

Rivalry leads to love of the sea

Jacob Willis feels right at home out on the water. He talks with **Julian Raethel** about life as a Sea Scout.

GOOD SPORT

It was the jealousy only a brother can know that pushed Jacob Willis towards the Sea Scouts.

He was only 10, when he followed his younger sibling Jesse – who was 6 – to the New Lynn club.

Of course Willis wasn't going to let him have all the fun, but he says the enjoyment took him a little by surprise.

"I hadn't been out on the sea at all, I was almost scared of the water.

"Now I'm out there every weekend. I have my parents to thank for that."

Willis, 18, can hold his own, gathering a wealth of invaluable survival skills and knowledge of the ocean.

Sea Scouts combines a variety of outdoor activities including sailing, kayaking, rowing and even tramping.

The New Lynn club is one of the largest in the country, as is Motu Moana Scout Camp in Green Bay, which makes West Auckland a



Calm seas: Jacob Willis grabs any opportunity to greet the ocean.

powerhouse in membership numbers.

New Lynn is also one of the best and holds the Jellicoe Trident Trophy, the most coveted in the country.

Also added to the silverware cabinet are the Northland and Auckland Regatta titles, which New Lynn have kept for the past two years.

It's no coincidence that

success has come with the presence of junior leader Willis.

But his Sea Scout journey hasn't escaped a few scary moments.

In 2012 he helped save the life of a senior member during a Ponsonby Cruising Club race.

When the skipper slipped and fell overboard, Willis

Fast facts

Name: Jacob Willis

Age: 18

Lives in: New Lynn

Club: New Lynn Sea Scouts

Favourite athlete: Dean Barker

Favourite television show: *Dr Who*

Favourite music:

Whatever's on the radio

Favourite food: Pork

If I wasn't a Sea Scout: I have no idea what I'd do.

took control by grabbing the wheel and turning the 10-metre yacht around to reach him just in time.

"It gave me a real fright," Willis says. "We still managed to win the race too."

Another nervous moment happened in Lyttelton when Willis' two-man sunburst yacht capsized.

"The wind pushed us right over," he says.

"I'd never capsized before but we got back to shore OK.

"We were the only ones still out there, everyone else had already turned back because of the wind."

Despite the extremities Willis wouldn't change being a Sea Scout for anything.

"It's probably the cheapest way to get out on the water."

Photo: JULIAN RAETHEL