

Win some, lose some

Welcome mat out for star Aussie

■ HOCKEY
JONATHAN MILLMOW

BRENT LIVERMORE cannot arrive quick enough for the Wellington men's hockey team after it was thumped 7-1 by Canterbury in a national league hockey match in Christchurch yesterday.

The Australian captain joins Wellington tomorrow and how timely that is after they conceded 11 goals during the weekend and dropped to fifth on the table, albeit only two points behind league leaders North Harbour.

Wellington beat bottom-placed Central (Manawatu) 6-4 in the capital on Saturday but they were undone by Canterbury, or more precisely Hayden Shaw, yesterday, who netted three goals from penalty corners.

Wellington coach Peter Miskimmin felt the scoreline flattered Canterbury, but he admitted Livermore's skill and experience will be vital heading into the final three rounds and the playoffs.

"Getting Brent on Tuesday will lift the guys," Miskimmin said.

"We are pretty wounded and disappointed after today but having said that we haven't played that bad.

"I think we ended up with more shots on goals, we had more corners, we had a stroke saved by them so it was one of those games where we couldn't buy a goal and every time they got inside our circle they put it in."

Australian Mark Paterson put Wellington 1-0 up in the 11th minute but then Shaw stepped up, slotting home three drag flicks to three different parts of the goal.

Nick Haig added two goals with Eddie Oakenden and Isaac Staples get-



Pure agony: Joanne Holdaway suffered a fractured thumb against Central.

ting the other for Canterbury who lead 4-1 at halftime.

Miskimmin admitted he is concerned about leaking 11 goals in 140 minutes of play at the weekend.

"That is a worry," Miskimmin conceded. "Quite clearly we pride ourselves on defence and we have the best goalie [Kyle Pontifex] in New Zealand.

"Hayden put three corners in and two of them were unstoppable."

Miskimmin singled out Paterson, Jamie Schaefer and Grant Down for a solid weekend's work, while he continues to sing the praises of his young drag flick exponent Matt L'Hullier, who scored four goals against Central and had a couple "scraped" off the line yesterday.

Wellington play sixth-placed Southern at home on Saturday and seventh-placed Northland in Whangarei on Sunday.

The Wellington women's team is second after four rounds following a mixed weekend.

Poor execution in the attacking circle resulted in a 2-1 loss to Central in Wellington on Saturday.

But the strikers found their radar yesterday with a 5-1 victory against



Not for the faint-hearted: Wellington's Teneal Attard, left, clashes with a Central player.

Pictures: KENT BLECHYNDEN

Canterbury in Christchurch.

The Central match brought further woe with Joanne Holdaway out for the season after fracturing her thumb midway through the second half.

Wellington coach Chris Leslie had steam coming out of his ears on Saturday but was in a far better mood

last night after Niniwa Roberts scored a hat-trick and Frances Shaw and Suzie Muirhead joined her on the scoresheet against Canterbury.

"It was an awesome turnaround, the girls were on fire," Leslie said.

"We soaked up some early pressure then took it to them."

Muirheads, Roberts and defenders Angela Croad and Sheree Phillips were the stars of Wellington's vital win yesterday which leaves them three points behind leaders Northland.

Wellington are at home to last-placed Southern on Saturday then play Northland on Sunday.