

CANOE CARNAGE:

The Wainui open women's crew (top) are wiped out during their short course event at the Gisborne Surf Lifesaving champs on Saturday. The Midway crew, who went on to win the race, didn't fare much better, with three of their members dumped into the water. Kendall Elliott, front left, was the only one to survive the ride. Results and report in tomorrow's Gisborne Herald. See also back page.

Picture by Paul Rickard



Fire is back — 'I'm going to win'

by Kristine Walsh

POLLY Green's mate reckoned that if she started training now, she could be in the top 10 at the 2011 whitewater kayaking freestyle world championships, in Germany.

He should know — German kayaker Arnd Schaeftlein is considered a legend in the sport. But Green says she did not receive his praise with much grace.

"I'm not interested in being in the top 10," says the US-born sportswoman and filmmaker, who settled in Gisborne in 2008.

"I'm going to win."

A bold claim but, if anyone's going to make it, she is. This is the woman who last year told The Gisborne Herald she wanted her second short documentary — Soft Power Health, about kayaker Dr Jessie Stone's humanitarian aid efforts in Uganda — to be an award-winner. The film was last month named jury winner of best action sports film at California's Mammoth Mountain Film Festival.

She has a strong foundation to work from. As a fine arts student at the University of Colorado, she was already a hardcore sportswoman when she took up freestyle kayaking in the early 1990s. In 2003, she was fifth at the world champs in Austria.

Though she gave up competing two years later, Green believes her experience and ability to work under pressure will stand her in good stead.

Taking a top place next year will not be easy. In 2009 the championship in Switzerland was won by US kayaker Emily Jackson, at 19 half Green's age.



Polly Green will take her stubby 1.7-metre kayak on the water for two hours every day in the lead-up to next year's whitewater kayaking freestyle world championships. It will be her first competition since 2005 when she won the Nile Freestyle Festival in Uganda. Picture by Dave Thomas

"But it's certainly do-able so I'm stoked that my sponsors, Jackson Kayaks and Kokatat Watersports Wear, are back on board."

Green is already doing her part — a seven-hour-a-day, six-day-a-week schedule that combines flatwater training on the Waimata River with cycling, yoga and meditation.

To supplement that she plans regular

trips starting this week to Rotorua's Kaituna River which, with its grade five rating, will give her the whitewater she needs to perfect her tricks.

"But because I don't really want to leave Gisborne, much of my training will be on flat water — which means a lot of the work I do will be mental," she says. Schaeftlein will coach her via the internet. Today she is in Auckland for

a session with neuroscientist/sports coach Kerry Spackman, whose book The Winner's Bible is a source of inspiration to her.

She will also appear on tomorrow's 8.20am edition of the Sunrise television programme to talk about both her sport and her filmmaking.

She has a meeting booked with the New Zealand Film Commission to talk about funding for A Fire Burning, the feature film she intends to make documenting her comeback into whitewater kayaking.

The first shoot for the film has already been done and Green has assembled a team that includes co-producer/co-writer Darnelle Timbs and co-director/co-photographer Jo Tito, with high-profile Gisborne-based US duo Peter and Sarah Dixon on board as mentors.

"You have to approach these things with a sense of humour, so the film should be quite funny as well as being very personal," Green says as she buckles on her helmet for the day's training session.

"It will be very raw, very real but should have a few life lessons along the way."

Polly Green in part blames The Gisborne Herald for her coming out of retirement, after it reported comments she made last year about not having won the world championship she coveted.

"Seeing it in black and white brought it home that I hadn't achieved my goal to be the world No. 1 and I knew that if I didn't go for it, I'd regret it.

"So now I'm absolutely committed. The fire is back."

AOS involved after an argument escalates

MEMBERS of the armed offenders squad and police negotiation team were called to Manutuke on Saturday night when a fight between brothers escalated.

A 27-year-old man allegedly fired rounds from an air rifle and threatened his brother with it during a dispute at about 11.30pm.

Sergeant Dave Walker said the men were involved in an argument when it turned physical.

The man then went inside his house and returned carrying the gun, Mr Walker said.

He allegedly fired two rounds into the air and threatened his brother with it.

The AOS and PNT were called to the house

and negotiated with the man briefly before he gave himself up.

He faces charges of possession of an offensive weapon, presenting a firearm and threatening to kill. He was also arrested on an outstanding warrant for unrelated matters.

He is expected to appear in Gisborne District

Court today.

The incident was one of 17 domestic callouts over the weekend. An 18-year-old was arrested for allegedly threatening to injure his sister on Sunday morning. He was also wanted by police on unrelated matters, which are expected to be addressed when he appears in court today.

LOOKING AHEAD



AUTOWATCH

- We take a look at the new Toyota Landcruiser
- V4 and Rotary cars shows off their stuff
- Mazda wins at 24-hour Daytona
- Mazda marks two decades with spec MX-5

TOMORROW



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WEDNESDAY



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