also had to sacrifice a chance at an exciting desk job."

But he says the move from Auckland to Wanaka for three months of each year is a must.

"The South Island is where it's at as far as everyone who means anything in the industry."

Two winters spent in Tahoe, northern California, saw Field place fourth in the Northstar Jib Series and he boasts that travel to the northern hemisphere is awesome.



Matt Field

"At the same time [as training] you are experiencing other cultures and constantly learning."

Field still calls Auckland home and last semester he completed his Diploma in Business at AUT.

At the moment he does not have any other job, but he sees his future lying in the sport.

"I want to work in the industry too and see New Zealand free skiing progress; we have huge potential here now."

Field says his strengths lie in the terrain park but he highlights his switch cork spin manoeuvres as a weakness. He also has knee problems which is where the cycling helps.