

## [Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Rebekah Stott: How I kicked cancer and carried on

On this episode of Between Two Beers, we talk to Rebecca Stott.

Stott is a football fern who will be one of the team's most important players when they host the Women's World Cup in New Zealand in July.

Her professional football journey has been quite remarkable.

Ten different teams across four countries, two World Cups and two Olympics, but her story transcends sport.

In June 2020, Stott noticed a lump above her collarbone, and soon after it was diagnosed with Stage 3 Hodgkin's lymphoma, a type of cancer that would turn her world upside down. But 294 days after her diagnosis was confirmed, she returned to the footy field, beating the disease and returning to the professional game.

In this episode, we talk about how she dealt with her life-changing diagnosis, her thoughts on mortality and how she stayed positive, her epic return to professional football and the path that got her there, meeting Neymar, kissing Russell Brand, all her thoughts on the upcoming World Cup, and much, much more.

Stott is an exceptional role model for anyone suffering adversity in life.

Her upbeat approach to life and illness is both inspiring and uplifting, and it's easy to see why she's so widely loved by everyone in the football community.

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Also follow us on our Insta and TikTok, where we cut up all the best video clips from each episode.

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This episode was brought to you from the Export Beer Garden Studio.

Enjoy!

Rebecca Stott.

Hi.

Welcome to Between2Beers.

Thank you for having me.

We're very excited to have you in the Export Beer Garden Studio and welcome home.

Just got off the plane from Brighton.

What are we, we're Monday now, so that was three days ago, bit of a bit of a jet lag going on there.

Yeah, a bit.

I slept good last night, so that was helpful, but the night before, oof, woke up at 2.30, not good.

Never good.

No.

Never good at 2.30.

Coming back, so you're on that plane to return to play in New Zealand at a World Cup.

Was there a bit of time spent on that flight reflecting on what you were coming back for and, you know, what a once in a lifetime opportunity this is?

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Yeah.

It's huge.

It's the biggest thing to, the biggest football thing to happen in our country, I think, so it's going to be such a cool tournament and I'm just so excited, so yeah, definitely reflecting on it and I'm just excited.

Menchay, we were talking earlier about how, it's 30 days away from when this episode's going to be released and it's just creeping closer and closer.

There was a story in the Herald last week which had a few sort of bullet points that really caught my attention.

It was like, a corporate suite at Eden Park for nine games is \$180,000, \$33,000 for the cost of a box at the semi-final, FIFA have entire, have the entire park height hotel in Auckland's waterfront just to accommodate the Zurich based staff.

Like the scale of it, when, I don't know, when you put it into those sort of money terms, it just shows how huge it is.

Do you follow along with, like, how ticket sales are going or any of the hype around it?

Do we just get the big numbers?

Like, I think one million tickets just got sold, which is incredible, so it is such a big event, rare on the world, so it's amazing.

Back in the UK, is there a buzz amongst, like, your peers that are representing their nations and getting ready to come down to New Zealand as well?

Yeah, definitely.

I was at, I was in England, I think, at the start of July or August last year and the Euros were on, and like, just to see how many people came out to those games and the atmosphere was so amazing, and then, yeah, my teammates play for Norway, England, Sweden, a couple other countries, Korea, yeah, everyone's so excited, they're like, oh, what's it going to be like?

I'm like, it's going to be freezing, but it's going to be good.

It's mad.

Just before, whose uncle is coming over from the States and they've booked their flights into Wellington, they're trying to get tickets to the Netherlands games, sold out.

Like, sold, I've had a long history with football and with FIFA and bits and pieces, I cynically probably never thought all of the games would sell out, I didn't think the ticket sales would be where they are now, it's a huge custard pie in the face to me, and it's a, it's a testament, I guess, to the momentum and the good work that's been done in the lead-up in terms of building slowly.

As a player potentially walking out in front of friends and family at Eden Park, how much excitement does that fill you with?

So much.

It's going to be the greatest moment in my career, I believe.

It's so huge, and I think we don't realise how big women's football is getting and how much, how much it's made a difference in the last couple years.

It's huge.

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Yeah.

Yeah.

People say it a lot, but I don't think New Zealand quite knows what's coming, but we still don't.

It's coming pretty soon.

Seamus used to ride that FIFA gravy train for about a decade, so he knows the scene well.

What are you looking forward to, Shae, about the pomp coming over our way?

Yeah, I think, and it's dawned on me now, I don't think New Zealand will ever host the Men's World Cup.

I don't think we have...

No?

You want to put your name to that?

I will put my name to it.

I don't think the stadiums don't have the capacity, the interest fee for in terms of bums on seats.

So this will be the biggest football event that ever comes to our shores.

And just phenomenal.

And I think the fact that the...

People always talk on these major events about the international spend and tourists coming in and hotel room nights and all these things are going to happen, they're genuinely going to happen.

Like, it's pretty exciting for the whole ecosystem, definitely.

And I hope that the casual sports fan gets behind the tournament as it progresses as well, even those that aren't football aficionados, that they get caught up and swept up in the hype.

Because you must have seen this in the two World Cups that you've played in before as well, the spectators from the home nation getting in behind the visiting nations as well.

Yeah, absolutely.

Schools come and watch, and a lot of the locals come, which is really cool to see, and it's always good to play in front of a packed crowd, like that's one of the best feelings in the world.

Awesome.

Is there a strategy involved at this point in the ferns about dealing with the outside expectations as this thing, you know, the biggest scrutiny that you guys would probably ever be under?

No, we're not really focusing on that at all.

We are just focusing on ourselves and getting sure we get the tactics and performing, really.

I think, yes, there is expectation on us.

We've got, I would say, probably the best group we've had, no disrespect for the teams, but being seated at the top for the pool draw, like that's always going to be the best draw we get.

So, yeah, we want to get out of our group, but I think regardless, it's going to be such

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a cool tournament.

I'm so excited.

Just as a little aside, you were one of the faces of the campaign team as well.

Like I remember, I looked back in the research for the episode about when the announcement was wading.

I think you were sitting in the FFA office in Sydney.

Is it buzzy to reflect back on that now as well, that you're sitting here in New Zealand a less than a month out from the tournament actually kicking off?

Yeah, it was crazy.

That night was insane.

I think it was maybe 2am or something in the morning, and so we had done heaps of media in the day and then went for a little nap and then came back at 2am and when they said we've got it, oh my gosh, it was unreal.

It was kind of like, what, like, this is actually going to happen here.

So it was so cool, and now it's just around the corner.

What, how many days?

I don't even know.

Yeah, 30.

30.

30 days.

Exciting times.

So close.

Yeah.

All right, we'll get into it.

I want to start by letting you know how universally loved you are.

There's been some really powerful feedback pouring in about you from friends and family, and we're going to get to that, but first, one of our contacts has suggested we start with a story, which we always love, a bit of a upbeat yarn to get to meet our guest.

So this person has said, you need to get her to tell you about her travel gone wrong escapades in Prague with Betsy Hesit.

Yeah.

Did we know about this?

Oh, we do.

Yeah, okay.

This is a, it's a funny story now.

It was awful at the time, but do you want me to tell you it?

I would love to hear the story.

So me and Betsy were playing in Germany, I can't even remember, maybe like 2013, 2014?

And we decided to go for a trip to Prague.

It was quite spontaneous.

So we got in the car, drove for five hours, and then we're like, oh, where are we going to stay?

And so we rocked up at this hostel, yeah, hostel.

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And so we're like, oh, this will be good.  
Just got in like a shared room for women.  
There was only like two other people, so we're like, oh, this is, this is decent.  
And then we just kind of dropped our bags, we went out for dinner and did a few things around town and came back around 12 o'clock, headed off to sleep.  
And then I wake up and I hear Betsy going, excuse me, what are you doing?  
And I was like half asleep, I was like, I'm not doing anything.  
And then she goes again, what are you doing?  
And then I like kind of came to it and then there was someone in our room, a guy, anyway.  
So we all kind of got up, we were all flustered and just all over the show.  
We chased this guy out, I thought we were sprinting after him.  
And then it kind of went to a balcony.  
So we're like, okay, let's not, let's not go with that.  
So we went back inside and then we woke up in the morning, well, no, we didn't go back to sleep because we were so razzled.  
And then we talked to the people at the staff, like the reception or whatever, and they had videos.  
And so we're all shaken up and money had been stolen, our car keys had been stolen, an iPhone had been stolen.  
And so we're a bit all over the show.  
And then we looked at the footage.  
And yeah, surely enough, some chick comes in and then five minutes and leaves and leaves the door open.  
Five minutes later, this guy comes in, he's in our room for five to six minutes.  
How creepy is that?  
And then you just see him go out of the room, he's walking.  
And then like two seconds later, we come out and we're all like running after him, trying.  
And then so it's, it's a funny story now, but I will never stay at a hostel again.  
Yeah, I don't know if that's a funny story now, that's like really.  
Oh, it's crazy.  
That is creepy.  
Yeah.  
Awful.  
And then they stole our car keys.  
So we had to take the wheels off our car and wait for another set of keys to come.  
It was awful.  
But it is funny.  
I wouldn't have thought to take the wheels off the car.  
That's a great, was that, did you know to do that?  
Well someone suggest that was a good idea.  
Yeah, I think someone suggested it.  
That's a great shout.  
Yeah.

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That is, isn't it like a movie?

Like a hostel, like the, there's a movie called Hostel, which is based in Eastern Europe, which is kind of a horror.

Yeah.

Really, really bad things happen.

Yeah.

Shit.

Okay.

Not as light as we thought to start off with a room invasion.

Oh, honestly.

Crazy.

Yeah.

That's a good one.

All right.

So Daisy Cleverly has come to the party.

So this is what she says.

She said, the best thing about Stoddy is how she makes everyone around her feel comfortable to be themselves because of how authentic and goofy she is.

She's always the one to be making people laugh in a subtle, quirky way.

She has this goofy, funny side to her.

But then whenever you need her support in anything, she will drop anything for you.

She's incredibly loyal, caring, and an all-round amazing human.

That's so nice.

You need to get her to show you her hilarious dinosaur impersonation.

No.

No.

I don't know what you're talking about.

What?

It's weird because she's an incredibly amazing person and you need to get her to show you a Tyrannosaurus Rex impersonation with the two overwhelming pieces of feedback from your teammates.

A lot of interest in the dinosaur.

Oh, no.

I was going to say that's so nice.

Yeah.

But...

I mean, yeah, it is.

That part is.

But she didn't need to mention that.

No chance of the T-Rex.

Maybe later.

Okay.

All right.

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Easy.

And yeah, we'll get to that.

It is a T-Rex though, right?

Kind of, yeah.

I don't know what it is.

It's evolved.

We'll knock on that door again and see if we can come in.

We'll be right back after this short break.

The thing that I love about doing this podcast is learning in detail people's journey.

And your footy journey is quite remarkable.

So 10 different teams across four countries, two World Cups, two Olympics, and that on its own is a long-form podcast worthy yet.

But what has happened to you in the middle perhaps puts everything into perspective.

And I'm hoping we could start there.

I want to sort of paint the picture and then sort of get you to take it from there if that's all right.

It's 2020, you're 27, and your 10th year of being a professional footballer.

The world's just gone into lockdown.

You're playing for Melbourne City in the A-League and have just signed for Brighton in the Woman Super League in England when you notice a lump.

Yeah, crazy.

I noticed a small lump on the right side of my neck.

I had actually felt it before, I think, November the year before.

And I was kind of like, oh, I'm doing too much gym or something, or a good excuse to get me out of gym.

But it had gone away, and so I'd forgotten about it.

And then, yeah, it came back in lockdown.

And again, I was doing like home workouts, and I was like, oh, maybe I've annoyed it again or something.

But then I was like, oh, I might as well just get the doctor to check it.

So I went to see my Melbourne City doctor, and he was like, oh, let's just get a biopsy and a few blood tests and stuff just to make sure everything's OK.

And then, yeah, so I went and got those checks done, and it was actually crazy.

I was at the bid.

So we were in front of the Sydney Opera House getting like doing media and photos and stuff.

And then I was still waiting for my test results then.

And then I got a phone call from the doctor, like literally while I was there.

And he was like, oh, there is something.

We think it's this Japanese thing called Kukuchi Fujimoto or something.

It's harmless, but it should be fine.

But if it grows, just get it checked again.

So I was like, what is that?

And so I was like Googling, and nothing really.

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Like, it wasn't anything.

Yeah.

And so I was like, OK, sweet.

Like, it's fine.

And then I went over to Brighton and slowly just kept growing, kept growing.

And then I was doing gym.

And I was like, oh, this can't be just from the gym.

And then the other side started to swell as well.

And so I've got these pretty big lumps on my neck.

And I'm like, this is not right.

And so I'm trying to get another doctor's appointment in England, see my club doctor there, and things move very slowly over there.

Obviously, we're just on the other side of COVID.

So that complicated things as well.

And finally, I got into COGP.

And then she recommended me to go get another needle biopsy.

So I'm like, oh, I've just had a needle biopsy.

Like, what's this one going to find?

Anyway, so when I was there getting that done, I asked the lady who was doing it.

I was like, oh, what do you think it could be?

She goes, oh, I think this could be lymphoma.

And I was like, oh, I actually didn't know what it was.

So I go out.

I'm like, oh, doesn't sound great.

So I went out to my car and I googled it.

And I was like, oh, crap, that's cancer.

Probably a bit naive of me.

But yeah, so that's the first time I heard the words.

Well, not the words, but I heard lymphoma.

What do you do then after you've googled that and you've seen that what the doctor has said is likely cancer or it could be cancer?

Like, are you just processing?

Do you call someone straight away or do you sit with it for a minute?

I kind of was like a bit in shock.

I was kind of I was out by my car and I remember like kneeling down and I was like looking at my phone like, oh, my gosh, really?

I'm 27.

This can't be right.

And then, yeah, I talked to my closest friends and family and then obviously drove home.

So I was on the phone.

I was it was kind of weird.

Like, yes, I was like that to the very start.



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And then I was like, OK, I don't know that it is that.  
I've just got to control what I can control at the moment.  
Yeah, it could be that.  
But we got to see.  
And then, yeah, I guess that's when the long process started.  
It took me a month to get those results.  
And then those results were inconclusive.  
And then I had to wait another three to four weeks to  
because I sent it for extra testing or something.  
And then again, go to the hospital.  
It's still inconclusive.  
We need to do these other tests.  
They put some weird thing up my nose and down my throat.  
And, yeah, didn't find anything with that.  
And then they're like, OK, we need to cut into it, take a bit of the tissue.  
So I've got a big scar there now.  
So that took another month to wait to get that surgery.  
And then, yeah, so are you still playing at this point?  
Are you still training and playing?  
Or is it a different?  
Is it a preseason part of the season?  
No, we were in season.  
I was playing up until I had surgery.  
Is that weighing on your mind while you assume it must be?  
Like it's a very hard thing to put to the back of your mind  
and focus on performance or did that act as a distraction away from it?  
I think it was probably a distraction.  
The coach actually came up to me and said,  
because she obviously had heard that it could be that.  
She said, are you mentally OK to play?  
Like, are you OK to do this?  
And I was like, yeah, like, this is good for me to keep doing this.  
I need this distraction.  
I need to feel normal.  
Is that Hope Powell?  
Was she the coach at that stage?  
Yeah, Hope Powell.  
So, yeah, I mean, it was good for me to keep playing.  
But then it did get to the stage where I needed to get this surgery done.  
And then, yeah, it was crazy.  
And then I waited a whole another month to get those results.  
And I'm calling up every week.  
I'm like, is there results? Is there results?

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And they're like, oh, it's a bit hard to tell.  
But it's cancer, but we're just trying to find out which type it is.  
And so as soon as I heard that, I was like, OK, get me on a plane.  
I was like, get me out of here.  
And obviously, COVID, there were not many flights going to Australia where I was getting treatment.  
And then finally, I think it was 24 hours.  
I was on this Facebook page and it was like travel agents trying to get people home.  
I think there was 23 people on my plane.  
And it was like, I think, eight thousand pounds for a one-way ticket.  
It was in business class, so that was good.  
But it was one of those ones that I think it was Singapore and it went and stopped in Singapore, but you couldn't get off the plane.  
So it was just in transit on the plane.  
So it was like, I don't know, 27 hours straight on the plane.  
Did the length of time that it took you to get that clarity that this is cancer that three months or whatever it was, did that help prepare you for when you did here? Because I guess you're preparing for two outcomes, right?  
It either isn't and you get on with it or you're preparing yourself for that is.  
And was that your plan the whole time?  
Yeah, I think the worst part, to be honest, was waiting to figure out what it was.  
Because obviously something's wrong.  
I've got these massive lumps on my neck, but I don't know what it is.  
I can't make it faster to get a result.  
So that was the tough part.  
And I think once that nurse did say it could be lymphoma, that's when I think I started researching it and I saw that it was a decent like survival rate and I figured out which ones are good to get, which ones are not good to get.  
So I kind of knew more about it and I was more prepared.  
And so when I finally did get that diagnosis, I was it was more relief.  
I was just like, OK, cool.  
Yeah, this sucks, but I can get on with it now.  
I can get treatment and I can get better.  
Yeah, gives you certainty about where your path is going.  
So you go back to Australia and it's it's a brutal year ahead, right?  
How many can you talk us through what?  
Basically as much as little detail as you want to go into in the treatment.  
Yep. So I got to Melbourne.  
I had previously talked to the doctors just online and they'd said, oh, do you want kids?  
And I was like, what?  
I got cancer. Why are we talking about having kids?

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Inappropriate. Yeah.

I don't have time for that right now.

I was like, oh, I haven't really thought about that lately.

And they're like, because obviously having chemo can really affect your fertility.

So I was like, well, yeah, obviously, I want that choice.

I don't want that to be taken away from me.

So first thing was to get IVF.

So I went in, I got a bone marrow biopsy.

I had a PET scan.

I had a whole bunch of tests.

And then obviously I started with the IVF, which I think that was maybe two weeks.

I can't really remember.

But pretty much you've got to inject your stomach, get these hormones in to get you making these eggs.

And then once you've got enough, they or when they're ready, I don't really know.

They get them out and yeah, just going to put it out there.

I did really well.

Yeah, I got 27 eggs.

Good result. Wow.

Because they say 10 eggs equals one baby.

So I was like, wow, thank you.

Yeah, yeah. Two and a half.

Yeah.

Done the math.

I was really sitting there trying to take it through.

Yeah, so that was good.

And then.

Yeah, so just pause you there.

That's a hell of a double whammy to have to deal with in a short space of time, because you're preparing for this one case and then you're getting slapped with this other case.

Like, what's your support network look like at that stage now that you're back home?

So I was getting treatment in Melbourne.

The facilities are amazing.

They're like, that was the best place for me.

My family lives on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.

Sorry.

And so.

They would come up every couple of weeks when I would start my treatment for my cycles.

So that support was really good.

I have a lot of friends in Melbourne that was Melbourne's my home.

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Like, that's where I can see myself living.

So I had a lot of friends and a lot of friends, parents, like my second family is there.

So, yeah, all those people helped me out so much.

But before you started the chemo, did you have an idea of what chemo was? Did you have it?

Yeah, did it did it marry up to what you thought that experience was going to be?

I had absolutely no idea what it's going to be like.

I remember sitting there before my first chemo session, I guess.

And I had to get there at like, I don't know, eight o'clock or something.

And then I had like a half an hour, an hour, like chat with the nurse.

And they were like, OK, this is going to happen.

This is going to happen. This is going to happen.

And I was like, OK, and then I went straight in for chemo.

And I was like, this is crazy.

Like, that's the first time I had been told what was actually going to happen.

And then half an hour later, it's happening.

So it was a bit like, here we go.

I'm not going to say it was exciting, but I was kind of like.

What is this going to be like?

Like, I don't know, because I mean, I tried to do a bit of research and I didn't really find out too much.

But I remember thinking one thing was like, how is this going to feel like when it goes inside?

Like, is it going to hurt?

Is it going to be like, make me feel awful all of a sudden?

So I was a bit like, what's it going to be like?

But I would say actual doing the chemo, like going in for the sessions was better than what I thought it was going to be.

It was the side effects that came with it that were the crap thing.

Do you want me to go through my cycle?

Yeah, yeah, if it's all right.

Yeah, so I was told because I had a limb.

Oh, my gosh, brain, because I had that's that's a that's a genuine side effect as well, right, is a bit of brain fog.

Yeah, does it still affect you to this day?

I think it does, to be honest.

Like my memory really sucks.

I'll go to say something and then I'll forget it like that.

It was worse when I was going through it.

Oh, my goodness.

I've listened to a few of your interviews almost straight afterwards and you can normally, I heard you speak about that

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and you can almost hear yourself lose your train of thought and then try and bring yourself back.

Definitely. It's definitely a thing.

I think some people thought I was like, oh, yeah, chemo brain sometimes, but I was like, no, actually can't do it.

Yeah, so I had stage three Hodgkin's lymphoma, which meant I needed more intense chemotherapy because it was below my diaphragm.

And so he was like, you lose your hair.

Like it's it's more intense, like your body's going to take a hit.

And then it was a 21 day cycle.

So day one and two and three, I would go in for like the first day was the longest day. It was about five hours, six hours.

And I had three different types of chemo.

One was called the Red Devil, because I think that's the one that makes you lose your hair.

But also if you sit in the sun after it and you like get burnt, like your veins go black.

They kept telling me that I was like, I'm not going in the sun.

It's crazy.

And those two were fine.

The first two were fine.

And then the third one, it was the longer one.

And they're like, this one kind of gets people.

And I was like, oh, my body's great.

I'll be fine.

And then about 10 minutes into it, my head just went and I was just like, like thinking about it now gives me a shivers

because it was such a like unpleasant feeling.

And you just get like, they call it a head cold.

I can't even explain it really.

It's just not a good feeling.

And then so they can slow it down and you you just got to

I don't wait for it to to finish and then you kind of feel better and stuff.

What do you do during a chemo session to keep yourself occupied?

Phone, watch a movie, I don't know, write notes or something.

I remember one one day my friends, a coach, and she was like,

oh, can you watch this game and give me some like feedback?

And so I was doing doing that and writing some notes and stuff.

And and that was good.

It made the time go fast.

But to be honest, the best thing for me was Packish.

Do you know Packish?

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No crackers. Yeah.

They were so good.

Honestly, they got me through that half an hour of awfulness.

Yeah. So that was day one.

And then it was two and three were very quick days if you got in fast, like literally 15 minutes for two to different chemo's and then you're out.

And then same with day three.

And then you have so that's one to three.

And then day I think eight or nine, I go back in and get another one, which was easy as well.

And then I wait till day 21.

That's the end of my cycle.

So really, I go in for four days of chemo.

And then so, yeah, I had six of those.

And then the doctor told me I didn't need sex.

I only needed four.

So I was like, yes.

That's that's a good message to get.

Before I get to that, though,

the mindset that we're going to talk later about, you know,

the incredible career you've had and the mental strength

and why you're so likeable in the team environment because of your attitude.

When something like this happens and you're you're going through rounds and bouts of chemo and you're facing death, right?

Like, are you thinking about death?

Are you thinking about mortality or your mortality?

Or are you just thinking about how strong you need to be in the positives?

And are you just sort of focused on how you're going to get through it?

Yeah, to be honest, I never thought about death.

I never I was like, like that wasn't an option.

Obviously, I saw the good survival rates and the doctor filled me with a lot of confidence as well.

But honestly, after I researched it, I was like, I'm fine.

This is going to be all good.

I'll get through it.

So I didn't really think about that ever, which is interesting.

There's there's brave there's brave facing it like like you say.

But surely during the period of your treatments, there are some really dark days and some really challenging days as well.

Who did you lean on or how did you get through those darker moments that that maybe you don't talk about all that often?

Or I know I know you did your blog stuff, which was really great and really gripping.

So but how did you how did you fight those kind of dark moments?

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Yeah, I mean, they definitely were the dark moments 100 percent.  
But I guess talking to people, that was my big one.  
I had Steph Catley.  
She was on the other side of the world and she was amazing.  
Like I would call her when I was having problems.  
And she was just a legend that really helped me.  
I think I wish she helped us on this podcast.  
I reached out to her and she didn't give me anything back.  
Well, that's all good.  
She would have had some real good stories.  
Yeah, but my family, they they would come for my chemo days  
and they helped me out a lot.  
And then the people I were living with, they were great.  
That's like my second family.  
So definitely talking to people.  
But to be honest, like one thing that I think really helped me get through  
it was distracting myself with beat it, starting starting that.  
It gave me something else to do.  
And like, I remember I was on steroids, so I was on a whole lot of drugs.  
And so these steroids, I think it was steroids,  
they would wake me up at like two a.m.  
And I'd just be buzzing, like I'm there like.  
And my brain's just going, going, going.  
And so I'd have all these thoughts about beat it.  
And I'd like get up right now, it's and do all this.  
And it kind of like gave me a purpose away from football.  
So I think that was the biggest like help for listeners that don't know.  
Can you explain what what beat it is?  
Yeah. So be that, I guess it started with my blog,  
just telling people about what I was going through about my story.  
And then I kind of had an idea that  
to make a cancer bag for people to take into hospital.  
So I was going to one of the early days appointments  
and with like a little shopping bag, like not very comfortable.  
And I was like, no, I'm going through something so crap.  
I deserve better.  
I deserve to like treat myself.  
And I was like, I need a bag to put all my stuff.  
Like it was just ridiculous, like paperwork  
and tourniquet and just everything drugs.  
And so I was like, I'm going to make a bag.  
Why not? And so I started thinking how I could do that.  
And so I reached out to China.

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And I designed these beat it bags that were like purpose to take into hospital and hold all my medical stuff and drink bottle.

And then I was like, OK, how are we going to do this?

So then I was like, what do I need when I'm going through treatment?

And I was like, I need a distraction, I need food,

I need my medication, tourniquet, paperwork, blah, blah, blah.

So I made like separate, like little, what do you call it?

Departments for that, compartments for that.

And then, yeah, so it just kind of went from there.

And then I was like, OK, I need to get these two people.

So then I started an auction.

I got heaps of footballers shirts and from the Olympics, I think that was on then, well, just about auction them off and then raised a bit of money and then to pay for all this.

And then we actually got them all out to canteen.

Do you know what canteen is? Yeah.

So they are in the process of giving them out to young adults, young patients that are going through cancer.

Yeah. So it's really incredible.

And actually, at the moment, they are getting more bags sent over so that they can continue, beat it by study bags and get them out to people who need them.

That's so cool.

It's honestly really cool.

It's so much pride that you've turned something which is so horrible and bad and something so good.

Yeah, it's so good.

And I've been getting a few Instagram messages from people saying like, oh, I received your bag today.

I'm so thankful, like it's perfect, blah, blah, blah.

I mean, it's not perfect, but no, it's really cool to help people.

So the doctor says that you don't need to do any more treatment.

You're in the clear.

Was it at that point that you think about getting back on the football field or was that was that something that you were going to do earlier?

I mean, I I always thought I'll be back to football.

I didn't know how soon it would be.

But I was I was definitely the whole way through.

I was like, yeah, I'm getting back.

Like, I can't wait to be done so I can get back to it.



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But yeah, I mean, when the doctor said,  
oh, you you ready for your last cycle?  
I was like, what?  
No, I'm only halfway.  
And he's like, no, you're pretty much in remission.  
Like one more and you're done.  
And I was like, like that for me was the best moment,  
like the best news because that that last cycle actually hit me quite hard.  
Like that was when I was at my lowest.  
So I was so glad that I was done after that.  
I know you did the world's greatest shave.  
And I think part of the fundraising goes towards leukemia.  
Actually losing your hair.  
How confronting is that?  
Yeah, I was kind of scared for that, to be honest.  
I had Photoshopped a photo of me bald  
and the bald head that I had got was quite big.  
And so I looked like an alien and I'm like, I'm going to look ridiculous.  
This is not good. Like I was terrified.  
But yeah, so I was like, I need to make this at least kind of like fun and good.  
And so I was like to like invited my friends and my family to like a salon.  
And we kind of did like a wig party.  
So everyone had to wear wigs, except for me.  
And then they shaved it off.  
And I think we raised around 40,000 or something to go to the leukemia foundation,  
which is incredible.  
So much support is it was amazing.  
But then, like once they actually shaved it off.  
So I think I went to maybe that short, but I loved it.  
Like, I think we did a mullet in the middle of it.  
And like once it was gone and I actually saw myself, I was like, OK, I don't look too bad.  
Like, it's kind of suits me. This is fun.  
But then I guess when I did fully lose it and it was like all patchy  
and then finally shaved it off.  
Like, I was fine with it.  
It was actually like walk around the mall with no beanie.  
People was funny, like the looks I would get was it was kind of interesting.  
Like people look at you with so much sympathy.  
Oh, I'm fine. Don't worry.  
Because when you eventually came back to the field for Baleen Lines, I think it was,  
you were rocking the full shaved head at that stage, right?  
I was completely bald.  
Yeah. Had no hair, actually. It was great.

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This is this is an interesting one.

Like, were you able to hit the ball, genuine question?

Like, there was no issues around like sensitivity of the skin or anything like that.

You were fully. Yeah. OK.

Now, I had this good

oak shampoo and conditioner, so like my head was fine.

Just before we get you back on the field, there's

is there some super emotional phone calls when you get the message?

Is it when you get the message from the doctor or when you have that last treatment that you're in the clear and how do you celebrate?

Like, do you celebrate that?

Yeah, I remember because I didn't start chemo that day until like an hour later or something.

So I went outside to like the little parky area

and I called my parents and I was like, I'm done.

I only have to do this last one and I'm done.

They were like, what?

So like that was incredible.

And then I called one of my closest friends and and told her the news.

And yeah, it was just the best feeling ever.

It was so nice.

We'll be right back after this short break.

And then what was the time frame from from when you got that message to when you started training and then playing again professionally?

Professionally or playing again at all.

So the bullying game was very early, like I had probably only been playing for training, sorry, for like two weeks.

Yeah, if that you you still in my really amateur,

you still looked really sick in my eyes in that in that game.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

And I was only 10 minutes and I was still like making sure my heart rate wasn't going too crazy.

So I finished treatment, I think, early June.

Around the 21st, maybe.

And I would say I fully got back to like in Melbourne City training.

I would say around September, October.

But even then it was like I was having issues.

Like it took me a long time to build up and actually be

OK playing like I don't think I was I was not in a good way throughout that whole season.

I got to the end of that season and I was I was barely training.

I was just playing and then the Australia tour happened.

So I went to the US

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and then for my first game back for New Zealand, which was incredible. I was sorry to interrupt, but I was doing a bunch of watching a bunch of old clips interviews over the last week and that clip where you come on and it's your first game back and the two players come over and there's just a very brief little hug and there's just like so much meaning in that moment. It got me all emotional. Yeah. No, that was special.

It was so cool.

Yeah, it was one of the best moments ever.

And then there's extra emotion added in that particular.

I think it was the Iceland match because there's a US fan in the stands

Alison Gale, and she's got a sign and the sign reads, go study.

And thanks for helping me beat Hodgkins.

That is a statement in itself, right?

Did you realize the impact that you were having through your own journey?

Kind of did just because of the messages I were getting and the communication I was having with these people.

So it's a crazy story.

Like she had the same thing I did at pretty much the same time we were going through treatment on the other side of the world.

And so it was really cool.

Like that was that was so special for her to come to that game.

And us kind of have that moment, I guess.

She's actually come in the World Cup, which is so cool.

Amazing. Yeah. No, it's it's so special.

And it's so cool to to see how I guess I have helped and inspired people and just helped them know that they can get back to football as well.

Does that carry a little bit of a weight of burden or pressure with you as well?

To or once you've been through a cancer journey, is it all just whatever?

I'm just I just get to enjoy and to play football now.

I think it's more like that.

Like what I have been through, I think it kind of does put things into perspective.

And like, I think like things are more important than football.

Like, yes, it's a massive part of my life, but I think I've realized like.

Life, like being happy and enjoying myself is is so much more important.

I want to read a quote now from Rado Vitisic, who coaches Melbourne City men's side, but was at one point your coach in an interview just as you were returning to play.

He said this, Rebecca Stott, that is the highlight of my coaching career.

I've had 36 undefeated games with Brisbane Raw and I've worked with

Ange Postacoglu, coached Alessandro Dalpiero, I won the FFA Cup with Melbourne Victory and now here with City on part of a fantastic organization,

but to be part of someone's life journey to defeat the illness that she has had,

to come back and to see her, how dedicated she is to the sport, to the woman's game and how much following she has got and how much people adore her.

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I think for us, that is the winning season.

If we don't achieve anything else this year, just by helping her to get back on her feet and to achieve whatever dreams that she has in front of her,

I think that is the winning right there.

Is that the coolest quote?

It is cool.

No, I remember seeing that and I was like, wow, like that itself puts it into perspective.

So it's cool. I'm actually surprised there's no sweetie in that, though.

He would just call us sweeties, it's pretty ridiculous.

But no, it's so nice.

And yeah, I imagine something like that helps put it into perspective for you because you're just on this journey, you've just had this thing thrown at you and you're fighting through and you're doing everything you can to get to the other side.

And the people that you inspire along the way and you hear someone like Rado saying such powerful words about you and we're going to read some other stuff out later of the impact you have through the strength of your journey.

It's just, yeah, it's really inspiring.

Yeah.

It is crazy, like I'm just going along with every day.

Like I'm not thinking about that.

And then when someone does say something like that, it kind of does hit me.

And I'm like, whoa, I've been through that.

Yeah, I wondered that.

I wonder if it is now more just forward facing?

Like, I know it's important to reflect back on what you've been through.

And there's lessons to be learned from that journey as well.

But when you go through that, I imagine you do just look forward to kind of every opportunity that's in front of you.

And and rather than reflecting on the difficulties, the opportunities that now present themselves to you.

I think sometimes I forget about it, to be honest.

Like, I mean, what, it was three years ago now, two years ago now.

So sometimes I do forget about it, which is nice, I guess, in a way.

But I definitely am like forward thinking and just thinking about the future.

Yeah, we're going to move on.

But what is your relationship like with the telling of this?

Because every interview you do that I've listened to, it forms a big part of it.

It's obviously a big part of our preparation.

Is that something that you enjoy talking about in every interview?

Or do you look forward to a time down the line where it's a minor, it's a more minor part?

No, I actually enjoy talking about it.

I think it is good to reflect sometimes and actually go through the story again.

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Like, I don't mind it at all.

I think there definitely will be a day where I get sick of it and I'm like,

OK, I'm over that.

Let's not talk about it again.

But I do like talking about it.

I don't know why.

It's weird.

But like I my mum had non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

So going through the research of this has been a little bit challenging for me

because you're taken back into a place that you don't.

It's fulfilled with some kind of uncomfortable moments.

But one of the things that shone through was thinking about the support that you had,

but also thinking about the amazing people that work in oncology.

They are just phenomenal, phenomenal humans.

And you don't realize how much you can lean on strangers sometimes as well

when you're in those those uncomfortable moments.

But they're just beautiful humans that work in those departments.

And they absolutely worked into the ground.

They are incredible.

The nurses are my goodness.

They're the best.

Do you ever go back to any oncology wards for visits or anything like that yourself?

It's been hard because I've been in Brighton, but I do have three month check ups.

But to be honest, like you don't really get to see the people who were around you through chemo.

So yeah, you don't really get to see that.

But I see the doctors.

We'll be right back after this short break.

All right, we're going to go back to the start.

We're going to sort of paint the picture of Rebecca.

Four brothers growing up in Papamoa.

Is that is that where the competitiveness came from?

You're sort of trying to compete with the bros?

Yeah, definitely.

If I didn't compete with them, I would get bullied and get hit and, you know, all over the show.

So definitely growing up with four brothers.

It was fun. It was crazy.

Are you the youngest?

Second youngest.

Thank goodness.

And then as I grow up in New Zealand and the age of 10,

I think your parents went over to Australia and decided they were going to move the family there.

It's quite a tough age to move.

You know, you've got friends and established, but then you're in the sunny coast.

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That's where you pitched up.

Was it an easy transition?

I mean, they came home from a holiday and they were like, we're moving.

I was like, no, like I was crying.

I was like, I don't want to move.

And obviously, like growing up, we would watch the All Blacks versus the Wallabies.

And I hated Australia.

Like I hated them.

So they said that I was like, what?

I don't want to go there.

But yeah, moving over like we went, I think we arrived in the middle of January or something like right in summer and we're living close to the beach.

And so I was like, go down to the beach every day.

I was like, this is kind of cool.

And then going to school, I think I went to a primary school for like a year.

And then I moved to high school at like a different kind of area.

So I didn't really make that many friends in school over there, which was kind of hard.

But I was always at football.

So I had my football friends and they like, I don't know, they were the best.

So I had that side of it and yeah, school.

At what stage do you jump into the QAS, the Queensland Academy of Sport?

How old are you at that point?

I think I was 14 or 15.

And that took up majority of my time.

Like I would go to school, go to school.

And then I think I'd leave early, go home, make dinner and pack it.

Dad would come pick me up because we had to drive an hour and a half, sometimes two hours with the traffic to get there every night of the week.

Yeah. So that was crazy.

But I loved it.

And is at that point you think I could actually make a career out of out of football at kind of age 14, 15?

I don't think I did realise it then.

I think it was when I was in the under 17 Australian team.

I was like, oh, there's actually a career in this.

Obviously, times have changed a lot since then.

But to see that then, like it was pretty cool.

I was like, this is great.

Then I finished school and I was like,

do I go to uni?

Yeah, that's what you're supposed to do.

So I enrolled and I was going to do sport and industry, I think.

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So I rock up.

I go there for two days and I'm sitting in this lecture room.

I'm trying to write these notes, but then I like miss what they've said.

And then I've written half the notes.

I was like, yeah, I was like, this is not for me.

I left. I was like, nah, I quit.

And I was like, I see football.

So I was like, yeah, funny.

Well, because you're not just you're not just representing the under 17s and under 19s in Australia.

You're captain of your country or the country at that stage as well, aren't you?

Have you risen to leadership positions in those age group teams?

I think for for one of the tournaments I was, I was like co-captain with one of the others or something.

So yeah, that was really cool.

Did you have like, where was women's football at that time when you were 15, 16, sort of thinking about maybe a path?

Like, who do you remember who your role models?

Did you have strong female role models in the game at that point?

I think Rapinoe, I remember her.

And then obviously Marta, Marta was my favorite player.

And I was like, this is cool.

Actually, tell your story.

When I was in primary school in New Zealand, I had to do a speech.

And it was like, what do you want to be when you grow up?

And I remember I made my speech on like being a woman's football.

I was like, when I grow up, I'm going to play for China or the USA because they're the best teams in the world and doesn't work like that.

But I mean, obviously I had that dream since I was a child and then to actually realize that it is a reality.

It was pretty cool.

So you represent Australia under 17, under 19 level, but then you don't play full national team for them?

Did you not see a pathway or how did you end up at the fans?

I was playing at Melbourne Victory then.

And so is Jodie Taylor.

Obviously, I don't know if I can say that.

You can. OK.

Obviously, at that stage, Jodie was in a relationship with a football fern.

Yes. And that football fern

suggested that you get in contact with Tony Reddings.

Yes. Is that what you were going to say? Yeah. Yeah, that works.

So I was like, maybe, why not?

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So I came over here for a trial with my dad.  
I think we're here for, like, maybe three days.  
And then we went to the mount because we got family there and it was nice.  
Yeah. So three days of training and I did all right.  
Like, did my usual thing and just chilled.  
And then I got back to Australia and Tony was like, oh, yeah,  
like, we want you to come over and live here and train with us and  
maybe come on tours with us.  
And so at that stage, I was like, damn, I need to make a decision.  
And I think it was, I think that was early 2012.  
And obviously the Olympics were coming up  
London and the Matilda's hadn't qualified.  
And I was nowhere near in their sights.  
So I was like, I'm going to go to these Olympic games.  
This is definitely happening.  
So I moved over. I think I was 17 at the time. I can't remember.  
So I lived with a random family and it was quite hard, actually.  
I remember I cried the first night.  
I was like, oh, what am I doing?  
But then I started getting into training, got friends  
and I loved it here. It was so good.  
Got real fit.  
And then I made the team to go to London.  
And that was so cool. It was the best.  
Olympics are pretty cool, right? Oh, my gosh, the best.  
About time, Shay tells us this cheeseburger eating competition.  
Yeah, no, I want to hear this. I want to hear that.  
He tells it every episode.  
Someone brings up the Olympics.  
I haven't.  
So I was with the men's team that Olympic Games  
and we had a couple of days.  
I'll try and fast-track, please.  
I'm getting daggers from Steven  
and I'm getting daggers from producer Adam, because I've heard the story so many times.  
As you know, in the Olympic Village, the McDonald's is there.  
We hadn't started playing yet and me and Roland Jeffrey, the physio,  
decided we should have a cheeseburger eating competition.  
It got around the players. Everyone was behind it.  
So the full delegation basically charges into the dining hall  
and then we just sit down opposite one another, like you and I are now  
and just go cheeseburger for cheeseburger.  
And then I beat him 13-12, I think it is.



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I can't remember. I have to listen back. Change it.  
It changes every time, but yeah, that was pre-competition.  
And then the Black Ferns hockey team, I think,  
put a complaint in their event report that the New Zealand men's football team  
were having a cheeseburger eating competition  
and didn't take their preparation seriously.  
I can't believe he's told it.  
I can't believe he's told it again.  
We were in the same hotel in Newcastle at the end.  
So we played Brazil in the last game and you guys were preparing  
for the USA quarterfinal, right?  
But you and a few of the others may have a Brazilian Olympic football story.  
Yeah, it's not my name to drop.  
So you go ahead and drop that name.  
So we're having dinner, I think, and outside our dinner room was pool tables  
and ping-pong tables and then just happened to be Brazil was next to us  
in the next dining hall.  
So we're outside like playing pool and stuff.  
And then they kind of come out and they start playing.  
And I'm like, that's Marcelo. Marcelo is playing with us.  
I was like, what? And then we started playing sting pong.  
And then Neymar comes out.  
Alexander Pato comes out and I'm like.  
I was like, what is going on?  
But it was so cool playing sting pong with them.  
Sting pong. OK, you know sting.  
I know beer pong.  
They went playing beer pong in the Olympics.  
Well, I know. I don't know what I don't know what I'm assuming it's similar.  
But what's table? Yeah.  
Bad at that end, bad at this end in like five, six people.  
So one person starts here, hits it, drops it, runs to the side.  
That person hits it, drops it, runs to the side.  
So it's like a rotation.  
So the next person comes in, hits it.  
If you get out first, you're the one getting stung by the winner.  
So then if you lose, you get eliminated till it goes down to two.  
And then it's like you hit it, spin around, hit it, spin around.  
Yeah. Yeah. Not like beer pong at all.  
Not at all. Yeah, I did.  
Well, I was there.  
Honestly, the best go.  
But the stinging part, you didn't explain very well.

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So if you lose, you've got to turn around and then they.  
Oh, yeah, they whack the ping pong at you on close range, hence the sting.  
Yeah. Neymar stung me.  
Did he? Yeah. Wow.  
That's a claim to say. Yeah.  
Not the only celeb interaction.  
No. Closing ceremony.  
It had just finished and everyone was just going wild on the.  
I don't know, stadium floor or the lights came on and stuff.  
And then I saw this massive like clump of people walking around someone.  
I was like, well, and I saw it was Russell Brand.  
And I was like Russell Brand.  
And I'm like, I don't know, 18 at this stage.  
And I'm like, crazy.  
And I go, Russell, can I have a kiss?  
So he gives me a kiss on the cheek.  
And I'm like, whoo.  
I'm fascinated to understand why Russell Brand was in the middle  
of a whole bunch of athletes at the closing ceremony.  
I think he had just like performed or something.  
And he was trying to get out of there.  
He had to cross me first.  
You were we'll get to it eventually, but you were overdue  
in Olympic Games performance, right?  
Because I think Rio 2016, you were just coming back from an injury.  
And then Tokyo, you were in the middle of your treatment.  
So Paris 2024 must be a big one on the horizon for you as well.  
Not putting it too far ahead of the World Cup coming up.  
No, yeah, 100 percent.  
I'm looking forward to that so much.  
That's I mean, the Olympic Games is such a cool event.  
Like you stay in the athlete's village.  
Is there's just so much hype around it.  
I love it so much.  
So definitely you have any other famous athlete  
stories or interactions from any of the games villages?  
No, I'm a fishing expedition.  
Yeah, to be honest, you never know what you're going to pull out.  
Rio was a bit weird, like we were only there for a few days  
and then we were out for good, whereas London, we got to come back  
and be a bit crazy.  
Yeah, I think they stopped it after London.  
They stopped it.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Rebekah Stott: How I kicked cancer and carried on**

It's your fault.

Thanks for that.

Yeah, it might well be, actually.

I'm going to start chatting your sort of professional football journey.

It's quite a list.

There's there's so much here.

I don't know even where to start, but Brisbane Raw in 2010,

Melbourne Victory 2011 through 13.

2013, 15, SC Sand.

Now, where's SC Sand?

Germany. That's a German club right on the border of France.

OK, so you're leaving an English speaking country to go to Germany.

Why is he saying that name right?

Sand. I'm asking perfect.

Sand, SC Sand.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

I was just saying to start with you got it.

Well, I didn't know how to pronounce it either.

So I was checking.

Yeah.

Sand.

Sand.

Yeah, but like, what's the what's the decision made?

How come you've?

Yeah, Sprecher Deutsch.

Sorry.

You're right.

But if you've gone German.

Well, you had to learn it.

Ah, yeah, I was there for two years.

I didn't have to.

Right.

I wanted to.

Yeah, but why do you leave Australia?

Why do you leave your professional in Australia to be a professional in Germany?

Semi.

Semi pro in Australia.

Full pro in Germany.

Kind of amateur in Australia.

This was early days in the W League.

And so it wasn't really like a career pathway.

No, there was, but it wasn't like a full time.

Like this is what you're doing.

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I always wanted to go overseas.  
And so after London, like that opportunity came up and I was like, yeah, I'm going.  
I didn't care that it was Germany.  
I was like, yeah, it'll be fun.  
And Betsy was there.  
So I was like, oh, cool.  
Don't really know it that well, but sure, we'll get to know each other.  
And we became very close.  
So that was cool.  
And so it was fully professional and is the sound like you.  
It was all you were doing.  
You were training and playing like you didn't have to do.  
Yeah, technically, it was a bit amateur at the start.  
We were in the second division.  
So it was like train three to four days a week and just do whatever the rest of the time.  
You didn't have to like pick up a job or anything like that.  
Like it was enough.  
Though you looked after enough that you didn't have to do anything outside of football.  
Well, we had accommodation and we had a car and then we got paid a bit.  
So no, we didn't need to work.  
But like it wasn't like, oh, yeah, I'm saving all this money.  
It was kind of like almost breaking even like we weren't we weren't out of pocket,  
but we definitely weren't saving much.  
You bounce back to Australia for two years, Melbourne City,  
and then you're off to Seattle for 2017-18 season.  
Just a good another good opportunity in America.  
Try something different.  
Yeah, I mean, the W League at that stage was, I think, running for three to four months.  
So like it's not very like you otherwise you're just training at home  
and playing maybe local league.  
So that's not what I wanted.  
I wanted to be playing all year round.  
And I think a few of the players at my team, then just fish lock and Lou Barnes,  
they were at Seattle and they're like, oh, you should come over to Seattle.  
So I was like, yeah, get me to Seattle.  
And they did.  
So I was like, yes, this is sick.  
So went over there and it was all right.  
I like Seattle, but I didn't really like the country.  
So I was like, get me out of here.  
How did it compare to New Jersey?  
Because you're in New Jersey for a season two, right?  
Well, that would have taken Seattle over New Jersey.

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Yeah, not a fan of New Jersey.

It was kind of crazy.

Like you signed a contract.

I signed a contract for two years and I asked my age and I was like, oh, this is one year plus one year, right?

Like if I don't like it, I can leave after a year.

He's like, yeah, it's an option.

It's an option.

Turns out it's an option for the league and the club.

So the league actually owns your rights and the club doesn't.

So I got traded in that off season to New Jersey.

So I have no say in that you go from a place where you have facilities, you get fed, like it's good, like it's got nice house, blah, blah, blah.

And then I go to New Jersey and I was like, oh, this place sucks.

No offense to anyone from New Jersey.

We've got quite a lot of New Jerseyans.

We're about some Jersey.

I was like in the middle of a random town, like in the middle of nowhere.

Stephen loves New Jersey.

Just yeah, I went to university in New Jersey.

Means a lot to the right.

Freehold, you know, freehold.

Yeah, I do know freehold.

Do you like it?

I didn't spend a lot of time there.

I know it. There's nothing.

Anyway, we had no facilities.

We would like had no lockers, no nothing.

Barely got fed.

And so it was like, I signed up for Seattle, not for this.

And it was kind of like, oh, this is annoying.

So yeah.

So you're really well positioned then to comment on how much football women's football has changed in particular.

How does how do those early days compared to where you are now at Brighton and Hove and Brighton and Hove Albion?

Crazy, crazy.

You should see my facilities.

We have our own building, the men's ones over here.

And then just a little walk where there we rock up at 830.

We go over to the men's side for breakfast every morning.

Amazing breakfast.

You can eat whatever you want.

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Come back over.

We've got our own meeting room.

Our change room is massive.

We've got like an ice bath in there and then like a hot tub, like literally two spas pretty much.

We have our own pool with jets.

So you swim against it.

Got our own massive gym and it's all brand new, like physio rooms.

We have everything, boot room and then the fields are amazing.

So, yeah.

Is it true that you've come to appreciate the gym more post-cancer treatment than you did pre-cancer?

I appreciate it more and I realise and can admit that I need it.

I hate it still.

I'm not a fan.

I do see the need for it though.

So I'll do it.

So the Brighton stint as we talked about sort of got cut short and you went back and you were in Melbourne City for a year and then you'd just gone back over and you've just come back.

But the second time you went were a lot of the same people there from the first and was there a sense of sort of connectedness from what you'd been through?

Yeah, a lot of the players had left.

There was a couple there still.

Some of the staff were the same, like the coach was the same.

It was cool to go back to Brighton.

When I was there last time, we were at a university pitch.

We'd have to go from there and like in the winter it was just mud like awful.

We had no change rooms and then we had to go over to the stadium for like gym and food if we got it.

And then going back this time to the new facilities I was like, wow, this is amazing.

This is professional.

This is what professional football is like.

So yeah, it was pretty cool and then obviously the team had changed a lot but the girls were really cool.

I think that's one thing Brighton has is the team culture is so cool and it's just a good time being there.

How does the level compare to all of the places you played?

America and Australia and England, Germany, Norway.

What was the best level?

England was definitely the best.

I think that league is probably the best in the league.

I think America has definitely come a long way as well

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and I think they probably were the best league for a while until the WSL got their stuff together. But yeah, they've got the best players in the world.

Why the number 13 shirt?

I don't know.

I love 13.

I've just always liked it.

Actually, I think when I was younger in Australia, I would watch the Matilda's and I loved their center back and she was wearing 13 and I think that's where it kind of came from. And I was like, I want to be 13 and then I've just loved it ever since.

It's a great number.

Alright, so that brings you into sort of current day and we're in the footy fern squad.

World Cup's approaching and it's been a bit of a challenging build up.

You know, it's been some tough results.

There's been periods where you haven't had the group together.

A lot of players not fit.

How's the vibe? How's the team approaching this 30 days out?

You know, everyone's coming together.

I'm sure I think there's two players outside.

Otherwise, everyone's there.

Is the momentum building, is there a feeling of we can do this?

100%.

I've only just got here now.

But you're right, it has been a bit of a broken and hard build up so far.

Like tours haven't gone our way and players been out.

We haven't had that kind of consistency.

But yeah, definitely we've got three weeks together now.

We've been together for six weeks already and you can see there's improvements on the field.

I think it's invaluable.

Three weeks together is so good and so helpful and we can really build on our cohesion and our game plan.

You're one of the leaders in the team, one of the older, more experienced women.

Is your role, do you give advice?

What's your leadership style?

Yeah, I just like to help people.

On the field say, if I see something, I just try and, if we have a break or something,

I'll be like, oh, instead of doing this, maybe we do this or whatever it is in a certain situation.

I would say, yeah, that rather than being the loud, I'm more the go up to someone and give them a little bit of advice that way.

How much do you think about, we've spoken about the inspirational story of what you've been through,

the World Cup on our doorstep, the next generation of girls who are going to see women competing well.

Do you think about the impact that it's going to leave on the next generation of footballers in New

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Zealand?

What a difference you guys can make?

Yeah, I think it's huge.

I don't think the New Zealand public has ever, or not ever, but they haven't really had the access.

Like this home World Cup is going to shine on us.

We need to do well to try and help that as well and be successful is probably the best way to do that, to inspire the girls.

But yeah, I think it will make a huge impact.

Was that a motivating factor, not a motivating factor, but was that like a beacon that you could look forward to as well in the depths of your cancer journey to hold on to that hope of walking out in front of friends and family here in New Zealand?

Yeah, it's huge. I mean, that was the goal. Going through that, that was the next big thing.

Obviously, going back to club was big for me as well, but the World Cup was the biggest thing, especially a home World Cup.

You're blessed to even get that once in a lifetime. That's crazy.

So yeah, that was one of the biggest goals and motivations.

I know it's been a hectic few days since you've been back. I know you're all over the show today, so we won't keep you much longer.

Shay does have a few little quotes to read out, I think.

Oh gosh, here we go.

It's two of your former football ferns team managers, actually.

So Ange, I just want to fact check something with Ange that she said, which is,

Study's hilarious. I'm pretty sure she's mooned everyone out of the bus window a number of times.

And I feel like most of the time I had to go to her room on tour, she'd always respond with, I'm naked.

What?

Her words, not mine. I guess the first question is, have you been known to moon out of a team bus window?

I think that was probably when I was younger. I'm a bit more mature now, but I'm not going to lie.

I am a bit of a mooner. Just not out of the bus window anymore.

Yeah, no. But the other one, I don't remember the other one. It's probably true, but...

Being naked in the room.

Or saying it. I might not have been.

Okay, that's all right.

But what she did say was, it's hard to put into words.

Study is just an amazing human being, inspiring, compassionate, humble, a true professional.

I remember everyone being devastated when they heard of her diagnosis,

but she was such a trooper, incredibly headstrong and positive throughout.

When you first came back into that football ferns environment, what was that feeling like?

Because I know it's a special club. It's a special group.

And because of the nature of club football, you're all around the world.

So the opportunity to come together and all just be Kiwis together.

Was that heightened the first time back in the USA, back in February 2022?



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Yeah, it was kind of like weird being back with the girls and stuff. Like, I don't know, it would have been at least a year, a year and a bit since I'd been with the ferns. So it was crazy being back there and I don't know, it was just nice to be surrounded by Kiwis again. We're such a family and it's such a good group, so it was amazing. And I think that sets up nicely for Tracy Spray, who said, What study brings to the team is beyond words, so it's difficult to describe her. She is this incredibly genuine person with the most outrageous energy, completely and unapologetically herself all the time, like too much information at times. I've heard about her bowel movements more than I need to, but she's so much fun, and if she's not on tour, you really notice that she's missing. She's an epic leader that demands high standards of herself and others, and you can see that on the field, but she carries that off the field as well. How important is it to you to kind of maintain those high standards on and off the field? Because I've heard a story about you taking Kate Taylor under your wing when she made her debut in Europe as well, and how you made that transition into what can be an intimidating and challenging environment a lot easier. Is that important to you to look after those younger ones coming in? A hundred percent. I think it is scary going into a new environment with players that are one a whole lot older than you, but that can seem intimidating just because of who they are and what they've done. And I think when I was coming into the team, it was similar to that. It was scary just because it's such a big thing, and I remember Christy Hill was so funny and so nice, and she made my time coming into the firm a lot better for me. She's such a legend, like what a person she is. So, yeah, I definitely try and help that kind of transition into the team a lot easier and probably being a bit of an idiot and making fun of myself or whatever it is probably helps that. But yeah, I definitely want those young ones coming through to feel comfortable because they're the future. And the last thing that Tracy said was, I don't know if Stottie quite realises the impact she has on other people and how much she has valued and respected, but I hope she does. She's an amazing person. That's so nice. That is really nice to hear, and sometimes we get guests on where the feedback when you reach around is just a unanimous show of love and approval for their personality, and often they don't perhaps realise. But my last question is, do you have a message, because the other thing we find is that when people share their stories like you have of really overcoming adversity, it helps people, it helps listeners, it inspires them. Is there a message for them, for people going through a tough time of their own? For me, what I tried to focus on was to focus on the positives. I know it's hard at the time, but to take yourself away from it and think,

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I don't know, it can be as simple as, I can't wait for my coffee this morning.  
Just to, I don't know, to love yourself a bit, I think.  
If you can find a positive, then that automatically is going to help you get out of your little, whatever you're in.  
So I think just try to find the positives in life.  
I want to show you up for the big outro, but just before I get to it,  
I just want to say thank you for coming in.  
I'm really excited for the World Cup 30 days away.  
Really excited to follow your progress and the team, and hope you guys do so well.  
We'll be at the Games.  
Thank you so much.  
But yeah, your story is sort of transcends football.  
I think it puts into perspective what is really important,  
and it's just so cool that you're here to tell it and share it.  
So articulately, so thanks for coming in, but pass over to the big guy.  
Sorry.  
Yes, this is right.  
I think in the research for the episode, I knew about your cancer journey.  
I knew the strength of character that it took to get through it,  
and I knew how important football was in the centre of that as something to look forward to.  
And it's super exciting, as you say.  
It's a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I think we only get one life, right?  
And the fact that you are, as people say, unapologetically yourself,  
it's really hard to get the sense of a person in an interview, in a podcast episode.  
But I feel like we've been able to kind of get that goofy side of you.  
Get that sincere side of you.  
Get that caring side of you that comes out as well,  
and that compassion and that empathy for others.  
In spite of what you've been through, which was an incredibly challenging and confronting thing  
to have your livelihood potentially taken away.  
And I think it's an amazingly positive outlook that you have.  
And I'm going to steal words from someone who wrote in,  
and I asked them something about you and kind of their feelings on you.  
And they said, she's one of a kind.  
Just being in her presence fills your cup.  
She's a wonderful person.  
And I definitely feel uplifted, and my cup is full after.  
Not only being in your presence today, but researching  
and looking at all the wonderful things that you've done.  
And I encourage people to look up, beat it by study and to support that cause  
because it's an amazing thing that you're doing for young kids  
that are going through really challenging times.  
And I think back to my own mum and my own mum's journey.

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And that was fine as an adult, but to have to go through some of these things at such a young age is important to have those support networks around.

So keep inspiring people all the very best for the World Cup.

And I hope you get to Paris 2024 as well.

Thank you so much for having me.

And like building my self-esteem has been great for me.

We'll take the credit when you guys cruise through that group stage.

Yeah, 100%.

Cheers, study.

Thank you so much.

Catch you next week.