



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

22nd March 2017

Newsletter #162

Vodafone Warriors in Dunedin



Shaun Johnson offloads during a tackle.



Simon Mannering eludes Aiden Tolman.



Solomone Kata fends off Josh Morris.



Charlie Gubb gets tackled.

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz



Foran Included on Bench

by Richard Becht

SIMON MANNERING will claim the club record for most NRL appearances and new signing Kieran Foran has been included on an extended bench for the Vodafone Warriors' fourth-round NRL encounter against St George Illawarra at UOW Jubilee Oval in Sydney on Sunday (6.30pm kick-off local time; 8.30pm NZT).

The 30-year-old Mannering, now in his 13th NRL campaign, drew level with the legendary Stacey Jones' mark of 261 games in last Friday night's clash against the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs in Dunedin.

Mannering made his debut alongside Jones against Brisbane at Mount Smart Stadium on June 26, 2005, and has gone on to forge a reputation as one of the game's most consistent performers.

He underlined that yet again with a typically whole-hearted 80-minute display against the Bulldogs with 122 metres from 14 runs, 49 tackles without a miss, 11 decoys and 10 supports.

While Mannering takes outright ownership this week of the club record for most games, his Kiwi teammate Kieran Foran is in line to play for the Vodafone Warriors for the first time; if he does he will become Vodafone Warrior #217. The 26-year-old former Manly and Parramatta playmaker was cleared by the NRL to resume his career in round three but missed the Dunedin match.

Captain Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, unavailable for the Forsyth Barr Stadium encounter, has been named to return this week while Tuimoala Lolohea moves back to the right wing where he started the season. Ken Maumalo switches back to the left wing to replace veteran Manu Vatuvai who was forced off with knee trouble in his first 2017 NRL outing last week.

Foran's ex-Manly team-mate Ligi Sao is also in the extended squad after a strong return from a long

injury lay-off in the Vodafone Warriors' 36-0 win over Wests Tigers in the Intrust Super Premiership last Saturday.

Centre Solomone Kata makes his 49th NRL appearance this week.

The Vodafone Warriors head into the contest with one win and two losses in their first three matches while the Dragons have two victories and one defeat.

St George Illawarra has been the Vodafone Warriors' most difficult opponent, winning 11 games straight from 2008-2015 before the Vodafone Warriors ended the run with a 26-10 win at Mount Smart Stadium last May.

Overall the Dragons have a 19-5 win-loss advantage since the two clubs first met in 1999.

VODAFONE WARRIORS

v

ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA DRAGONS

*UOW Jubilee Oval, Kogarah
6.30pm, Sunday, March 25*

- 1 Roger Tuivasa-Sheck (C)
- 2 Tuimoala Lolohea
- 3 David Fusitu'a
- 4 Solomone Kata
- 5 Ken Maumalo
- 6 Mafo'aeata Hingano
- 7 Shaun Johnson
- 8 Albert Vete
- 9 Issac Luke
- 10 Jacob Lillyman
- 11 Bodene Thompson
- 12 Ryan Hoffman
- 13 Simon Mannering

Interchange:

- 14 Erin Clark
- 15 Charlie Gubb
- 16 Sam Lisone
- 17 Bunty Afoa
- 18 James Gavett
- 20 Ligi Sao
- 21 Blake Ayshford
- 22 Kieran Foran



Give me a break, losing to the Dogs!

By David Kemeys

Former Sunday Star-Times Editor, Former Editor-in-Chief Suburban Newspapers, Long Suffering Warriors Fan



HERE GOES another few hundred words of wasted wisdom, my weekly cheerleading for the Warriors.

I really thought we would get the job done in Dunedin, and beat the Canterbury Bulldogs.

Then we lost Roger Tuivasa-Sheck in the week, victim to concussion problems after his injury against the Storm, and my confidence waned.

The Dogs of course had a totally different idea and turned up in Dunedin ready to play, and came from behind to a win a less than thrilling encounter.

Did I not say all I wanted was a decent start to the year?

In fairness we are only three games in but it is starting to feel remarkably like previous years.

One commentator, Dale Budge, wrote a lengthy piece in a paper whose name I refuse to mention, saying it was time to panic.

Not sure about that, but the man had a very reasoned and rational argument, more is the pity.

Se we head to Sydney with one win from three to face the Dragons. Most of us looked at the draw this year and thought that's pretty kind, our first three weeks of the season all at home, albeit one of those down in Dunedin.

But while a scrappy win over the Knights, and a loss to the Storm many not have been a huge surprise, the manner of the 24-12 loss to the Dogs was, and it was a worrying one too.

Not great against the Knights (blame week one), not great against the Storm (blame the weather), and not great against a side tipped to really struggle this year (blame who knows what).

Whatever was to blame, coach Stephen Kearney is probably now getting a far better read on the extent of the job in front of him.

"Regardless of the wins and losses, the second half was the real disappointing thing."

It is bitingly obvious that we need RTS in the side, and Kieran Foran getting on can't come soon enough

for me because we looked like decapitated poultry out there – that's headless chickens to you.

Because I have to write this before Team Naming Tuesday, I have no idea if either will be in Sydney. If they aren't, my confidence is likely to wane further, especially given we struggle with the Dragons.

One player who won't be there is Manu Vatuvei, who aggravated a knee injury. I have an enormous amount of time for Manu, who has always been a willing and welcome visitor to the children's hospital where I work, but that injury might spare him the fate of being dropped regardless.

What worries me is that if Manu is out, there's likely to be a place for Tuimoala Lolohea, and I remain less than convinced he is the misunderstood genius who just needs the chance to show what he can really do, his supporters tell me he is.

If he is I wish he'd bloody get on with it.

A far bigger concern is still the defence, which was pitiful last year but has at least raised itself to the standard of brittle this year. Rome wasn't built in a day.

The Dogs racked up four tries – come back Justin Morgan.

Now assistant coach Stacey Jones knows one hell of a lot more about the game than I ever will, and he had this to say: "When you are tired and fatigued that is when you have to put your body on the line, and we don't have everyone doing that at the moment."

So when someone of Stacey's stature says that, you've got a problem.

But what I also know is that Stacey is quite right too about something else.

"We have to have faith in what we are doing."

More on the next page...

Is It Really Time To Panic?

I mentioned the Dale Budge piece. He certainly thinks it is. Full credit to the bloke, he did not hold back. But that doesn't make him right.

According to Dale, it's obvious it's another season of disappointment for us. The Warriors, he said, had "Loser DNA", which I happen to think is a appalling thing to say to any professional athlete, it's personally insulting, hugely derogatory, and just downright shitty. But hey, the man has cahones and nothing worse than a league writer with no opinion.

He basically said management need to realise we don't have it, and have the courage to act – however harshly.

There was lots of other stuff, but the Budge axe would not miss Manu or Tui, who we talked about above, nor pretty much any of the forwards, but especially not Jacob Lillyman, Isaac Luke or Ryan Hoffman.

He wasn't too chuffed with Shaun Johnson, who apparently needs to "harden up", or Sam Lisone either, though in fairness he did dismiss the entire forward pack as "still weak".

I might be a negative git from time to time, but this guy makes me look like Patty McPositive .

And speaking of staying positive, I did smile when Auckland Mayor Phil Goff described his relationship with the Warriors (and the Blues) as being like marriage - together in sickness and health.

"They break my heart from time to time," he said.

Welcome to our world Phil.

Super Simon

Expect an avalanche of stories this week about Simon Mannering.

Stacey Jones has already gone on record that Mannering is our greatest ever.

To be the best you have to beat the best I suppose, and that is what Mannering will do this weekend when he faces the Dragons.

He will overtake Jones' most appearances record, taking it to 262 games.

Every one of his 13 NRL seasons has been with us, so that's an average yearly appearance of 20 games, incredible when you consider the power of today's game. In fact he's managed 262 of a possible 288

games since his debut in Round 16, 2005.

Jones has no doubt Mannering had surpassed him, telling nrl.com: "He has been the best player we have had. He plays through pain and the amount of minutes he plays, he puts his body through it all."

Throw in more than 40 Kiwis games and five Warriors Player of the Year awards and you can see why Captain Mannering is such a crowd favourite.

Even against the Dogs, his 49 tackles led the count, all with no misses. Just in case you thought he was a bit lazy, he also chucked in 14 carries for 122 metres.

InTrust Premiership Side Goes Three From Three

The Warriors made it three in a row, hammering Wests Tigers 36-0 in wet and windy conditions, that didn't seem to trouble Mason Lino, who controlled the match,.

Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad was again a standout, he and Lino combining to send Fetalaiga Pauga, in for try number one.

Matt Allwood scored number two, and Semisi Fotu number three, taking us out to 16-0.

The Tigers coughed up a penalty just before the break and Lino took advantage with a grubber for Pauga to secure his double.

Just minutes into the second half, we went to 26-0 when Taniela Palavi muscled over and then Nicoll-Klokstad struck again when he hit a gap to score.

We hit 36-0, when Isaiah Papalii jumped on a loose ball that deflected off a defender.





Was this Batkid and Badlady at the game??



Was great to see all the kids having fun at the game.



Was great to see the Hornby Panthers from Christchurch at the game.



Loyal Vodafone Warriors Fans at the Game

Sir Peter Leitch Club Lounge in Dunedin



Chatting with Logan Edwards x Kiwi, Canterbury and Warrior player before the game in Dunedin.



Was great to have Shaun Johnson in the lounge, but it was even better to have his brother Jo who shared some of Shaun's secrets with us.



Was nice of Jim Doyle to pop into the lounge after the game and have a chat Jim was very frank with his comments.



We had Shaun Johnson come up to the lounge after the game to have a chat he was very open and honest with his thoughts.



I had the pleasure of interviewing Terry Lamb a Bulldogs legend. He played 262 games for the club and also played for NSW and Australia.

**Tim and Patrick are MASSIVE Vodafone Warriors Fans.
They follow the team around everywhere and never miss a home game!**



Big Vodafone Warriors fan Patrick with Kieran Foran in Dunedin.



Dad Tim with Patrick having a blast in Dunedin.



Patrick with Ryan Hoffman and Shaun Johnson.



Aaron Drever and Rachel Benge from the Mad Butcher Point Chevalier supporting the mighty Warriors in Dunedin.



Casey Brown, a big fan, with Ken the book man from Waiheke Island at the signing session.



Richard Becht Warriors media manager and Noah Piri from George Street Normal School rugby league team.



Shani from membership team with Alex Tavendale age 8 and Darcy Tavendale age 6 at members event in Dunedin..



Shani and Diane & Ken Evans.

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Hozayah and Deano from Timaru.



Rick and Rewi from Invercargill big Vodafone Warriors fans.



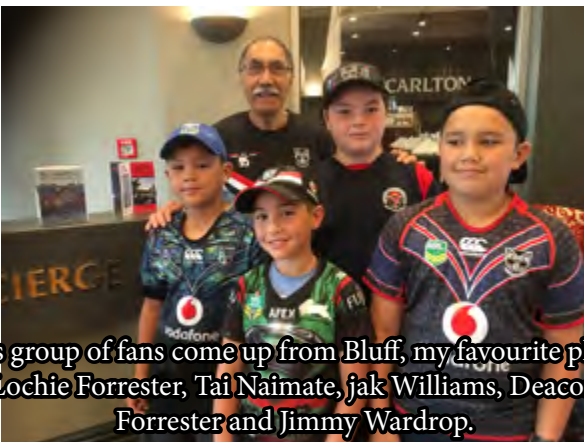
Mark and Ellen Pe'a, From Invercargill massive fans.



Ray and Carol Cattermole, Jan and Alan Rushton (13 TEST X KIWI from Canterbury) in the Otago in Dunedin.



Tania, Michael and little Raymond Merrick traveled down from Auckland massive Warrior fans.



This group of fans come up from Bluff, my favourite place! Lochie Forrester, Tai Naimate, Jak Williams, Deacon Forrester and Jimmy Wardrop.



Ken from Waiheke island traveled down to Dunedin to support the Warriors.



Check out more of the awesome bus shelters I saw in Dunedin on my Facebook page...





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Has the NRL Missed the Bus?

By John Coffey QSM

Author of ten rugby league books, Christchurch Press sports writer (44 years), NZ correspondent for Rugby League Week (Australia) and Open Rugby (England)



AUSTRALIA'S JILLAROOS completed a clean sweep over the Kiwi Ferns in three women's matches at the Auckland Nines and will be favoured to continue their recent trans-Tasman dominance in the Anzac Test at Canberra on May 5 and their home World Cup tournament later in the year. But while the NRL has recently directed more attention and money towards the development of women's rugby league in Sydney and Brisbane, they have given other sports big head starts in establishing a semi-professional club competition.

Already there is a women's Big Bash League played as curtain-raisers to the men's cricket BBL, with leading White Ferns such as captain Suzie Bates, Amy Satterthwaite and Rachel Priest bolstering the teams representing Australian cities. The former trans-Tasman netball competition, dominated throughout by the Australian, is no more. Instead, the Australians have created their own eight-team league with new franchises sponsored by the Melbourne Storm (based on the Sunshine Coast and with Silver Ferns captain Laura Langman a notable signing) and Australian Rules clubs Collingwood and Greater Western Sydney.

While there is no comparable women's rugby union competition, Australia won the inaugural Olympic Games sevens gold medal in Rio last year and has a 12-team World Cup tournament in Ireland in August to attract ambitious footballers and touch players to their sport. The other nations taking part are Canada, England, France, Hong Kong, Italy, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, United States and Wales. While some appear to be included solely for their commercial value rather than playing ability it is double the number of countries preparing for the women's rugby league World Cup three months later.

But the biggest example of how the NRL might have missed the bus has been provided by the inaugural women's Australian Rules competition featuring eight AFL clubs, the Adelaide Crows, Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Collingwood, Fremantle, GWS Giants (Sydney), Melbourne and Western Bulldogs. Even ardent AFL fans were shocked when the opening match between Carlton and Collingwood in early February filled a 26,000-seat stadium to overflowing. Since then crowds and television ratings have understandably dropped during the men's pre-season competition building up to their premiership, which starts as the women finish this weekend.

The women's AFL is semi-professional with most players working at least part-time. Players reportedly earn between \$8500 and \$27,500. They have a short season (just seven rounds leading up to the grand final on Saturday) and shorter games (four 10-minute quarters plus stoppage time, half that of their male counterparts). But it has been a great start. When one views the women's cricket being played in near-empty stadiums that fill up for the men later in the day and with the new netball competition still an unknown factor, the popularity of the women's Australian Rules has been a revelation.

Meanwhile, Australia's most proficient women's rugby league players have to be content with appearing on the many Fox Sports and Channel Nine talk shows expressing hopes that their own club competition might not be too far away. They are all singing off the same song sheet, praising the NRL for putting more emphasis on their international and state games but obviously wishing for something more substantial, and more lucrative, to fill in their seasons.

When a semi-professional women's league gets under way it will be interesting to see if the Warriors become involved. They would have a strong nursery. But whether they do or not, Australian clubs will inevitably compete for Kiwi Ferns' signatures. The Auckland area has long been the stronghold of the women's game, so much so that the NZRL recently appointed Aucklander Tony Benson as Kiwi Ferns coach to replace Alan Jackson (Taranaki). It was felt the coach should be closer to his players. A former Junior Kiwis coach, Benson has spent the last decade with English clubs and now has seven months to prepare for the World Cup.

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That tournament will be contested between Australia, Canada, Cook Islands, England, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. Three qualifying rounds and the semi-finals are to be played at Cronulla's Southern Cross Group Stadium from November 16 to 26, before the final at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane on December 2. As in 2008, it is curtain-raiser to the men's World Cup final.

Australia's victory in 2013 was its first after New Zealand had reigned supreme since the original Kiwi Ferns crossed the Tasman in 1995. They were unbeaten in the World Cups in England in 2000, at home in 2005 (beating New Zealand Maori in the final) and in Australia in 2008. After that perceived humiliation at Suncorp Stadium, the NRL began taking their women's players more seriously and were rewarded at the 2013 World Cup. But it seems some more prodding is necessary if they are to follow the lead of cricket, netball and, especially, Aussie Rules by introducing a substantial club competition.

Win 1 of 10 2016 Official Rugby League Special Issues



David Middleton's 2016 Official Rugby League Annual, a quite incredible publication which includes every imaginable statistic from the past season – and many more statistics that only a guru such as Middleton would be capable of imagining.

The 266-page Annual contains reviews of every aspect – club, state, international, women's and junior – of the 2016 season, and provides historical records which include all State of Origin and Grand Final teams. There are also team photos of all NRL clubs plus Four Nations teams, the Kiwi Ferns and Australian Jillaroos, and complete lists of Kangaroos and Kiwis representatives. It also looks ahead to 2017 with NRL and World Cup draws and club player gains and losses. It's a brilliant buy and an even better win.

- John Coffey

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By John Coffey QSM

Author of ten rugby league books, Christchurch Press sports writer (44 years), NZ correspondent for Rugby League Week (Australia) and Open Rugby (England)

Painful Television Viewing



A dejected David Fusitu'a after the match. Photo www.photosport.nz

BY SATURDAY evening I had just about had enough of watching sport on television, after suffering through the Warriors' disappointing display against the Canterbury Bulldogs in Dunedin the previous night and then the Black Caps' demise at the hands of a virtually unknown South African slow bowler at the Basin Reserve. Somehow, though, I still managed to sit through most of the three Saturday NRL games, while keeping an eye on progress in the third cricket Test between Australia and India, before lining up again on Sunday. And some people think I need a life!

I had been looking forward to the Warriors playing in prime time on Friday nights. Not any more. When they have a Sunday afternoon kick-off one can ride a sense of anticipation through the weekend. While not expecting them to beat the Storm, they had to put down the Bulldogs to make a credible start to their season. Instead, the Warriors played the Bulldogs back into some sort of form, snapped the Doggies' six-match losing streak extending back to last season and relieved the pressure on embattled coach Des Hasler. At least the Warriors do not line up again on a Friday night until May 19, in the return clash with St George Illawarra Dragons. But that game is at Hamilton and they don't win away from Mt Smart. s

It was extraordinary that the Warriors, or any team for that matter, could be blessed with so much possession and so many favourable scoring positions yet present so little threat with the ball. Only a few days earlier the NZRL had trumpeted the addition of former England coach Steve McNamara to the Kiwis' World Cup coaching staff. McNamara has been given the job of sharpening the Kiwis attacking play on the basis he is already working with the so-called Kiwis spine at the Warriors. Hopefully the New Zealand selectors are looking beyond the Warriors when considering just who should be in that spine for the Test against Australia at Canberra on May 5 and World Cup tournament later in the year.

Travelling Warriors fans – all Dunedin accommodation was sold out -- had every right to expect more from their team than their counterparts on the Gold Coast. Later that night the Titans provided a brilliant example on how to overcome adversity but the Warriors are unlikely to have seen it. A make-shift Titans side was up against the unbeaten Parramatta Eels and at long odds. Eleven of their top 30 players were out injured, including marquee signing Jarryd Hayne. After being behind by two converted tries and buffeted by even more injuries, the Titans revealed guts and football skills to win 26-14. Konrad Hurrell's massive grin at fulltime said it all before he, too, hobbled off to the dressing room.

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Yet all had been well with the world at lunchtime Friday. It was St Patrick's Day and South Africa was tottering at 94 for six wickets and still 174 runs behind the Black Caps. From then it was a horror show, culminating with a dreadful batting effort and a South African victory by eight wickets. For their ineptitude, the home players received two additional days off leading up to this weekend's third Test at Hamilton. It has been speculated the New Zealand selectors had fielded their longest possible batting list to combat South Africa's seam bowlers in Wellington, seeking a draw to set up a series decider on a spinning Seddon Park wicket.

So much for grand plans. The Black Caps were bamboozled by little-known slow, not spin, bowler Keshav Maharaj. Left-arm-er Maharaj could not be classified as a spinner on a pitch which offered him no turn whatsoever. He lobbed the ball up and the batsmen self-destructed. If the Warriors are short of options, consider cricket, the most insular of all sports. Just as the television commentators were being unusually critical and agreeing out of form batsmen Tom Latham must go, an alert cameraman zeroed in on selector Gavin Larsen enjoying a laugh and a chat with Latham's father, Rod, an old team-mate. Young Latham mirrors the Black Caps. They can bully the likes of Bangladesh but are not competitive with the big boys.

Footnote: On Thursday night that jovial, popular, do-no-wrong Broncos thug Sam Thaiday made an early bid to be crowned Grub of the Year for 2017. After blindsiding Storm wing Suliasi Vunivalu and trying to push him all the way back to Suva, he went undercover and did his best to re-dislocate Jesse Bromwich's bandaged thumb. Thaiday was not penalised for the former offence and fined only a small amount for the second. It was reported the review committee let him off lightly because he had not inflicted much pain. It's a wonder they didn't suspend Bromwich for not being smart enough to put the bandage on his other thumb!

Dunedin's a Beautiful Place

By Sir Peter Leitch



WELL, THE Vodafone Warriors may not have won on Friday night but as I keep telling people, nobody died. On top of that, it's only round four so the Vodafone Warriors have plenty of time to get things right. I, for one, am confident we will turn things around and on another positive, I got to meet some fantastic, loyal fans in Dunedin last week at both the game and the exclusive members' signing session at the team's hotel. Many had travelled from all over New Zealand to be at the game; we certainly have truly loyal fans! Speaking of Dunedin and Janice and I had a wonderful five days down in the deep south. We think the place is underrated. The coastline is beautiful and runs on for miles. The beaches are stunning and as you drive around, all the bus shelters have murals painted on them. Around town, artists have also painted murals on the sides of buildings. The city boasts some great restaurants and, of course, the best stadium New Zealand. It even has a covered roof for wet weather! That said, I will always love Mt Smart Stadium as it's our home!

See more pictures from my trip to Dunedin on my social media:

Facebook



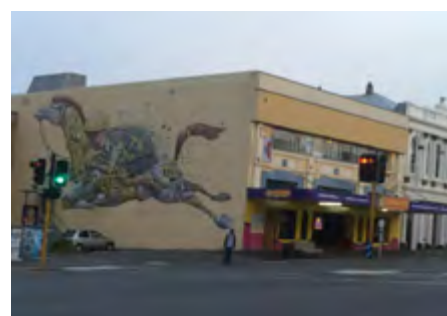
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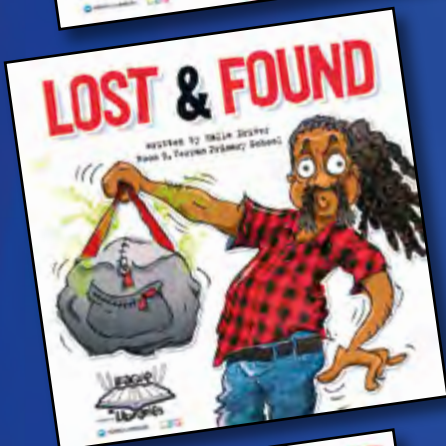
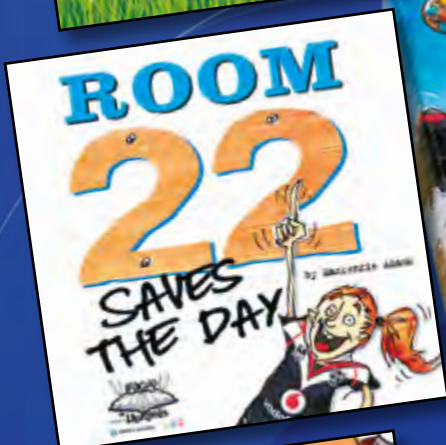
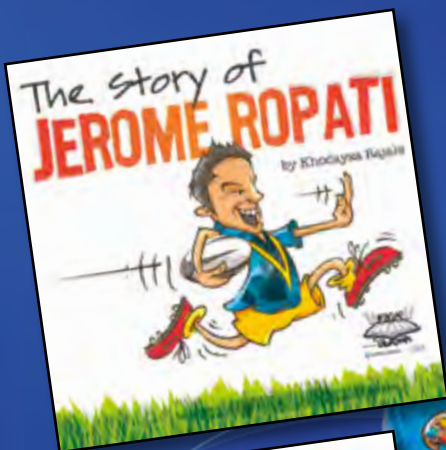
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One of the many buildings around Dunedin with artwork on them.



THE VODAFONE WARRIORS LEAGUE IN LIBRARIES 2011- 2015 BOX SET

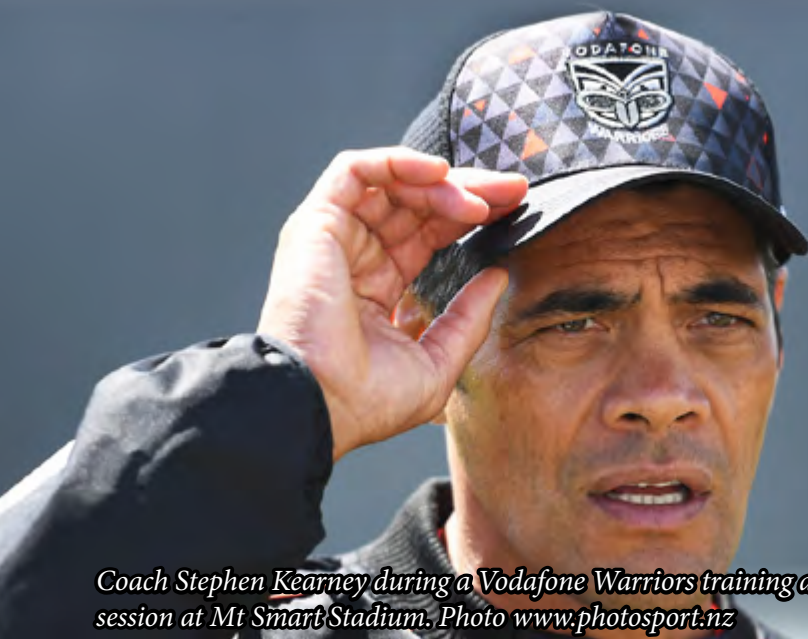


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By Miles Davis

Stephen Kearney

Coach Stephen Kearney during a Vodafone Warriors training and media session at Mt Smart Stadium. Photo www.photosport.nz

AT THE tender age of 44 Stephen Kearney has achieved a great deal in the world of rugby league and many fans will still remember him as a player (he still looks as if he could lace up the boots and do a decent job) but for those of you who don't or whose memories are fading, here is a reminder.

Born and raised on the Gold Coast (the Wellington one not the Aussie one) Kearney started his love affair with rugby league with his local club the Kapiti Bears. His talent was soon recognised and he was picked for the Junior Kiwis in 1989. Two years later he was made skipper as the Junior Kiwis defeated Great Britain 2-0 (a team-mate in that side was Tana Umaga who was to defect and do ok in the other rugby code).

After playing senior league for the Randwick club and the Wellington representative side he jumped the ditch and joined Western Suburbs (now combined with Balmain as the Wests Tigers).

In 1993 at the age of 21 he became the youngest ever captain of the Kiwis and managed 45 appearances for his national side over the next 11 years.

After 3 years with the Magpies he returned to Aotearoa and became part of the original Vodafone Warriors squad in 1995. He made 79 appearances for the fledgling NRL outfit before returning to Australia and joining the Melbourne Storm. In his first season the Storm won their first NRL Grand Final (as a Dragons fan this is a painful memory and I still don't send Bill Harrigan a Xmas card for awarding the match-winning penalty try!! Nor Anthony Mundine for that matter.). Fellow Kiwis Richard Swain and Tawera Nikau were also part of that victorious Storm side.

The following season the Storm went to England and defeated St Helens to win the World Club Challenge. He played 139 games for the Melbourne side and during that spell became the first Kiwi to clock up 250 NRL games.

Kearney finished his playing career in the UK with a season at Hull FC. As with the Storm he was once again an instant winner as Hull went on to defeat Leeds in the Challenge Cup Final in Cardiff.

From a very young age he had set goals for his league career and coaching was always on the agenda. In 2006 he had the dream start to his coaching career when he was employed as an assistant coach at the Melbourne Storm under super-coach Craig Bellamy. Over the next 4 seasons the Storm were to feature in each of the NRL Grand Finals, winning two and losing two (although both wins have now been stripped due to salary-cap breaches. Stephen Kearney's salary was miniscule so it wasn't his fault.).

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In 2008 Kearney was offered the head coaching role with the Kiwis for the upcoming World Cup and initially had some sleepless nights as to whether to accept the offer. Some felt it was too soon to take up such a huge challenge but the confidence placed in him by his mentor Wayne Bennett and the fact that he would have Bennett as his assistant convinced him to sign. Kearney said "To now get the chance to pick the brain of one of the best coaches of the modern era, and under the circumstances of it being with the Kiwis team, which I've always been very proud and passionate about, I wouldn't say it was a no-brainer but it was a great opportunity that I couldn't pass up."

Kearney led his side to a magnificent 34-20 win over Australia in that final (still one of my favourite rugby league wins of all time, even though I am a Pom. The memory still brings a tear to my eye). In 2010 his side again defeated Australia to win the Four Nations crown, repeating the feat in 2014.

It hasn't been all beer and skittles for Kearney as his period as head coach of Parramatta will testify. In 2011/12 he managed just 10 wins in 42 games before leaving the club. Despite many stories pointing to faults in the club's management and culture, Kearney typically took refused to blame others and took responsibility "I have been unable to achieve the success I had hoped for and this club deserves. From my point-of-view we could go through a thousand reasons why and why not but I'm not here to give you those answers today."

His coaching services were still in demand in the NRL and he spent 4 years as an assistant coach with the Brisbane Broncos before being appointed head coach of the Vodafone Warriors in September 2016 and stepping down from his Kiwis coaching role.

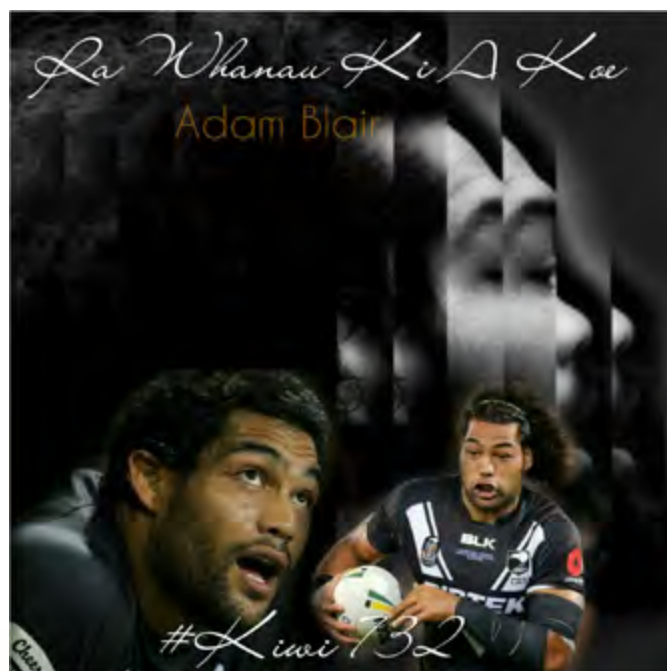
Throughout his career Kearney has proven to be a winner and if he is given the time I am sure he will bring success to the Vodafone Warriors. After his success in the 2008 World Cup Final he was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit. If he takes the Vodafone Warriors to a Grand Final win he may well join Sir Peter Leitch as a rugby league Knight of the Realm.

1999 NRL Grand Final <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETgWxcuqqlk>

2008 World Cup Final https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6SA59d_z5g

2000 World Club Challenge St Helens v Melbourne Storm <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ioOg25reC8>

Joyce Putohe League Artwork



Weekend Thoughts

By Miles Davis



A massive weekend of sport has left me needing sleep but also to get a few thoughts off my chest so here goes.

Vodafone Warriors

YOU CAN already hear the talk-back pessimists ring up to put the boot into the Vodafone Warriors after their loss to the Bulldogs on Friday night but how legitimate is their negativity?

There is no doubt it was a disappointing result against a side that had lost both its games so far and looked ripe for the plucking. It was frustrating to not maximise on the multiple turnovers created throughout the game. The Bulldogs were constantly pressured into making mistakes but currently there seems to be a lack of cohesion and penetration when the Vodafone Warriors are on attack. The absence of skipper Roger Tuivasa-Sheck did not help in that regard and the addition of the experienced Kieran Foran will no doubt give a lift in that regard. That is not to say that I haven't been impressed by the youngster Ata Hingano. While still learning his craft he has shown immense potential and his efforts on defence have been impressive for a player of his age and size. The forwards are still working on gelling as a unit but there is no doubt the likes of Bunty Afoa and Albert Vete will continue to grow under the guidance of Jacob Lillyman, Ryan Hoffman and Simon Mannering (if there is a more consistent, 100% player than Mannering in the NRL?). To put it in perspective the Vodafone Warriors are just 2 wins from the top of the table and only points differential away from the play-offs. Don't press the panic button yet. If they lose the next 3 games then we can start dialling the radio to vent our spleen.

Black Caps

WE ALL want our teams to win but sometimes we have to accept that other teams are better. New Zealand cricket has limited numbers to pick from and are always going to rely on their top XI being fit for action if they are to compete at the highest level. The loss of Ross Taylor and Trent Boult was a huge blow and unless Kane Williamson managed his usual heroics in both innings then a positive result was always going to be unlikely. Add to that the increasing focus on limited overs cricket in NZ. Although the Plunket Shield is still played for it is very much the poor relation of the 3 formats as far as player and public interest goes. This is backed up by the ICC rankings which has New Zealand ranked 3rd in ODI's and No. 1 in T20.

Let us just enjoy the test wins when they come and appreciate what an achievement each one is. Perhaps in Hamilton this week?

England And The All Blacks

IT HAS always puzzled me why there is so much hatred towards the English rugby team in NZ, led by what can only be described as an ill-informed, Machiavellian media. On behalf of England I would like to set matters straight. The All Blacks are by far the best side in world rugby and no sane person in English rugby feels otherwise so do not believe the bollocks that the NZ media spout to fuel the hatred. England coach Eddie Jones (Sir Mad Butcher's favourite Australian) said last week after his side's win over Scotland "We are not the number one team in the World, we are number two and there is a gap between us and the number one team". England captain, (kiwi-born) Dylan Hartley "We want to be the best team in the World but we're not, that's the reality. But we've got something to aim for." Hardly the gloating braggarts NZ scribes would have you believe. So stop giving England so much undeserved stick. By all means enjoy their defeats such as that at the weekend but also give them, and Sir Peter's favourite Aussie, the credit they deserve for turning around a shambles of a World Cup performance into 18 straight wins (beating the same teams the AB's did). And rest assured the AB's are still a couple of streets ahead of the rest.



SOUTHS WILL rely heavily on their big two when they take on the competition leading Roosters this Thursday at ANZ Stadium in Sydney. Both Sam Burgess and Adam Reynolds had strong games for Souths in their win over Newcastle on Saturday and they will need to do the same this week. Burgess, as he has done throughout his career, leads by example. Against the Knights he topped both the tackle count with 39 and the running metres with 196, and he did this in his 65 minutes on the field. The big Englishman just keeps on keeping on and he will be tested by the Roosters in-form pack. The Knights match was Reynolds' second this season, after returning from injury the week before in the 38-18 victory over Manly. Since he has been back behind the South Sydney pack, the Rabbitohs look a much calmer and more organised team. They were belted by the Tigers, without Reynolds in the opening game of this year, but have won two from two since his return. In the 57th minute against Newcastle, Reynolds threw one of the passes of the season to put his right winger Braiden Burns over for try, which after his conversion, gave Souths a 24-18 lead. It was a clever, over the top pass, which cut out two inside men. In his two matches this season, Reynolds has landed 11 goals from 12 attempts and his goalkicking is another major plus for Souths. The 26 year old State of Origin halfback now has 875 points (17 tries, 399 goals, 9 field goals) in his 115 first grade games with Souths. The Rabbitohs lost their previous five successive games before Reynolds returned against Manly.

While Reynolds and Burgess are vital to a good season for Souths, they do have many other high quality players such as fullback Alex Johnston, five eighth Cody Walker and forwards Jason Clark, John Sutton, Kyle Turner, Robbie Farah and Damien Cook. Robbie Farah celebrated his 250th first grade game with the win over Newcastle and it is the first of his several milestone games that he has marked with a victory.

Souths will go into Thursday's game without three players who were suspended after the fiery clash with the Knights. Centre Hymel Hunt will be on the sidelines for at least four games after being charged with a grade two reckless high tackle. George Burgess will be out for at least three games, following his grade two striking charge and Braiden Burns will miss one game after an alleged shoulder charge. These suspensions could change if the players fight the charges.

The Roosters were lucky to get away with their 14-12 win over Penrith and referees boss, Tony Archer, admitted that the final pass for fullback, Michael Gordon's match winning try, was forward. Although they were flat for some periods of the game, the Roosters did well to come away from Penrith's home ground with the two competition points. Their halfback, Mitchell Pearce is in good form and he laid on two tries against Penrith. Boyd Cordner is also important to the Roosters and he ran for 156 metres and made 29 tackles in his 80 minutes against the Panthers. With Test prop, Matt Scott, out for the season, Dylan Napa will be keen to do well against the Souths forwards. The 24 year old knows he is on the short list for a Queensland State of Origin position. Against Penrith, Napa played for 57 minutes, making 29 tackles and 126 running metres.

As well as the Souths-Roosters game, round four throws up several other interesting match ups. Ricky Stuart will want his Raiders to continue on from their great 46-6 belting of the Tigers when they take on the Broncos in Brisbane. Playing his first game of the season against the Tigers, the Raiders centre, Jarrod Croker, is another one of those players, who brings a calming and more organised atmosphere to his team. The 26 year old Croker finished with 18 points against the Tigers with a try and seven goals. He now has 1,442 points (99 tries, 523 goals) from his 192 first grade games. Will he cross for his 100th first grade try at Brisbane? At Manly's Lottoland, Des Hasler and his Bulldogs will want to register their second win of the season against Manly who were strong in their 30-8 victory over the Cowboys at Townsville. Both the Eels and the Sharks were disappointing in their losses over the weekend and their clash at ANZ Stadium on Saturday night, although early in the season, could have a major bearing on their respective 2017 results.

Continued on next page...

After two big defeats in succession, Tigers coach Jason Taylor has been sacked. Despite the chaos that will follow Taylor's demise, the Tigers must stand up and be counted on Sunday afternoon at Leichhardt Oval. They have leaked 82 points to just eight against the Panthers then the Raiders, including allowing 14 tries against them to just one of their own. The Storm will make things tough for interim coach, Andrew Webster, and his charges. A much better defensive effort will be the key to any improvement by the Tigers. Webster, 34, who returned to the Tigers this year after working as an assistant with the Warriors for the previous two seasons, will be in charge from early this week.

I will be at Kogarah Oval in Sydney this Sunday to watch the Warriors take on St. George/Illawarra. I hope to see an improvement in the Warriors attack close to the opponents tryline.

And now to my Toronto Wolfpack update. On Friday night, 17 March in London, they scored the biggest and most important win in their short existence when they beat the London Broncos 30-26 in a round four Challenge Cup game. Both sides finished with five tries but the Wolfpack's captain and centre, Craig Hall, landed five goals from six attempts to give his side the victory. The Wolfpack led 30-12 after 60 minutes before the Broncos fought back. The Wolfpack's next match is this Sunday against the Keighley Cougars at Keighley near Bradford in West Yorkshire. The Wolfpack's next Challenge Cup match was not known at the time of writing. The draw was made live on BBC Radio Five's Breakfast Show on Tuesday 21 March by dual English League and Union international, Jason Robinson. Known as Billy Whizz during his great career, Robinson is now 42. In Rugby League, he played 27 games for Hunslet and 302 with Wigan, while he also played 12 Tests for Great Britain, seven for England and one for the Rest of the World. In 1996 when Rugby Union went professional, Robinson played League with Wigan Super League in the summer and 13 matches in the winter for Bath Rugby Union club. He turned to Union in 2000, playing 157 games for Sale Sharks and then three games with Fylde. He also represented England in 51 Tests and the British and Irish Lions in five Tests. Robinson retired in 2011, aged 37.

League Has the Chance to Bring in a Better System Than Rugby Union Ruling on Forward Passes By John Deaker



CONSIDERING RUGBY league has so often been ahead of other sports like rugby with its use of technology it continues to be stunning that the TMO in league can't review forward passes. The weekend's match between the Penrith Panthers and Sydney Roosters provided a prime example of why the system should allow for some way of ruling on passes. The Rooster's winning try came from a forward pass that the NRL's referee's boss Tony Archer has since admitted was a mistake by the on field referee. That admission won't make it any easier for Penrith to handle if they miss out on the finals series by a point or two!

Part of rugby league's reluctance to allow the bunker to rule on forward passes is because of how hard it is to sometimes get good camera angles to determine if a pass is forward or not. Rugby union has had its own issues since giving the Video ref the ability to rule on passes a few years ago. Rugby's attempts to cater for the law of relative velocity (the same law that ensures that if you were to jump out of the door of a moving train, you would end up a little further along the track than the point at which you made the jump) has confused referees both on the field and off it – not to mention the fans! The confusion from this law has meant that many tries that should be reviewed for at least possible forward passes aren't even getting looked at in Super rugby and test matches.

Rugby League has a prime opportunity to allow the bunker to rule on passes in the future and apply some common-sense to their rulings (not the law of relative velocity!) unlike rugby union. Then again, video refs and common-sense have never been things you'd place in the same sentence so we probably shouldn't expect the weekend's costly decision to end up resulting in a permanent change that would be long overdue.



HATTRICK HERO: Jaimee Robin scored a hat-trick in her debut for the Hawke's Bay women's rugby league team at the weekend.
PHOTO/HAWKE'S BAY TODAY



By Shane Hurndell
Hawke's Bay Today
Sports Reporter

Grass Roots Clash Makes Up For Warriors Lack of Cheer

CRIKEY IT was just as well we had a grass roots rugby league encounter to watch in Hawke's Bay so some of the pain from Friday night's Warriors clash could be erased.

Us Warriors fans don't deserve the garbage which was served up under the roof in Dunedin during the Warriors 24-12 loss to the Bulldogs. The Warriors lacked creativity and urgency on attack particularly effective last tackle plays and their defence was far from the standard expected.

One win from three games before the lads have crossed the Tasman certainly isn't the start coach Kearney and his troops wanted. It's early days but the Warriors have to deliver against the Dragons simple as that.

A team which delivered at the weekend was the Hawke's Bay women who beat Linton of Manawatu 38-28 at Kirkpatrick Park in Hastings on Sunday. This was the first match for the Bay side in a Mid Central competition.

The hosts could have been more convincing but player-coach, former Kiwi Fern Chanel Huddleston, opted to give her entire squad plenty of game time so they would be prepared for tougher matches which are expected later in the season. Her troops led 8-6 after the first quarter, 14-12 at halftime and the score was 22-all after the third quarter.

Scrumhalf Huddleston, 33, scored a cracker of a 90 metre solo try in the third quarter when she scamp-ered through some soft defence close to the play the ball area and out sprinted the cover defence. Centre Jaimee Robin (nee Edwards) scored a hat-trick for the hosts.

Robin, 29, who made her debut for the Bay, has represented her home province in five codes as she has previously played touch, hockey, union and sevens for the Bay. Four years ago Robin turned out for

North Harbour in the National Hockey League and the former New Zealand under-18 hockey rep said she is as fit now as she was then after losing 14kgs in the countdown to her February wedding.

Standoff Ngahuri Thompson was classy in all aspects of play for the Bay. Forwards Jess Bennett and Awhina Wainohu were workaholics.

Like the Warriors Huddleston's troops need to sharpen up their defence down the inside channels and improve their execution on the last tackle plays. Unlike the Warriors the Bay women had an excuse for some of their downfalls at the weekend and this was the fact they hadn't trained as a team before the match and just relied on familiarity from club trainings and previous games together in union and league.

It was awesome to watch a league game in the Bay on a Sunday because if league is going to flourish in the Bay again like it last did in the mid 1990s Sunday league is the answer. Union will always be the dominant code in the Bay on Saturdays in winter but if league is played on Sundays players will be able to play both codes as was often the case in the 1990s and most of the women in Sunday's game will if there is going to be a Hawke's Bay Tuis union team to entice them.

Hawke's Bay league fans should not have to wait until the annual Spring competition starts in August to get their fix of the 13-man code. Huddleston said her team will play these Mid Central comp games once every fortnight.

Rugby League Hawke's Bay chairman Dion Te Ahu said Sunday league is the long-term goal for the Bay and he hopes more competitions will be up and running by the middle of next month.



By Ben Francis

James Fisher-Harris fractured cheekbone in loss to Roosters



PENRITH PANTHERS forward James Fisher-Harris is out indefinitely with a fractured cheekbone. Fisher-Harris suffered the injury during the Panthers controversial 14-12 loss to the Sydney Roosters.

The man from Northland copped a knock to the face early in the match. Fisher-Harris tried to play on with the injury, but left the field in the 23rd minute and did not return.

Panthers coach Anthony Griffin confirmed post match the 21-year-old will be out 'for a few weeks.'

"He's got a fractured cheekbone unfortunately," said Griffin.

"He had a head clash early on in the game and as soon as he tried to blow his nose it just popped out.

"He'll be a few weeks out."

Fisher-Harris ran for 28 metres and made nine tackles in the 23 minutes we was on the field.

Panthers junior Caleb Aekins continued to impress U20 side as they beat the Roosters U20s 38-12.

The former Whangarei Boys High School star ran for 192 metres and scored his third try of the season. It was also the third straight game Aekins has ran for over 150 metres in all three matches this season. .

Wests Tigers back-rower Elijah Taylor was missing from action as the Tigers were destroyed by the Canberra Raiders.

The Tigers announced on Saturday Taylor would miss the match due to personal reasons.

The former Kaitia College student was sorely missed as the Tigers lost 46-6.

Adam Blair had a solid performance for the Brisbane Broncos but it wasn't enough to get the win, as they lost 14-12 to the Melbourne Storm.

Blair completed 24 tackles and ran for 62 metres, along with three offloads.

The Panthers and Broncos both play on Friday night against the Newcastle Knights and Canberra Raiders respectively while the Tigers face the Melbourne Storm on Sunday night

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High-Tackle Holloway... I'll give ya the tip mate!

By John Holloway

ANY PERSON acquainted with Sir Peter Leitch MB knows that you criticise the Warriors at your peril...constructive is ok but negative is a no go area...where Angels fear to tread. But gee its hard when they play like that.

Sometimes I think that as died in the wool Warrior fans we look too hard and cant see the trees for the forest, I think we get lost in the bush. To my eyes the Bulldogs were fair only but still too good for our boys. All the other teams look like they are trying harder than us but is it just in the crack in my rose coloured glasses. My pick for the spoon this year was around the Titans, Dragons or Knights but the Gold Coasters towelled up the electric Eels on the weekend, The Dragons got a further 2 points off the highly favoured Titleholding Sharks and the Knights came close to a second gallant win result against a resurgent Souths. My point being that other teams appear to be boxing above their weight while we are just sparring. A couple of our big punchers are on the ropes. I will try to hold any further comment till we get Foran on deck and RTS back at the back and hopefully a rejuvenated Matulino in the pack, they should upgrade our attack by plenty but will that crank up the attitude? It is still early days to judge if Coach Mooks can light the fire, we'll see. To finish this part on a positive vibe my wonky specs also note that with the Storm and Roosters on 6pts, Dragons Eels Bunnies and Cowboys on 4pts the other 10 of us with 2pts The mighty Warriors are running 3rd yeahhh not so bad eh. According to the Ladder we are 15th but what would they know.

Worth noting only 3 rounds in and every team has had a win, weird.

The bonafide results this round came from the steady Storm (as usual) coming home with the wet sail to pip the Broncos on the bell 14/12 with nether side losing face in a very high quality encounter. The other hard to pick was the Roosters and The Blue Mountain men and again a hardfought tussle with the same numbers 14/12 to the Bondi Boys, a lot of very talented footy players running around in this matchup, Penrith got the silver but watch out they are starting to fire-up. The topsy turvey Tigers went down (again) big time to the rampant Raiders. The Green Machine at full noise demolishing the Westie wannabees 46/6. Underfire Coach Taylor not a happy chappie. The turnups were around again with the certainty bets

the Cowboys dropping the bundle at home to the injury riddled Sea Eagles. The Manly mob came to play and took the money clearcut at 30 points to 6. The Trbojevics again to the fore and the rest muscled up for the win. Thurstons was all business but his cowhand crew looked tired. How could you not back the Sharks to knock off St George. The Local derby looked pretty one sided to me but the Dragons were breathing fire, tireless tackling and a double from toughie centre Aitken was the diff at 16/10. The Eels lose a lot of direction if Corey Normans not there and so it proved with the Try-Hard Titans getting up for a surprising 26/14 decision. A rare game that Radradra doesn't cross the stripe. As previously noted the Knights got unseated at home by the Bunnies but only just coming back at the death but not quite overturning a 24/18 deficit. The Steeltown boys are punching above their weight.

My expert eye was well off centre last weekend I think I tipped a miserable 3 here but in the NRL Official money comp I got 5. For what its worth I reckon round 4 is another minefield of possible pitfalls.

On paper the Roosters will top the Rabbittohs, the Panthers will deal to the Knights, The Broncos at home to the Raiders will be a beauty with the Sun-corp crowd the decider, The Sea Eagles could dent the Bulldogs, The Eels might get a Shark backlash, The same goes for the Titans via the Cowboys. The Tigers will need to smarten up bigtime to get any change from Cam Smiths gathering Storm and the Dragons will start AUSTAB favourites over our boys over there.

That's it for this week me boyos. With a nod to the rugger Tanas Blues didn't save the Latte City but the Irish used their St Pats day fervour to stop the English bulldog in its tracks what a great result for yours truly as I have two English Son-in-laws that were waiting to climb into me over the All blacks losing the record. There is a god. Mind you my Christchurch Son in Law had a little Crusaders shot at me and fair enough I can cop that.

NRL FANTASY TEAM Shoutout...I am a few teams short in my NRL Private league starts this week rd 4...any Fantasy team guys/girls very welcome

Go to Swashyboys ...code is 5T5KM743. Play with High-Tackle. Lets have some fun. Keep the Faith catch ya next week.

By Rugby League World Cup 2017 New Zealand Team

WE ARE doing our best to get out and about in the community to promote the tournament, and had a presence at Polyfest in Auckland and the Bulldogs vs Warriors game in Dunedin last weekend. Polyfest is always a colourful display of pacific cultures, and it was a perfect setting for us to connect with the Maori and Pacific Island community. Not only did members of the public get to see former greats Ali Lauititi, Nigel Vagana and Lesley Vainikolo; they also had their chance to win tickets to the RLWC2017. Congratulations to Kelsi Amiatu who is taking her family to the RLWC2017!

This weekend we will be at Pasifika Festival at Western Springs. Come along for your chance to win another family pass to the opening match between New Zealand and Samoa on 28 October at Mt Smart Stadium. Tickets for RLWC2017 are available now from RLWC2017.com, starting at \$10 for kids, \$20 for adults and \$45 for a family of four




A photograph of two men standing in front of a banner that reads 'MODERN POWER'. The man on the left is wearing a dark blue t-shirt with a white logo and blue sneakers. The man on the right is wearing a red polo shirt and grey shorts. They are standing on a green artificial turf surface.

Luke Gates (RLWC2017) with Lesley Vainikolo.

THE RUGBY League season kicked off for senior grades last Saturday at Opoho Park in Dunedin. Six teams competed in the tournament, with Aranui Eagles defeating the East Coast Eagles 10-0 in the final.

Terrence Reid and Sam Johnstone were key players for East Coast, setting up tries to help them beat University to book a spot in the final. However, the locals couldn't maintain their earlier form, losing key players to injuries and making costly errors. Aranui remained determined, winning the final two tries to none.



Aranui Eagles, champions of 2017 Otago Nines

Southern Schools Get A Taste Of Nines Rugby League

PRIOR TO the Warriors and Bulldogs match last Friday, Otago Rugby League held a schools nine-a-side tournament at Logan Park to encourage more young players to give League a go.

Teams from Dunedin, Central Otago and Canterbury participated in grades from Year 5-6, 7-8, 9-10 and 11-13. The final of the year 11-13 grade was played as the curtain-raiser at Forsyth Barr stadium prior to the NRL match; with John McGlashan College defeating Central Otago Mustangs in the Final 20-8.

In the Year 9-10 grade, Central Otago Mustangs defeated John McGlashan 20 – 4, with Tahuna Normal Intermediate winning the Year 7-8 grade. During the day, young players also had the chance to get signatures from Ben Matulino and Kieran Foran, as well as Bulldogs legend Terry Lamb stopping by to support.

On the Thursday before the tournament, schools were visited by members from the Warriors and Bulldogs, who delivered the ACC Sports Smart Programme. Further to this, local NZRL Development Officers have been in the schools to assist with coaching and upskilling players in anticipation for the tournament.

This tournament was the first RLWC Festival Day being run this year in conjunction with NZRL. These Festival Days will happen all across the country in the lead up to RLWC2017, to help promote the tournament in the grassroots communities. For more information on the Festival Days, and to see where your closest festival day is visit NZRL.co.nz.



Caleb Wallace of Tahuna Normal Intermediate.



Sam Teal, of Central Otago Mustangs is chased by Adam Woodhouse, of John McGlashan.



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Rugby League Stalwart Cathy Friend Qsm Bestowed Prestigious Role

By Talei Anderson, Auckland Rugby League

AFTER SUPPORTING rugby league for more than six decades and serving over 25 years on the board, rugby league stalwart Cathy Friend QSM has been bestowed an official kuia (elder) of Auckland Rugby League (ARL).

Family, friends, and the rugby league community gathered ahead of the annual general meeting at the Mt Richmond Hotel on Saturday March 18, to celebrate Friend and her dedicated service to the game

"This is a very special day for us," said Cameron McGregor, chairman of the Auckland Rugby League.

"For the first time in ARL history, we have created this role of such prestige and honour."

"Cathy's knowledge and experience is very much valued and appreciated. We are pleased that we are able to acknowledge all that she has done."

A veteran of the Manukau and Otahuhu clubs, 83-year-old Friend started her rugby league career as a teenager working in administration.

She was a driving force behind NZ Maori participation in the 2000 Rugby League World Cup earning the Maori Sports Administrator of the Year.

She is a life member of the Auckland Rugby League, Auckland Maori Rugby League, New Zealand Maori Rugby League, and made history in 2014 when she became the first female life member of the New Zealand Rugby League.

She has also been awarded a Queen's Service Medal for her contribution to the game.

Having retired from her role on the board in November 2016, McGregor says the prestigious role will see that Friend is still very much involved.

"She will continue to help us on our quest to make ARL the best it can be, while also being an advocate for our clubs and communities," said McGregor.

"On behalf of the Auckland Rugby League, I thank Cathy for everything she has done and will continue to do for us and our great game."

In her 64 years as a member of the ARL, Friend says she has learnt the importance of giving true service.

"I want to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to the Auckland Rugby League community," said Friend.

"I hope that over the years, I have helped many of you achieve your goals and victories."

"To my wonderful whanau, thank you for your continued support.

"We all love rugby league - that's what brings us together. It's a real honour to be part of the rugby league family, so I thank you all from the bottom of my heart."

In addition to honouring Friend, ARL took the opportunity to present Distinguished Service Awards to Steve Quedley (Te Atatu), Rawinia Mana (Pakuranga) and Mike Vern (ARL football committee) for their loyalty and commitment to the game.



Cathy Friend QSM

Continued on next page...

Continued from previous page...

Paula Betham (Marist) was awarded the Simon's Scroll for her outstanding administrative service, while Mangere East was named Best and Fairest Club of the Year by the ARL Referees Association.

ARL's Brian Mills was awarded the Edith Woods Honours for his unbroken service to the organisation.

A former player, referee and now administrator, Mills has diligently served ARL and its clubs directly for the past 28 years.

He was general manager of the Auckland Rugby League in 1989-1993, before leaving to take up the position as financial controller of the then Auckland Warriors and subsequently NZRL. He has since remained as the ARL contract accountant.



Distinguished Service Award - (Right) Stephen Quedley (Te Atatu) with director Evelyn Brooker.



Distinguished Service Award - Rawinia Mana (Pakuranga) with director Shane Price.



Edith Woods Honours - Brian Mills with chairman Cameron McGregor.



Simons Scroll - Paula Betham (Marist) with director Gordon Gibbons.



PORT CHALMERS boys, Zak and Alex Corbett got a special surprise when they were invited to meet the Vodafone Warriors at the member's signing session in Dunedin by their Uncle, Leighton, who is the club's Designer.

They were so excited to meet their hero's at the Signing session, they wore their autographed jerseys to school all day on Friday and to the game with the whole family on Friday night.

The boys can't wait to get up to Mt Smart Stadium in Auckland for the first time to cheer on the team once again!



Auckland Honour International Champion Team of 1977

By Talei Anderson, Auckland Rugby League

THE MONTH of June will mark 40 years since the 'remarkable grand slam' when the Auckland premier representative team beat Australia, Great Britain and France at Carlaw Park in 1977.

Squaring off against the international sides, the provincial team made headlines for their magnificent and historic performance in taking down Australia 19-15 on June 1, Great Britain 14-10 on June 14 and France 17-0 on June 21 – 'the treble against international sides had been completed'.

Former Kiwis prop and Auckland player Lyndsay Proctor who played in the infamous fixtures has set out to reunite all 19 players to remember the nights played under the lights at Carlaw Park and their supreme victories.

"I am very proud to be a player of the Auckland side of 1977," said Proctor.

"We were named the best Auckland team to represent our province, and most certainly the most successful on record."

"Looking back, it certainly was a great time for us all. We all played part in a team that made its mark on Auckland Rugby League history."

Of the 19 players to take the field of dreams that month, 14 played for the Kiwis or went on to represent New Zealand, five were named Kiwi captains and three were inducted into New Zealand Rugby League's Legends of League. Former Kiwi loose forward and Auckland player Mark Graham was also named New Zealand Rugby League's Player of the Century.

The record-setting side will be guests of honour at the Vodafone Warriors match when they play the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs at Mt Smart Stadium on Friday June 23 (8.00pm kick-off).

On Saturday June 24, the Auckland Rugby League will pay tribute to the side at the home of the Richmond Bulldogs (Grey Lynn Park) where clubs, players and fans can join them in celebrating their reunion of 40 years.

"In 2007, the Warriors acknowledged our 30-year anniversary and paid homage to the team by playing in replica Auckland jerseys that night," said Proctor.

"It was a special occasion and I think it was the first time I've been cheered by supporters, compared to the boo's I received at Carlaw Park all those years ago – thank god for the memories," he quipped.

"It's been ten years since our last get together and both the Auckland Rugby League and Warriors have been wonderful in helping me organise this special occasion.

"I must also thank Sir Peter Leitch for his support when the idea was in fruition.

"I emailed him about the reunion, and he has supported me all the way. I look forward to catching up with him on the night of the game.

"Our guys are coming from Australia, Auckland and the rural towns of the North Island for a weekend affair.

"We are all excited for what will be a great weekend of footy and as you can imagine, lots of laughs."



1977 Auckland International Champion team photo



Former Kiwi and Auckland players of the 1977 Auckland international champion team, Fred Ah Kuoi (left) and Lyndsay Proctor (right).



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#NRLDragonsWarriors

P	T	G	PTS		P	T	G	PTS
3	1	0	4	Josh DUGAN	1	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	Nene MACDONALD	2	1	0	4
3	2	0	8	Euan AITKEN	3	3	0	12
3	0	0	0	Tim LAFAL	3	1	0	4
3	0	0	0	Jason NIGHTINGALE	3	0	0	0
3	3	13	38	Gareth WIDDOP (C)	3	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	Josh McCRONE	3	2	5	18
3	0	0	0	Russell PACKER	3	0	0	0
3	1	0	4	Cameron McINNES	3	0	1	2
3	1	0	4	Paul VAUGHAN	3	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	Tyson FRIZELL	3	1	0	4
3	3	0	12	Joel THOMPSON	3	1	0	4
3	1	0	4	Jack de BELIN	3	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	Tariq SIMS	1	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	Leeson AH MAU	3	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	Jacob HOST	3	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	Kurt MANN	3	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	Jai FIELD	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	Taane MILNE	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	Luciano LEILUA	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	Hame SELE	0	0	0	0

INTERCHANGE

14	Erin CLARK	1	0	0	0
15	Charlie GUBB	3	0	0	0
16	Sam LISONE	3	0	0	0
17	Bunty AFOA	3	0	0	0

RESERVES

18	James GAVET	0	0	0	0
19/20	Ligi SAO	0	0	0	0
20/21	Blake AYSHFORD	0	0	0	0
21/22	Kieran FORAN	0	0	0	0

COACHES

Paul McGREGOR Stephen KEARNEY

PENALTIES	SCRUMS
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8	5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12	9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16	13 14 15 16

PENALTIES	SCRUMS
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8	5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12	9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16	13 14 15 16

52 BIG LEAGUE 2017 Round Four

DATE: SUNDAY, MARCH 26
VENUE: UOW JUBILEE OVAL
KICK-OFF: 6.30PM (AEDT)
REFEREE: DAVID MUNRO
ASSISTANT REFEREE: CHRIS SUTTON
TOUCH JUDGES: DAVE RYAN & PETER GOUGH
SENIOR REVIEW OFFICIAL: ASHLEY KLEIN
REVIEW OFFICIAL: LUKE PATTEN
FOX SPORTS: LIVE 6PM
LIVE RADIO: ABC, TRIPLE M

	DRAGONS	WARRIORS
Position (Points)	3rd (4)	15th (2)
Points For	74	48
Points Against	54	72

ATTACK		
Tries	12	9
Completions	75%	80%
Tries 0-20m	5	7
Tries 21-50m	6	2
Tries 51-100m	1	0

DEFENCE		
Tries	11	12
Tries 0-20m	10	4
Tries 21-50m	1	7
Tries 51-100m	0	1

MATCH AVERAGES		
Tries Scored	4	3
Tries Conceded	4	4
Points Scored	25	16
Points Conceded	18	24
Hit Ups/Runs	174	171
Tackles	324	317
Metres Gained	1604	1511
Handling Errors	4	4
Offloads	13	6
Line-breaks	4	3
Goalkicking	87%	67%

HEAD-TO-HEAD
 Played 24, St George Illawarra 19, Warriors 5

AT UOW JUBILEE OVAL
 Played 2, St George Illawarra 1, Warriors 1

WINNING FORM 2017
 ST GEORGE ILLA: WLW Streak – 1 win
 WARRIORS: WLL Streak – 2 losses

PAST 8 CLASHES
2016 – WARRIORS D. ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA 26-10 at Mt Smart Stadium
2015 – ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA D. WARRIORS 36-0 at Westpac Stadium, Wellington
2014 – ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA D. WARRIORS 20-10 at WIN Jubilee Oval; ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA D. WARRIORS 31-12 at Eden Park
2013 – ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA D. WARRIORS 19-10 at WIN Stadium
2012 – ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA D. WARRIORS 38-6 at WIN Stadium
2011 – ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA D. WARRIORS 26-22 at WIN Stadium; ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA D. WARRIORS 25-12 at Mt Smart Stadium

BIGGEST HEAD-TO-HEAD WINS
 ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA D. AUCKLAND 54-0 at WIN Stadium, 2000
 WARRIORS D. ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA 34-6 at Ericsson Stadium, 2001; WARRIORS D. ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA 44-16 at Mt Smart Stadium, 2007

NEXT CLASH
 ST GEORGE ILLA: v Wests Tigers at ANZ, 4pm Sunday April 2
 WARRIORS: v Gold Coast at Mt Smart, 4pm (NZ) Sunday April 2

CASUALTY WARD
 ST GEORGE ILLA: Will Matthews (hip), Kiti Glymin (shoulder) – indefinite; Drew Hutchison (knee) – season
 WARRIORS: Ben Matulino (knee) – Rd 5

Courtesy of our friends at Big League Magazine

GAME EIGHT: St George Illawarra v Warriors

NRL Preview

Fire returning to the Dragons' belly

by DAVID MIDDLETON
@Middleton_David



CAMERON McINNES

1

try assist
in Round 3

UOW Jubilee Oval Sunday, 6.30pm

Form: The performances of the Dragons have provided one of the biggest surprises of the early rounds. A resounding win over Penrith and last Sunday's defeat of defending premiers Cronulla were full of merit and should provide a strong foundation for the rest of the season. The Warriors have done little to shed their image as the competition's biggest underachievers after a narrow win over Newcastle and successive losses to the Storm and Bulldogs.

History: The Dragons have dominated clashes with the Warriors since 1999, winning 19 of 24 played and 11 of the past 12. The Warriors ended a long losing streak against the Dragons with a victory in Auckland last year but they haven't tasted success against the Red V in Australia since 2003.

Danger sign: The Dragons' forwards hold the key for the team and the performances of Jack de Belin and Paul Vaughan against the Sharks were full of intent. The Warriors will need to aim up powerfully in the middle of the park if they are to match the Dragons' firepower.

Best Bet? Look for the Dragons to build on their promising start and continue their imposing record against the Warriors. Take St George Illawarra by 1-12 points.

Money-spinner: Options for First Tryscorer include Euan Aitken, Jason Nightingale and Solomone Kata.

HEAD-TO-HEAD LEADERS

AVERAGE METRES	AVERAGE TACKLES	LINE-BREAKS
Jacob Lillyman 157	Cameron McInnes 50	Joel Thompson 3
Paul Vaughan 153	Simon Mannering 39	David Fusitu'a 3
Josh Dugan 146	Bunty Afoa 37	Paul Vaughan 2
Roger Tuivasa-Sheck 145	Jack de Belin 36	Shaun Johnson 2
Ken Maumalo 140	Paul Vaughan 30	Gareth Widdop 2

STATS

NRL FANTASY

FANTASY POINTS

Cameron McInnes	67.3
Jack de Belin	66.7
Shaun Johnson	64.3
Joel Thompson	57.3
Paul Vaughan	57.3



HOLDEN CUP

DATE: SUNDAY, MARCH 26 VENUE: UOW JUBILEE OVAL KICK-OFF: 4.15PM
REFEREE: JAMES VELLA
TOUCH JUDGES: RYAN JACKSON & PAT MACKAY

DRAGONS V WARRIORS

Steve MARSTERS	1	Kane TELEA
Matheson JOHNS	2	Lewis SOOSEMEA
Reuben GARRICK	3/25	Melino FINEANGANOFU
Zac LOMAX	4	Mat FAITOTOA
Jason GILLARD	5	Edward VAEAU-MULITALO
Tristan SAILOR	6	Chanel HARRIS-TAVITA
Jackson WILLIS	7	Dylan TAVITA
Josh DOWEL	8	Kenese KENESE (C)
Reece ROBSON	9/21	Chris SIO (C)
Matt SHEPPARD	10	Soane HUFANGA
Trent PEOPLES	11	Joe VUNA
Jayden MORGAN	12	Havi TUPOUNIUA
Stuart MASON	13	Jerome MAMEA
14 TJ UELE, 15 Max BAILEY 16 Cooper PURCELL, 17 Joe LOVODUA, 18 Hayden LOMAX, 19 Jackson FORD 20 Tom ANGEL, 21 Dylan MORRIS 22 Jack CROSS, 23 Israel SEUFALE		3 Keanu LAUMATIA-PAKI 9 Liam HAMPSON, 14 Auzzie TUWHANGAI, 15 Elijah SUFIA, 16 Troy PULUPAKI, 17 Gibson POPOALII, 18 Lee TURNER 20 Jordan PINNOCK, 22 Nathan NEWTON, 23 Preston RIKI
Wayne COLLINS		Grant POCKLINGTON

BACKWARD STEP... The Dragons suffered their first loss of the season in Round 3 after being outplayed by the Sharks. Their only try was scored by Matheson Johns in the 70th minute as little more than a late consolation. They missed 59 tackles and had a poor completion rate, struggling to create opportunities for themselves in a lacklustre display.

FINDING THEIR FEET... The traditionally strong Warriors are languishing at the bottom of the ladder after their third loss of the season, this time at the hands of the Bulldogs. While they are improving week-to-week, they are still a side trying to find their feet with a fairly new line-up. Fullback Kane Telea put in an eye-catching performance, scoring a try in the 49th minute and assisting another.

— KAMILIA HANNA

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Warriors Visit to Invercargill A Huge Success

By Alana Lockhorst

WEDNESDAY 15TH march Southland awoke bright and early to get their first glimpses of the visiting players of the Vodafone warriors players Ben Matulino, Kieran Foran, Jerome Ropati and kiwi ferns Georgia Hale. After a hours gym training at stadium southland the crew head off to gala reserve to meet the Rock Radio Station. Live on air the 2 cast members flipped a coin the looser was then to be tackled by Jerome Ropati who was more than happy to with a great big smile.

9.30am – The crew were split into 2 groups Thank you to Rick and Andrea murell for lending us two big trucks from Kia motors with 2 Southland driver Chee Turuwhenua and Shaun Tamiriki – Todd. The warriors were then able to head to 6 lucky schools – Southland Boys High and Arora college , then Waverley park primary and New Field primary followed by Fernworth primary and Te Whare kura O Arowhenua. They were presented with an amazing programme on “well being” eating healthy drinking water and sleeping right. The children had so much fun not only learning the message but with fun quizzes and interaction with the players. The warriors were welcomed with Love and respect and farewelled with a Haka vice versa. I really feel strongly they have left a warm strong impression on the Southland kids and community.

12.30pm -The Kiln restaurant and bar kindly treated the warriors to a free lunch. Thank you to Allan Ngakai - Kieran Froan presents Allan with a signed ball. We also popped into the Richardsons Truck museum for a tea break.

MY MOST FAVOURITE MOMENT OF THE DAY

After finishing at one of the schools we had around 15min to spare we popped in with Ben Matulino to surprise this young man named Mitch Pereira at his home. Mitch is 18 years old has terminal cancer and is too sick to leave his home so we managed to go to him. Ben sat with mitch and chatted before giving him a signed ball. – picture is Ben, Mitch Mum Ana and Mitch. Mitch was surrounded by his beautiful whanau.

Continued on next page...



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While the warriors were off to the next school, I shot off to Fred & Ginger's Hairdressing salon to meet up with Jacob from NZR, Nigel Vagana and Henry Fa'afili and the lovely Jo Hall who kindly cut my hair. We then had an interview with the Southland Times media with a short story on my cancer and how League for life and NZRL helped me with funding for my treatment at the Peter Mac Centre in Melbourne Australia. I was diagnosed with a terminal rare form of bell Cancer called Carcinoid Syndrome and there is no funding available in New Zealand to help pay for the treatment. Thank you to Jacob, Sir Peter Leitch and the board at NZRL for assisting with my cause you have taken a bit of pressure off and I now have extra time to spend with my 8 year old son and carry on my journey with rugby league.

We then carried on to Elles Rd League grounds where Invercargill/Southland were invited to a Community signing and interaction with the Warriors. Great turnout!

5.30pm – At the ascot park hotel a senior presentation with NRL, NZRL and Nigel Vagana and Henry Fa'afili where a presentation on "STATE OF MIND" talking with the local community and grass roots clubs about depression and well being. And how we can deal with it in our clubs, community our own lives and families.



7.30pm – We were onto our Southland rugby League Prize giving. The awards were presented by Nigel and Henry for the southland U15's, 17's, 19's and the premier Southland Rams squad for 2016.

Volunteers and officials were also Thanked, Including the two ball boys Maiti Tengu and Kruize Cockburn.

Continued on next page...



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My week ended with a quick drive to Dunedin to help with promoting the world cup 2017 and watching my most favorite team The warrior take on the Bulldogs at Forsyth Stadium in Dunedin.



SATURDAY – I made my way to the Dunedin 9'S competition to Support my favourite Christchurch Team the Aranui Eagles who come away with the well deserved trophy, winners of the 9s !

That just topped the end of my week!



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Then post a stamped addressed envelope with your name, address, phone number and email to the address on the left.

Winner will be drawn on 4/04/17

West Coast Chargers Win Historic Shield Match

By Brad Tacon

WEST COAST Rugby League has had a major boost 2 weeks ago after winning the Thacker Shield from Canterbury rivals for the first time in 20 years.

A West Coast Chargers representative team beat Canterbury's champion club Linwood Keas 28-22 in Greymouth on Saturday 11th March to regain South Island rugby league's 104-year-old trophy.

They were the first West Coast champions since Cobden-Kohinoor beat Hornby 30-10 in 1997.

The shield was donated by Canterbury Rugby League foundation president Dr Henry Thacker in 1913 as a national challenge between the 2 top champion clubs, but it became an exclusively South Island series from 1921. The concept was revived in 2013 when the rules were changed to allow West Coast to field a representative side against Canterbury's premiership champions.

The Canterbury clubs agreed to travel to Greymouth's Wingham Park to put the shield on the line. Fittingly, West Coast-born former Kiwis prop Brent Stuart coached his Hornby team to a win over the Coasters at the first attempt.

Linwood were the first Canterbury club to taste Thacker Shield defeat since the series' resurrection.

Over the years, the West Coast teams have always come up against bigger, stronger opposition, Linwood were no different and ready to defend the title.

West Coast Coach Brad Tacon had assembled a strong squad to prepare for this match, but this quickly fell apart as injuries in club league soon depleted his squad, but in true West Coast style, players put their hands up to pull on the red and white jersey and represented the province with pride.

Scores were locked at 8-8 at halftime, but West Coast raced out to a commanding 24-8 lead before Linwood finished strongly to cut the deficit to six points.

West Coast's speedy wing Harley Vui grabbed his second try of the game - a 80m solo effort - to put the result beyond the defenders' reach.

Regan Stanton also scored twice for the home side with Phil Thomson and captain Hamish Paterson, the West Coast player of the year in 2016, also getting on the scoresheet.

West Coast Coach Brad Tacon was very proud of all 19 players who played in this historic winning match, "The boys left everything out there, they were out on their feet, they have done themselves and West Coast Rugby League proud, it is a great boost for Coast League just what we needed, I couldn't be happier "

Thacker Shield rugby league scorers

West Coast 28 (Regan Stanton 2, Harley Vui 2, Phil Thomson, Hamish Paterson tries; Thomson 2 goals) beat Linwood Keas 22 (Shea Te Hae-Duncan, Aleki Poching, Sam Hudson, Chris Nijssen tries; Michael Nicholls-Cane goal). HT: 8-8.



Thacker Shield




Thacker Shield team.



WIN! WARRIORS PRIZE WORTH OVER \$3000


NZ'S NO.1 WEEKLY MAGAZINE

Woman's Day



GIRLS' GUIDE TO THE WARRIORS

- ◆ PLAYER PROFILES ◆ PIN-UP POSTER
- ◆ GAME-DAY BUZZ ◆ CELEBRITY FANS




Girls' guide to the
WARRIORS
ONLY IN THIS WEEK'S
Woman's Day

Reader Mail



Bula Peter,

JUST HAVING a few words with Des Hasler and his boys in Sydney at the airport. They said I was wearing the wrong cap.

Regards,

Gerry



Hi Butch,

THANK YOU so much for the nines jersey! Love the newsletter, looking forward to seeing the boys do well this season. #warriornation

Jordan Erick, Patumahoe.

Hi Peter,

AS REQUESTED, here's a shot with some of my warriors jerseys. We've been living in Melbourne for 5yrs and always hit up the Anzac day game which is one of the best games of the year.

My Fianceé and I were hoping to buy a new heritage jersey to show support for the upcoming Anzac game against the storm, but won't be able to afford it due to saving for our wedding in December.

Keep up the great work with the boys, we've got an amazing team with so much potential

Best wishes Pierce Barrett



Keep up with Sir Peter Leitch! Click the icons to follow him on:



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Instagram



Twitter

Just wanted to share some photos of Albert Vete and his daughter...



2 proud Dads; Albert with Ariella and Jacob with Arani.



Albert, partner Whitney and baby Ariella.



Baby Ariella is a Vodafone Warriors fan.



Dad and mum showing baby off to the fans.



Proud Parents.



The boys all wanted a photo with Ariella.

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The Newsletter Team

Here is the team that help me put together the newsletter each week. We have a number of fantastic contributors who send in content each week that along with my editorial gets wrapped up by our graphic designer and sent out by our distribution man to your inbox.

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