

NGĀI TAHU Property

JADE URU

Road to Rio

It starts again, but now with two oars instead of one.

Yes that is right I have turned to the dark side. I am now a sculler.

After a very long summer of changing from sweeping to sculling, the best possible result happened. John and I got into the New Zealand elite Rowing Team.

The new quad of Myself John, Nathan and Chris will travel to Europe on the 13th of June to compete in two World Cups and the World Championships in Amsterdam.



Jade, John, Nathan, Chris



John and I at the National Championships



Dates for regattas

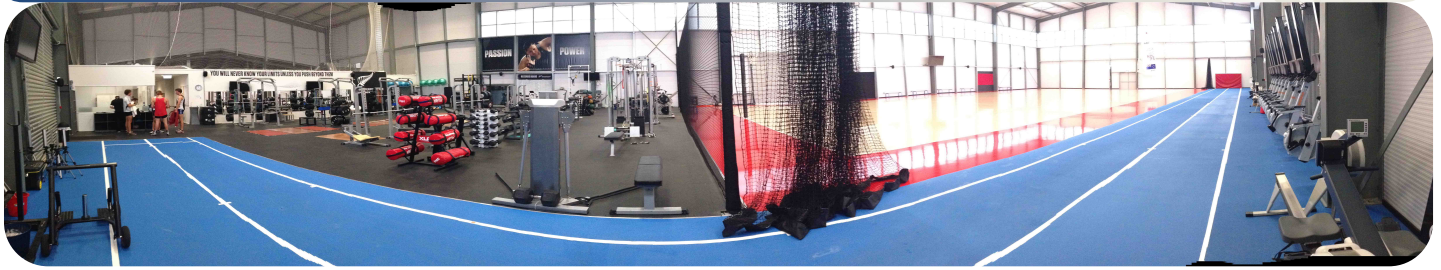
World Cup II, Aigbuelette 20-22 June 2014

World Cup III, Lucerne 11-13 July 2014

World Championships, Amsterdam 24-31

August 2014

Training over the Summer



As we all know sport has a lot of ups and downs. My biggest down to date is being left out of the New Zealand Summer squad team, after being part of Rowing New Zealand team for 5 years.

When I got pushed out, I was expecting a lot of people to tell me maybe it's time to move on, or how about you do something different. What actually happened is the opposite, every single person I talked to wanted to help me get back into the New Zealand team, to compete at the World Championships in Amsterdam.

So then came the planning, how to make myself better. Firstly it was about getting the right support network around me. That was a lot easier than I thought, Mum and Dad were the first to help out always supporting me through thick and thin. Lucy has always been by my side and she kept the house up in Cambridge going while I ventured down south.

So I was ready to tackle the new challenge. Training started and I was by myself for the first month, as John had University and I was trying to get back into full time training. The first few weeks were the hardest, but lucky for me, I had Jan and Bo Smith. I would head over there every Tuesday night for a home cooked meal, and just sit on the couch and hang out. I was thinking about it the other day and I don't think I could have got through this transition without them. Henry was very supportive letting me stay at his flat across from Christ College, which never had a dull moment, as it is pretty much the busiest place in Christchurch.

I tried out working for my sponsor (Ngai Tahu Property), but Tony became very adamant he wanted me to focus 100% on rowing. He said there is always time to work here when you finish rowing. So there I was just doing the rowing thing and nothing else.

Then one day I saw a woman struggling to read a bus sign, it started to rain so I stopped to ask where she needed to go. She was partially blind and could see very little. She seemed happy to get a ride so I drove her to the bus depot and helped her out to find her bus. When I was driving home I decided I would volunteer for the blind foundation. The next day I talked to mum she agreed it was a good idea. I then headed off to the foundation to meet them and ask if they wanted some help. I ended up going on a couple of walks, and showed them around the HPSNZ at Jelly Park. We also went on a tandem bike ride that was a lot of fun and became very interesting since the guy on the back could hardly see anything, communication was key.

He Toki is an amazing scholarship program bringing young Maori through the work force in Canterbury. I was lucky enough to be pulled into this program from both sides. Hawkins through our family friends Nancy McConell and Ngai Tahu through the great people at Te Tapuae O Rehua. David Eade and I spoke to the graduates of 2013 about our life lesson and how we pushed on when things didn't always go our way. Their excitement about finishing their course will always be something I remember for years to come and I hope to be part of the program in the future.

My entire rowing career I have been in the New Zealand team, in the men's four. I knew that this boat was not going to be sent again. Unless the four beat the lightweight at trials, which is a very tall order. So John and I started to do a lot of sculling.

It took me a while to leave the sweep oar behind, especially when I got a call from Hamish Bond a month out from nationals. Bondy asked, "so do you want to do the pair again?" My first thought was yes I want to defend my title, but I quickly realized that my focus was on sculling. If I decided to do the pair I would end up with the same result all over again. It's the age old saying if you keep doing the same thing day after day, you will always get the same result. – I think that applies to all walks of life. If you want to change you need to turn everything upside down and do what's unnatural or different.

So there it was, that one phone call that had changed everything. On I went to compete at different regattas, leading up to nationals and trials. Knowing I wouldn't hit the same speeds I have done in the past, but it was always for the greater good. When Nationals came around, it was hard for me to swallow knowing I wasn't going to win titles as easily as I have done in the past. But the best was still to come.

Having set my goals firmly on trials, first day was the erg I wanted a good strong consistent one, so 5min54 put me in the top 6 in New Zealand. I got comments from some coaches saying that it was the best one they have seen me do.

Seat racing rolled round and as expected I was left out of the fours racing. This was hard for me to watch, but the guys pulled out some good performances. The two rowers, who I thought should be in the four if they made one, went really fast with two young guys. But as predicted they weren't keen on breaking up the eight and two out of 4 guys isn't good enough.

So on came the quad racing for me, now realizing I had a new challenge, I dove in head first and won every single seat race I had. As expected the trail was all over the show, as there were 12 athletes going for 4 spots. I knew it would be tight but I just kept being as consistent as possible and they liked what they saw.



So now the quad has been together for 6 weeks and all has been well. A few injuries but nothing to slow us down. Speed is up and the team is happy. Everyone in the boat adds their bit to the crew and it makes for a great team. I am looking forward to tackling the big country's overseas and seeing what we can do.

I have got a new sponsor, he has always been helping Lucy and I. But over the summer Gary Reid put a lot of time and effort into helping me out, through the tough time of being left out of the New Zealand team. Gary had been through a similar situation, so he had some good words of wisdom when needed. Thank you Gary for your continued support.

We leave on the 13th of June so not long now.

Below are photos of Ngai Tahu Property's farm, Lucy rowing and Mount Cook on one of my many trips to Twizel.



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NGĀI TAHU Property

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