

Interviews Jamie Heaslip

Ustart's Paddy Quinlan recently caught up with Leinster and Irish rugby legend Jamie Heaslip to talk about latest news from the winning six nations camp, his DCU experience and life outside rugby. Read on to find out what Jamie had to say ...

PQ: *You played every minute of Ireland's Six Nations campaign, an incredible feat! What emotions run through your mind now that you reflect on this year's 6 Nations Championship?*

JH: It always takes me a while to appreciate big successes like winning the 6 nations. It's a huge achievement when you look back on how often Ireland has accomplished it. However, right now, in the moment of being a *pro* rugby player, I celebrate the moment but very quickly shift my focus to the next task at hand. There'll be plenty of time to get emotional about it all when I'm not playing.



PQ: *You've been incredibly successful in your career to date: 3 Heineken Cups, 2 Six Nations titles and a Lions Series win, you also played a couple times for the DCU rugby team – How much would you attribute these successes to what you learned playing here?*

JH: I put it down to a few things, luck, a degree of the way you're made up physically and then a whole lot of hard work and very targeted focus specialised training. To me those last 2 parts are all in the top two inches of an individual, their mind-set. In terms of getting that in Leinster/Ireland I've been very lucky to have some of the best trainers, coaches, backroom staff and facilities worldwide available. So a large part of the success I've had is because I've come up through the system here.



PQ: *People might not know this but while in DCU you studied Medical Mechanical Engineering. Can you tell us how you found this? How difficult was it to balance studies with your rugby commitments?*



JH: The reason I went with medical mechanical engineering was simple. I really loved biology, maths and technical graphics in school. It seemed like the perfect fit for me. I loved it, but it took a whole lot of work to balance it all, especially in my 3rd and 4th years when I turned down two professional contracts but still had to keep training.

PQ: *Would you recommend the DCU restaurant to your other Irish team-mates as a fast way to "bulk-up"?*

JH: Hell yeah, I was in there everyday for lunch...couldn't get enough of the baked potatoes with as many toppings as you like!



PQ: *While you are best known for your rugby, you also have multiple business interests (Bear Restaurant, Lovin' Dublin, Kitman Labs etc.) – what do you look for in a business opportunity before you consider getting involved?*

JH: First and foremost something that I have a passion/interest in. I can't be involved in something just to make a quick buck, I have to want to be in that space. Then after that, I look for something that is innovative/disruptive in the space. And then it's all about the people. I believe heavily in that business is all about relationships and people. Having good teams/people around is half of the battle!



PQ: *UStart is currently raising awareness about our summer programme to ultimately select a number of student-run companies - what's your advice for DCU students who might have a great business idea but are not sure about taking the next step?*

JH: Are they passionate about it? What is separating them from the rest? Go talk to people in the area about it, mentors are a great thing.

PQ: *What would you say are the important things to get right when starting out on a new business venture?*

JH: Focus, having a specific plan with different markers to be tracking. But not nice looking factors, but actual markers that affect what you are doing, what's specific to you. And not been afraid to pivot and go down another path if the data shows that you should.



PQ: *Following on from this, in both sport and entrepreneurship, failure is inevitable - what is your attitude to dealing with these up and downs?*

JH: Failure is going to happen, knock backs occur. But it's how you deal with it. Will you accept it and use it as an excuse, or use it? Learn from it? Then reset focus and go again.



PQ: *Finally Jamie, we know you are a foodie, which celebrities (past or present) would you invite to a dinner party and why? Would they be sporting heroes or business leaders or both?*

JH: Steve Jobs, Banksy, Tom Brady, Jack Dorsey, Michael Phelps and Billy Connolly!

PQ: *Thank you for your time, and on behalf of everyone in DCU we want to wish you good luck in your upcoming match with Toulon on the 6th of April. Hopefully we might see you down around UStart this summer so we can introduce you to Ireland's next generation of successful entrepreneurs!*