

Fronting up to the markets



CELEBRITY TRADER

Every month **Central Markets** and **The Exchange** present you with **Celebrity Trader**. We take unsuspecting celebrities to the trading floor, give them some money and a little training, and let them face off against the pros to find out just how much they've learned

Taking on the challenge of being this month's celebrity trader is England's most capped International rugby player and 2003 World Cup winner **Jason Leonard**. Opponents found Jason formidable in the scrum, but just how tough will he find it going head to head in a trading battle with Central Markets' Trading Director Adam Stark

WHEN IT COMES to meeting challenges head on and coming out successful the other side there's very little Jason Leonard doesn't know. A World Cup winners medal, a Lions Tour series win, numerous Five Nations, Six Nations and Grand Slam titles are proof of that.

Throw in his personal achievements, which include being the most capped England rugby player of all time, a captain of his country and being only the fourth Englishman to be inducted into the International Rugby Hall of Fame, and you begin to appreciate just what a goliath Leonard has been in the sport he has loved, and dominated, for so long.

And despite retiring from rugby in 2004 Jason is still looking for new challenges to overcome, which is why we were very excited when he agreed to take up the mantle as our celebrity trader this month.

Leonard is also a man who knows something about pressure. As the cornerstone of the England front row for almost fifteen years he certainly knows about the physical side of stress, after all there aren't many of us who would even contemplate putting our bodies through the rigour and strain he has throughout his rugby career. And having played in, and won, a World Cup final, he also knows what it's like to stare expectation in the face and still come out a winner.

Yet despite displaying a fearless nature on the pitch, just the thought of turning his hand to trading full time has Jason reeling.

"There are too many ways that you can lose a huge amount of money for me. You definitely need courage to be a good trader. Personally I'd rather have Jonah Lomu running at me instead!"

But how did Jason do when given the opportunity to be this month's celebrity trader?

"I don't really have that much experience of trading," he is quick to point out, but can remember back to a time when trading and rugby went hand in hand.

"In the amateur days of rugby union a lot of players used to work for trading houses. They'd get up early, do a day's work in the City, and then train in the evenings. But the most I've ever done is a few trading house charity days working the phones. That was scary enough."

However, when it came down to business Jason was nowhere near as hesitant as he might have imagined. He admits that he might have

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closed profitable positions slightly too early on occasions, but once he’d gotten into the swing of things his fear of the markets quickly evaporated.

A series of well-timed trades, including buying mining giant Fresnillo and selling British Airways, reaped a healthy reward that more than covered smaller losses.

Unfortunately for Jason he fell £500 short of being the first celebrity to conquer a professional trader in our celebrity trader challenge. His opponent Adam Stark finished the trading session with a profit of £10,610.58 from his starting account of £100,000, besting Jason’s profit of £10,120.25 by just 0.5%. Jason’s disappointed to have come so close to winning, but overall he’s happy with his results across the challenge.

When the conversation returns to rugby we’re keen to find out what Jason thinks of the home nations’ chances of bringing the World Cup back from New Zealand at the end of the month.

Unsurprisingly it’s the Kiwis who he’s backing as the overwhelming favourites for the Webb Ellis trophy. “They’ve choked before, but now they’ve got home advantage and the expectation of a nation behind them, not to mention a world class squad”, he explains.

That doesn’t mean he’s prepared to count out England though, who’ve been to the past two World Cup finals and have a number of past tournament winners in their squad, just yet.

“It looks like there will be a Northern hemisphere team in the final, and once you get there you’ve always got a chance. The bounce of



a ball, a referee’s decision, any lucky break can determine a rugby game on a given day. There have been bigger upsets before. And even though England haven’t played their best rugby in New Zealand so far, you have to think there’s more to come. England are the current Six Nations champions so we know they’ve got quality players in their side, and they’ve been to the last two World Cup finals, so they know how tournament rugby works. When it comes to knockout rugby England are historically one of the strongest teams in the world. And that’s where New Zealand have been found out in the past.”

And what if he could use his extensive his extensive experience to trade rugby instead of stocks, just where would he put his money?

“How could it not be Jonny Wilkinson?” Jason replies.

“His stock has always been sky high, he’s kicked teams to victory so many times. He was virtually out of the game for a couple of years because of injuries but he’s fought his way back, reclaimed the England no. 10 jersey, and is now considered one of the best players in the world again. He’s also one of the most popular sportsmen of his generation and a great ambassador for rugby, so if you could invest in him you definitely would. His stock is fantastically high.”

A slight nod to nostalgia, perhaps? After all it was Jonny’s last minute drop goal that Jason has to thank for the World Cup winners medal that



takes pride of place in his trophy cabinet.

Of course not, because Wilkinson's career achievements stretch much further than that. As well as at one time being the leading points scorer of all time in test rugby, if England do make it to the final later this month Wilkinson will be the first fly half to lead his team to three consecutive World Cup finals. Not a bad place to start then if you're looking a blue chip to put your money on.

"If you wanted to diversify your portfolio and invest in a global player as well I think it would have to be Jonah Lomu", Jason continues.

"He's a global brand. When he burst onto the international rugby scene nobody had seen

a player like him before, he completely changed the game. In the past try scoring wingers would have been 5'9", speedy and nine stone dripping wet. Jonah was 6'5", 19 ½ stone and could run the hundred metres in under 11 seconds. He was amazing, a complete athlete, and with skills too. I don't think we've seen a rugby player's stock higher than Lomu's was in 1995."

Unfortunately investing in Wilkinson or even Sonny Bill Williams, Lomu's heir apparent, is still a pipe dream (unless we're talking sports spread betting, which coincidentally we will be in a few pages time) so for now Jason will have to stick to betting the financials. Which is fine, because as he's just found out, he's very good at that.

BREAKING DOWN THE TRADES

RICHARD PERRY,

MARKET ANALYST, CENTRAL MARKETS

JASON LEONARD:

Jason has a successful stint as the celebrity trader, but unfortunately for him he came up just short against this month's in-house opponent, Central Markets' Trading Director Adam Stark. Both traders showed a decent profit after taking some smart market positions, but when the trading was done it was Adam who was the overall winner, be it by the narrowest of margins.

Jason went for a bit of a techie theme with his trades sprinkled with a smaller number of commodity plays and a bit of an emotional short in BAE Systems after the announcement of huge job cuts, which gave him a very pleasing profit. Jason made some decent profits catching the market nicely as he put some long trades on as the market rallied at the beginning of the week. Chipmaker ARM holdings was a nice little intraday earner, while he also caught Mexican gold and silver miner Fresnillo perfectly on Day two. His main losses came as he bought a gold ETF which was never on side, while his defensive long AstraZeneca was a somewhat surprisingly loser. In all Jason made over £10,120 across the trading period from a starting account of £100,000, to give him a trading performance of 10.1%

Adam was a touch more aggressive in his trading style, which was reflected in his performance. Opting to run his trades for much longer than Jason hugely paid off, especially with a trade in Johnson Matthey, which was a big winner (and ultimately the main reason why he one the challenge). He suffered mixed fortune in trading Burberry Group twice, scoring a big winner early in the challenge but also a confusingly picking up an almost equally large loss later in the week. The other trade which Adam suffered on was trying to catch Man Group as it fell hard on results. Overall Adam was up over £10,610 on the four days.📈

