

Soccer: Big step up for Bays

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By [Terry Maddaford](#)

East Coast Bays will head into uncharted waters when they run out for tomorrow's Chatham Cup final but at least they don't have to travel far for their first shot at soccer's biggest prize.

While Dunedin Technical, their opponents in the North Harbour Stadium showdown, have some Cup "form" to back their claims, Bays make the short trip down Oteha Valley Rd with nothing to show from previous forays but are determined to enjoy the occasion – and hopefully then head back to Bays City Park to celebrate.

In 1999 Dunedin Technical, on their second visit to North Harbour Stadium, beat Waitakere City 4–0 to win the coveted trophy for the first time. A year earlier, at the same ground, they had gone down 5–0 to Central United in the final.

That was their first trip to the final since 1964 when, as Tech Old Boys, they lost 3–1 to Mt Roskill (now Three Kings United) at Wellington's Basin Reserve.

The closest Bays have been to the final was a year ago when, at home, they lost in the semifinals – beaten by eventual winners Central United in a dramatic penalty shootout. A year earlier Central had ended Bays' run 2–0 in the quarter-finals.

Given the mediocre United Soccer 1 competition they were forced to play in this season – they won that title by 17 points with four games in hand – it is hardly surprising coach Willie Gerdson targeted the Chatham Cup as the big prize.

"We needed to play in the Northern Regional Premier League," said Gerdson. "Both sides in that stand-off – the Auckland Football teams who did play but without the top US1 teams and those US1 teams – suffered. Without teams like us, Glenfield Rovers and Waitakere City, they could not create a decent league.

"For that reason, and given how close we got last season, I, and the club, targeted the Cup," said Gerdson, from Germany and in his fifth year at the club. "The Cup final is the biggest game in New Zealand."

In reaching the final, Bays have beaten teams from four federations. They aim to make it a fifth tomorrow.

In six games thus far Bays have had two hard-fought 2–1 wins – the toughest against Eastern Suburbs at Madills Farm – but have tipped out former Cup winners Eastern Suburbs and Waitakere City.

For captain Leigh Kenyon it is the chance of a second Cup-winners medal. He was in the 2001 winning University Mt Wellington team who beat Central United 5–4 on penalties after being locked 3–3 at fulltime.

"I didn't take a penalty that day," said Kenyon. "But if we go to penalties this time I will step up. It promises to be a great day for the players and the club. Willie [Gerdson] has put a massive emphasis on the Chatham Cup and we want to go all the way."

While Kenyon has tasted success, two long-time teammates Jeff Campbell and Nick Hyde are chasing their first winner's medals.



Leigh Kenyon is hoping for his second win. Photo / Kenny Rodger

"They were both in the 1996 Mt Wellington team who lost to Waitakere, but when we played in 2001 Nick was playing in Brunei and Jeff was in Adelaide.

"While there are some of us who have had plenty of experience, there are a lot of young players who started their football at the club and have stayed here.

"The final will be a big step up for us as we won 18 out of 18 in the league and until the playoffs – which we did not really contest – we had won 24 from 24 in all competitions."

Like his teammates, Kenyon knows a little of what to expect. Dunedin's Blair Scoullar, a former University Mt Wellington teammate, and Sam Jasper are well known in Auckland and are expected to make worthwhile contributions for the southerners.

Technical coach Mike Fridge has a fair idea of what they are up against.

"As we did for our last two games against Miramar Rangers and Glenfield Rovers, we have had Bays watched," said Fridge. "But really, we are just focusing on ourselves. We have done our homework and know it will be a tough game."

He will again look to goal-scoring machine Aaron Burgess, who scored a hat-trick in the 3-2 semifinal win over Rovers to take his tally for the season to 29.

"But it has been a team effort," said Fridge, whose father played for another Dunedin club, Caversham, in the 1970s. Ross McKenzie and midfielder Andy Coburn have also been scoring while at the back they have done just as well, conceding only 17 goals in 20 games and scoring 94.

It promises to be close, but given their tougher battles en route to the final, including wins over former winners Northern and Miramar, Tech might be more hardened and ready to give a South Island team the spoils for the first time since they won nine years ago.

CHATHAM CUP FINAL: North Harbour Stadium, Tomorrow 4.30pm

This story was found at: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/4/story.cfm?c_id=4&objectid=10531718&pnum=0