

Fans, flares, frogs and the footballing Ferns

By Priscilla Duncan



I get goosebumps every time I think about it.

Last week I was playing for New Zealand at the Fifa Women's

World Cup in China in front of 60,000 people.

I'll never forget the atmosphere within the brand new Olympic Stadium.

So many vociferous, impassioned Chinese fans all packed into one space.

It was electric.

They were willing on the home team, of course, but we fed off their energy just as much as the Chinese players.

We had already played in front of impressive crowds against Brazil and Denmark but the last group match was something else.

China needed to win to stay in the tournament so it made for an intense game.

The drums were beating, the Mexican waves were circling and the smoking flares made it difficult to breathe.

It was a far cry from the usual Sunday afternoon club game in West Auckland.

The former World Cup finalists threw everything at us but we held our own.

Their Swedish coach was fuming on the sideline as we nullified attack after attack.

They finally broke the deadlock on the hour-mark with a messy header and unfortunately we couldn't capitalise on a one-on-one opportunity just moments later.

We lost the game 2-nil, the same result as our previous game

against world number six Denmark.

Brazil ended up dominating our group with a 5-nil win against us, a 4-nil win over China and a 1-nil win over Denmark.

We were bitterly disappointed not to get a result but the scores still gave us credibility and showed we could compete on the world stage.

It wasn't a bad effort for a team that hadn't participated in a World Cup since 1991.

Football Ferns is the official name we've been given to usher in a new era for women's football.

With Australia moving out of the Oceania qualifying group, New Zealand will have a far better chance of getting to major tournaments in the future.

As long as there is funding, we have every chance of competing at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

I certainly hope I get to go



KICKBACK: Priscilla Duncan before the World Cup in China.

back to China next year and relive my dream.

It was an amazing country to experience and they certainly know how to host an event of that magnitude.

We were treated like stars with security guards following us wherever we went.

The bustling streets came to a standstill when we travelled to our games as police cleared the routes to the stadiums.

We stayed in a five-star luxurious hotel in Wuhan but if you took a walk two minutes down the road it was a whole other world.

There was block after block of cramped apartments with people living in the most basic conditions.

We poked our heads down every alleyway but were scared to venture too far because of the less-than-appealing smells.

The thing I loved was seeing the streets just crawling with life.

We stumbled across people playing mah jong, making gyozas (dumplings), skewering frogs, selling snakes and doing every kind of activity you could imagine.

I wanted to soak up the culture just as much as I wanted to enjoy the tournament and that's what made the experience complete for me.

In fact, if it's possible to rank life experiences and come out with one that stands above all others, mine would have to be taking part in this World Cup.

I'm sure the memories will keep producing those goosebumps for many years to come.

"We were bitterly disappointed not to get a result but the scores still gave us credibility."

Buyers beware – consumer protection off the agenda

Editorial - Mike Kilpatrick

The collapse of the proposed Australia New Zealand Therapeutic Products Authority (ANZTPA) has given some New Zealanders a chance to engage in the nation's favourite past-time – the jingoistic Aussie-bashing usually reserved for sporting occasions.

ANZTPA was supposed to provide protection to therapeutic product consumers by ensuring the products are safe and efficacious, as well as bringing New Zealand's regulatory regime up to international standards.

In the wake of its failure, Australia's decision to enforce its right to come here (and charge \$980 per hour for the privilege) and inspect facilities of any manufacturer who wants to sell therapeutic products over the Tasman shouldn't come as a surprise.

From the moment Taito Phillip Field was expelled from the Labour Party, the bill was likely to die and the Aussies hammered the final nail in the coffin lid with this week's announcement.

Unfortunately, among the anti-Aussie sound-bites on the airwaves and on paper, the bigger picture is again being ignored.

Not only will Kiwi consumers lack the protection offered in other countries for some time to come, we complain when other countries try to uphold the stan-

dards we should be on the street demanding.

Perhaps the worst example of anti-Australianism is from Garth Wyllie, spokesperson for the Employers and Manufacturers Association (Northern).

He starts off by suggesting Australia's stance shows "the overbearing arrogance" it would have employed if the agency had gone ahead, and then suggests that Australia doesn't have the right to decide on the quality of goods it allows to be sold there.

"The Australians are saying only their personnel are qualified to undertake such inspections. What a lot of nonsense!" he continues.

As someone who has experience in the industry and has been subjected to many different regulatory regimes, it's clear to me there are vast differences between New Zealand's regulations and many other countries.

But why let facts get in the way of a good rant?

And then, invoking the infamous 1981 cricketing incident involving the Chappell brothers, Wyllie steps up to bowl the last ball of his over: "They're playing underarm again. It's pettiness writ large."

Screw the consumers. Take that Chappelli!

Perhaps Kiwis should be more worried about getting our own house in order before slugging big brother across the water for asserting rights it wouldn't have needed if we had done the right thing.

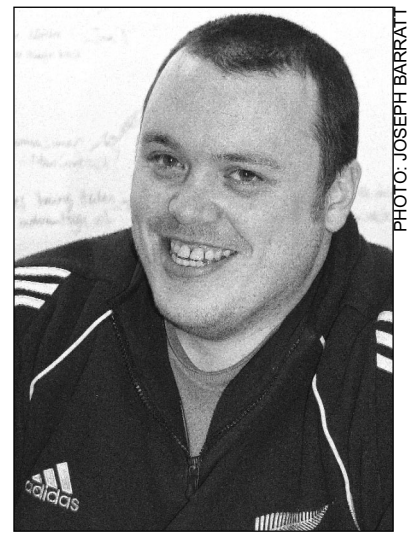


PHOTO: JOSEPH BARRATT

Letters to the editor

Celebrity journos and the lack of role models

Firstly, having worked on *Te Waha Nui* last year, I've been very impressed with the general layout and quality your team has produced this year, as well as some really interesting stories.

I read Eloise Gibson's column in response to Chris Trotter's column with interest.

It's nice of Eloise to state that she and her fellow students want to change the world. Good intentions are a good place to start.

But from my experience of journalism students there was a clear lack of interest in weighty issues.

Most students are so caught up in the materialistic and selfish culture we live in they have little time for highlighting the injustices that a good investigative journalist is interested in.

It seems the current crop of journalism students (talking from my experience of the last two years) are more worried about getting a job, getting paid and getting famous.

They are simply a product of our New Zealand culture which holds up journalists as celebrities as we lack high-profile figures on our small landscape.

I think many students take the courses with the hope of becoming celebrities themselves.

The reason there are no role models is probably the same.

Journalists who got into this game before us have replaced their journalistic fire with an underlying agenda to make a name for themselves.

The journalists who are the real role models don't get the

high profiles because they aren't sexy.

But if you want role models go and talk to David Robie and Greg Treadwell for 20 minutes about true investigative journalism.

They have made huge impacts on the communities they have worked in through gutsy investigative work.

It may seem I am throwing stones from my glass house because I'm not exactly working for *North & South* but we all have to start somewhere and that is the *Western Leader* for me.

But I aim to tell stories which will make a difference in the lives of the community I work in and I think I'm doing that.

Justin Latif

Increasing media diversity

I refer to your articles "Journalism in crisis" and "Calls for a more diverse industry" (*Te Waha Nui*, August 17, 2007).

I appreciate the fact you have brought up the issue and it has prompted me, as a person interested in media and journalism, to think.

It is a fact the New Zealand media industry should have more talented individuals, regardless of ethnicity and colour.

The world is becoming globalised and it is time the industry accepts and celebrates diversity.

Many people nowadays are not only able to speak more than one language but also capable in working cross-culturally.

Without journalism and the media, would we, as members of the public, have a group of people who can speak on our behalf, whether it's on paper, online or on television?

Would we be able to celebrate freedom of expression and speech?

Would we be able to encourage and unearth new talents who are good at finding information, speaking out and writing wonderful articles?

It is time for New Zealand journalism to not only change but also come up with up-to-date journalism and ethics codes, like our overseas counterparts.

I believe the journalism and media industry of New Zealand should not only seek individuals who are holders of degrees in journalism, communications or film and media alone.

Holders of degrees in languages, linguistics, literature and public relations should be encouraged to enter the industry.

Moreover, people with journalistic talents, especially those with wonderful writing skills and general knowledge, should also be encouraged.

Let us not let such talents go undiscovered or to waste here in New Zealand.

S K Matthews