



Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter

21 May 2015

#73a

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It's all over for Leuluai

Some more news for you, and some of it bad.

You all know I am a huge Thomas Leuluai fan, so the confirmation the injury that he suffered on Saturday night against the Eels has ended his season has hit me hard. But if it has knocked me, imagine what it has done to Thomas.

He will have season-ending surgery after scans confirmed he ruptured the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee.

The 29-year-old veteran was helped off just 23 minutes into the encounter after we had already lost Ryan Hoffman to concussion in the third minute.

Leuluai is the third player in the NRL squad to have his campaign ended by an ACL injury.

We have already lost Ben Henry and Ngani Laumape to knee reconstruction operations.

Hoffman, who wasn't able to return to the field, is following concussion protocols.

Manu Vatuvei (sternum) and Sam Tomkins (knee) are both on target to play in our next match against

Newcastle at Mt Smart on Sunday, May 31 (4pm kick-off).

A total of seven outside backs were unavailable for last weekend's round – Vatuvei, Tomkins, Laumape, Konrad Hurrell (suspended), David Fusitu'a (groin), Glen Fisiiahi (knee) and Matt Allwood (ankle).

Along with Vatuvei and Tomkins, Fisiiahi and Fusitu'a are also possibilities to be available for round 12 following this week's bye.



Ryan Hoffman, Manu Vatuvei and Thomas Leuluai watch from the sideline.

Injury Room

- Matt Allwood (ankle) | Round 14-15
- Glen Fisiiahi (knee) | Round 12-13
- David Fusitu'a (groin) | Round 12-13
- Ben Henry (knee) | Season
- Ryan Hoffman (concussion) | Monitored
- Konrad Hurrell (suspended) | Round 14

- Ngani Laumape (knee) | Season
- Thomas Leuluai (knee) | Season
- Sam Tomkins (knee) | Round 12
- Manu Vatuvei (sternum) | Round 12

Mate Against Mate!

Vodafone Warriors team-mates will go head-to-head for the first time in Origin history after New South Wales second rower Ryan Hoffman and Queensland prop Jacob Lillyman were both confirmed for the opening match of the 2015 series on May 27.

Continued on next page...

photosport

New Zealand's award winning sports photographic agency

I would like to say a big thank you to the fantastic team at Photosport. They provide the newsletter with their photos for us to use throughout.

Check out their website:

www.photosport.co.nz

Take a look at their photos and support them by buying a few. They are top people!

Your Old Mate
Sir Peter Leitch



Coinciding with the club's 20th anniversary season, Hoffman is the first current Vodafone Warrior ever selected for the Blues.

Soon after he was officially named, Lillyman was confirmed for his ninth Queensland Origin appearance and his third on end, after playing in game two and three of last year's series.

He also represented the Maroons out of the Vodafone Warriors in 2011.

Hoffman, who joined the Vodafone Warriors on a three-year contract this season, was in the starting side for all three matches last year when New South Wales ended Queensland's run of eight consecutive series wins. The Blues won the first two matches before the Maroons took out the final encounter. Hoffman will be making his 12th Origin appearance next week.

James Maloney won Origin selection for New South Wales in 2013, but had already finished with the Vodafone Warriors.

Previous Vodafone Warriors who represented Queensland while at the club were Kevin Campion, PJ Marsh, Steve Price and Brent Tate.



Jacob Lillyman Ryan Hoffman

NSW: Josh Dugan; Daniel Tupou, Josh Morris, Michael Jennings, Will Hopoate; Mitchell Pearce, Trent Hodkinson; Aaron Woods, Robbie Farah (c), James Tamou; Beau Scott, Ryan Hoffman; Josh Jackson. **Interchange:** Boyd Cordner, Trent Merrin, Andrew Fifita, David Klemmer.

Queensland: Billy Slater, Darius Boyd, Greg Inglis, Justin Hodges, Will Chambers, Johnathan Thurston, Cooper Cronk, Matt Scott, Cameron Smith (capt), Nate Myles, Aidan Guerra, Sam Thaiday, Corey Parker. **Interchange:** Daly Cherry-Evans, Jacob Lillyman, Matt Gillett, Josh McGuire.

Referees Named

Gerard Sutton and Ben Cummins have been appointed to referee the first 2015 Holden State of Origin match at ANZ Stadium next Wednesday.

Referees Elite Performance Manager, Tony Archer said Sutton and Cummins had been the standout referees so far this season.

My Old Mate Never Stops

Rugby World Cup winning coach Sir Graham Henry is always on the go and he has a new assignment. He's off to Seoul in South Korea to discuss the RWC with various officials from other countries.

And while he is there he will also turn selector!

But he's not picking a team, he's choosing the youngster who will run the ball out to begin the tournament.

Monty Set For Action This Saturday Night

I'm really looking forward to Saturday night and the Steps for Life charity boxing event at the Waitakere Trusts Stadium. As you know it's being organised by, and raising funds for, Monty Betham's charity, which works with obesity, and giving our youngsters healthy choices.

I can not speak highly enough of Monty and his Steps For Life charity.

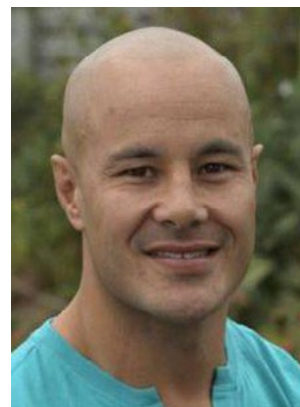
Monty is a former Vodafone Warriors captain, a Kiwi and in my opinion, one of the nicest blokes around.

I have done my fair share of charity work, and I take my hat off to him, because I know he does everything that he does without taking a penny for it.

It's done out of a desire to see kids have the same kinds of chances he enjoyed.

That's real leadership. It will be a top night, so if you want to know more about it, because there is plenty of time to get tickets and help a really worthy charity, visit:

www.stepsforlife.co.nz



Monty Betham

Black Sticks Men Call On Experience For World League

BLACK Sticks Men's head coach Colin Batch has named an experienced side for the FIH World League Semi-Final in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

New Zealand will be led by Phil Burrows (336 tests), Ryan Archibald (284), Simon Child (230) and Shea McAleese (214) at the tournament which runs from 3-14 June.



The Black Sticks are among 10 sides competing for a place in the World League Final, while the event also doubles as an opportunity to automatically qualify for the 2016 Rio Olympics with a top three placing.

Veteran Archibald returns to the side after missing the recent International Challenge in Hobart, adding strength to a youthful and talented midfield including Arun Panchia, George Muir and Nic Woods.

Southern defender and drag flicking option Kane Russell also returns for the first time this year after being rewarded for a strong period of training.

Head coach Colin Batch said despite several injuries within the squad it was pleasing to have strong players ready to step up.

"We have some injuries at present with Nick Wilson, Shay Neal and James Coughlan all sidelined, but have created good depth and are still able to put out a very good side for Argentina," he said.

That depth has led to a few role changes in this team with Phil Burrows moving back up to striker and Shea McAleese pushing back into defence.

"Steve Edwards will also move into the attacking line. He is a very talented player with great attacking skills and we think he can be genuine goal scoring threat."

New Zealand is joined in Pool A at the tournament by Netherlands, Korea, Japan and Egypt while Pool B consists of Germany, Argentina, Spain, Canada and Austria.

The World League format sees the Kiwis play four pool games ahead of a crucial sudden-death quarter final against a Pool B opponent.

North Harbour's Edwards said he was looking forward to suiting up for the Black Sticks again.

"It's very exciting to be back in the team at such an important time for us," the 29-year-old said.

"We've got a well balanced team with experience and some really good young guys. We want to finish as high as possible at the tournament, and qualify now so we can focus on Rio."

The Black Sticks fly out of Auckland on 25 May and head to Buenos Aires where they face Egypt first up on Thursday 4 June at 5am (NZ time).

Team:

SHIRT #	NAME
10	Ryan ARCHIBALD
18	Phil BURROWS
6	Simon CHILD (capt)
31	Steve EDWARDS
15	George ENERSEN
4	Nick HAIG
5	Andy HAYWARD
9	Blair HILTON
29	Hugo INGLIS
27	Stephen JENNESS
20	Devon MANCHESTER
25	Shea McALEESE
30	George MUIR
24	Arun PANCHIA
28	Dwayne ROWSELL
21	Kane RUSSELL
22	Blair TARRANT
17	Nic WOODS

Auckland Vulcans U/21 Squad Named For South Island Tour

THE Rugby League Development Foundation has today named an 18-man Auckland Vulcans U/21 squad to tour the South Island over Queen's Birthday Weekend.

The team will play matches against the West Coast on Saturday, May 30 and Canterbury on Monday, June 1.

Head coach Grant Pocklington will add a 19th member to the squad at a later date, with uncertainty around injuries and availability.

"I have been pleasantly surprised to see the quality of the players who are under 21 in the Appli-ance Shed Fox Memorial competition, and they have all come with a great attitude," said Pocklington, who has won back-to-back Fox titles with Pt Chevalier over the last two seasons.

"The West Coast in their jubilee year will up for it, and Canterbury won the national title last year and will be a huge test.

"Aside from the footy the players will get some great experience in a tour environment, as well as being exposed to the professionalism expected while we are away."

The Vulcans' trip to the South Island follows on from last year's games against Northland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty at the end of the club season.

Under the ARL's strategic plan the Rugby League Development Foundation organised tours are seen as

a crucial part of helping to grow the domestic game. "One of our goals is to use the strength of the Auckland Rugby League to help district rugby league prosper," said ARL CEO John Ackland, who will be joining the side on the tour.

"Particular in the case of the South Island where it has been such an important part of the game in New Zealand, producing many Kiwis and hosting Tests in the past."

A full Auckland representative side will take on the New Zealand Maori Residents in Rotorua on May 30 as well, with the squad to be announced tomorrow.



Fixtures:

Auckland Vulcans U/21 v West Coast - 2.30pm kick-off - Wingham Park.

Auckland Vulcans U/21 v Canterbury - 12.30pm kick-off - Crosby Park.

Team:

Players: George Edwards (Papakura), Johnny Faletagoai (Mangere East), Marlon Purcell (Mangere East), Francis Toetu (Papakura), Andrew Tusiane (Papakura), Alan Niulevu (Papakura), Alamoti Finau (Marist), Andrew Holani (Otara), Howard Brown (Mangere East), Tom Kavaliku (Marist), Casey Lafaele (Pt Chevalier), Aaron Swan (Glenora), Sala Falelua (Pt Chevalier), Jonah Sofele (Pt Chevalier), Michael Ki (Pt Chevalier), Simione Maamaloa (Mangere East), Paea Manukia (Glenora), Robbie Nathan (Glenora).

Auckland Rugby League Membership Programme Is Now Up And Running.

I personally signed up. This is a great way to support local league!

THE aim of our VIP membership programme is to use our data base to give value to our sponsors by providing an avenue for them to sell promoted specials to our VIP members.

Members will also receive access to College Rugby League games streamed live and special monthly archived video footage.

Our opening offer is from a new sponsor Lone Star restaurants.

For \$24 you will receive; your VIP membership, a Lone start T shirt and a \$20 Lone Star voucher redeemable at any of the six Lone Star restaurants in the Auckland region (postage and packaging included anywhere in NZ)

For those of you who wish to check it out and are as technologically challenged as myself :

Go to our website and click on the red 'click here' button and sign up from there.

<http://www.aucklandleague.co.nz/>

Vodafone Warriors visit Woodstock HQ

THE Vodafone Warriors visited Woodstock HQ last week where they challenged staff in the Woodstock target challenge, gave staff an exclusive opportunity to ask questions, take photos and talk about the sport we all know and love. The boys went on a tour of the huge facilities Independent Liquor has to offer, and told of the activations and plans Woodstock have in place standing shoulder to shoulder with the team for the remainder of the season and into the future.



Carla Rawson showing the boys how it's done.



Shaun Johnson taking charge.



Signing with Woodstock staff.



The team on a tour of the Woodstock Bourbon and Cola plant.



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Wellington, St James Theatre from Tuesday, 25 August

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"Magnificent" – Evening Standard, London, "Stunning" – The Irish Times

TIME LOST IS VISION LOST – EARLY DETECTION SAVES SIGHT!

MACULAR Degeneration (MD) is the leading cause of blindness in NZ for people over 50 years of age, affecting one person in 7 in this 'at risk' group. Only 48% of New Zealanders over 50 understand that MD affects the eyes. An increase in community awareness is reflected in earlier referral and treatment, reducing the number of people with severe vision loss. In Australia, as a result of awareness campaigns, an identical poll identified an awareness of 88%. This is reflected in Australia being world leaders in treatment outcomes.

While many people dismiss the warning signs of MD as an inevitable part of the ageing process, everyone over the age of 50 should have their macula checked regularly, particularly those with a family history of MD, who have a 50% greater chance of developing the disease. The most severe form of MD (wet MD) which accounts for the greatest proportion of people with severe vision loss can progress within weeks or months leading to irretrievable vision loss. Without treatment, 50% of people with the most severe form of MD (wet MD) will lose vision to registerable blindness within 3 months.

Prevalence of age-related MD in NZ is expected to markedly increase from 2014 to 2026 with the growing aging population. NZ prevalence in 2014 for the 45-85 age group is estimated to be 184,400 (10% of this age group) and increase 12.9% to 208,200 in 2026.

Macular Degeneration New Zealand (MDNZ) will be conducting free Education and Treatment Seminars around New Zealand following Awareness Week. These seminars will be led by a local Ophthalmologist who will share the latest information on research and treatments, as well as the management and the impact of living with this eye disease.

*Wanaka - 6 June
Invercargill - 7 June
Rotorua - 13 June
Taupo - 14 June*

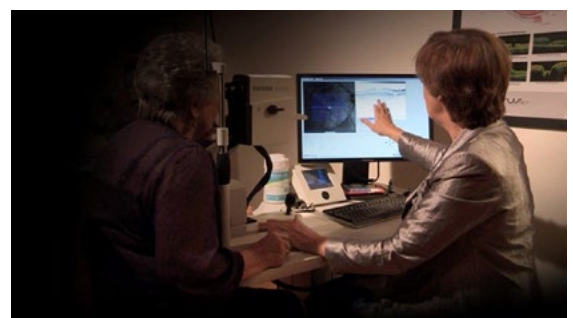
*Kerikeri - 27 June
Whangarei - 28 June
Nelson - 4 July
Blenheim - 5 July*

*Timaru - 18 July
Auckland - 29 August
Levin - 12 September
Waikanae - 13 September*

MDNZ welcomes those with Macular Degeneration, their families, friends and carers and anyone with an interest in learning more about macular degeneration.

Phone [0800 622 852](tel:0800622852) or email info@mdnz.org.nz to register attendance as capacity is limited.

With macular
degeneration, print
may appear distorted,
and parts of words
may be missing.



**Vodafone Warriors
V
St George Dragons
Westpac Sat 8th August**



Can Shaun Johnson Run the Ball Too Much?

By John Deaker



PEOPLE complain that modern day rugby league is getting too structured and sanitized. That's why watching Shaun Johnson jink and jive around the field the last few weeks in matchwinning performances for the Warriors and the Kiwis has been so refreshing and a reminder of why so many of us came to love rugby league in the first place.

There is no doubt that Johnson is at his thrilling best when he runs the ball. Unfortunately his ability to do this more in the past has been hamstrung by him often shouldering more than his fair share of the responsibility for directing the Warriors around the park. The natural bi-product of this has been that at times when in a perfect world Johnson's best option might have been to run the ball he's been 'forced' to take the conservative option of kicking the ball because that's the role the team has demanded from him.

On television last week Kangaroos' legend Gordon Tallis posed the question : "Can Shaun Johnson run the ball too much?"

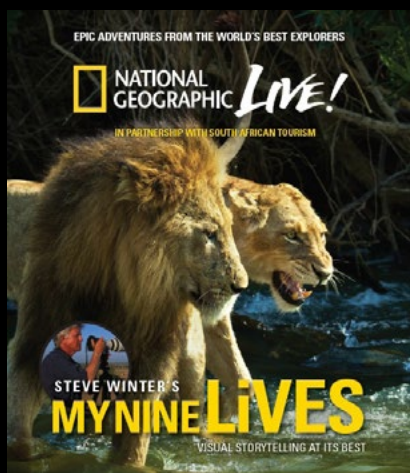
The general agreement from the former players in discussion with him was No.

It's hard to disagree with this general premise; It's very rare that you find yourself cursing Johnson for running the ball - but In contrast the same can't always be said when he puts boot to ball.

For those of us that grew up watching elusive halves like Cliffy Lyons and Terry Lamb drifting across field looking to link with straight runners it's exhilarating when Johnson dares to chance his arm and even run sideways – a tactic usually frowned upon in the modern game. The difference between Johnson from people like Lyons and Lamb is his genuine speed gives him the ability to not only create but finish tries if he manages to beat the initial defensive line.

Watching Johnson play league is sometimes a bit like watching Beauden Barrett playing for the Hurricanes and All Blacks. Both of these pivotal players seem to have retained the ability to express themselves on the field despite the pressures the professional game has landed them with. Some coaches along the way have probably tried hard to get both them to take less risks or even told them that their too small to make it to the top of such a physical sport. Fortunately for lovers of both codes Johnson and Barrett have retained their X Factor and now the world-class stadiums they showcase their talents on are effectively just upgraded versions of their back yards where they honed their silky skills and electric pace.

Thomas Leuluai's season-ending injury at the weekend again puts more responsibility on Shaun Johnson to be a leader within the spine of the 2015 Warriors' side. Hopefully as the team rejigs it's roster going in to 2016 they're able to establish enough class and structure for us to see even more of the best from Johnson's running game ; The prospect of having him carving up defences along with Roger Tuivasa-Sheck is mouth-watering. To answer Gordon Tallis's question: No. If he has the right structures around him Shaun Johnson can't run the ball too much.



Award-winning National Geographic photographer, Steve Winter, presents a behind-the-scenes look at tracking down big cats in the world's most remote locations.

Auckland Wed 5 August Aotea Centre (ASB Theatre)

Bookings: 0800 111999 | ticketmaster.co.nz

Wellington Thurs 6 August Te Papa (Soundings Theatre)

Bookings: 0800 111999 | ticketmaster.co.nz

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Friday **12** June at Ellerslie Events Centre

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Celebrate with the Kiwis who beat Aussie 26:12 in the ANZAC Test

2015 Victors attending: Shaun Johnson, Simon Mannering, Thomas Leuluai, Man of the Match: Manu Vatuvei and Ben Matulino. **Ex Kiwis:** Kevin Tamati, James Leuluai, Murray Eade, Gary Prohm, Howie Tamati, Don Hammond, Ruben Wiki, Michael Patton, Mark Bourneville, Dean Loneragan, Stacey Jones, Brian McClennan, Graham West, Lindsay Proctor, Brent Webb, Paul Rauhihi, Jerry Seuseu, Michael McClennan, Duane Mann, Clayton Friend, Stacey Jones, Awen Guttenbeil, John O'Sullivan, Ron Reagan and Dane O'Hara. Jim Edwards (88 years old) who is very likely the last surviving Kiwi from the 1952-53 invincible team, Ray Cranch (92 years old) Kiwi from 1951-52 and Don Hammond (79 Years old) kiwis from 1959-65

Ex Coaches: Graham Lowe and Brian McClennan **Ex Managers:** Gordon Gibbons, Tom McKeown and Sir Peter Leitch **Coming from Christchurch:** Tony Coll, Gary Clarke, Mocky Brereton and Gordon Smith **Coming from Australia:** Clinton Toopi, Nigel Vagana, Mark Graham, Quentin Pongia, David Solomono and Mark Graham

Host for the Day: Sir Peter Leitch

Guest Speakers:

- Mark Graham former Warriors Coach, Kiwis Captain and NZRL Player of the Century. We are flying him to the luncheon from Gladstone in Australia. Mark will be interviewed by Martin Devlin from Radio Sport.
- Jim Doyle (CEO Vodafone Warriors)
- Andrew McFadden (Head Coach of Vodafone Warriors). Andrew will be interviewed by Richard Becht (Media & Communications Manager of Vodafone Warriors).
- Dave Smith (NRL CEO)
- Phil Holden (NZRL CEO).
- Simon Mannering (Kiwis Captain) .
- Stephen Kearney by recorded video.
- **Radio Sport will be broadcasting live from the event.**

Thinking of coming from out of town? Then read on...

For out of town guests I have got a fantastic special price for accommodation at the Ibis hotel in Greenlane. For \$119 a room including breakfast (be quick they only have 10 rooms available – U20 Fifa World Cup is on in Auckland that weekend too).

To book ring the **Ibis hotel** on **09 529 9090** and mention the name **Mad Butcher** to get this deal.

SkyCity Hotel are also offering a fantastic deal:

Premium Rooms \$199.00 (Rate includes 1 x breakfast at Fortuna and GST)

Premium Suite \$359.00 (Rate includes 1 x breakfast at Fortuna and GST)

Please email hotel.reservations@skycity.co.nz to make bookings and quote **BUTCHER** to access this deal.

Go to www.grabaseat.co.nz and click on packages to find the deals.

Anyone travelling from outside of Auckland who has purchased tickets to the luncheon is eligible for a VIP tour of Mt Smart Stadium at 4pm the next day!

\$100 entry gets you a buffet lunch and complimentary drinks from 12.30 pm to 4pm.

To book a place email:
shandall@madbutcher.co.nz

Check out www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz for more details on the event including live auction items!

Yet Another Fantastic Week in Northland Sport

By Ben Francis



Rugby League

WE are halfway through the regular season in the Rugby League Northland Scott Electrical Premiership with both Moerewa and Portland sitting atop the standings with a 7win – 2loss record. Moerewa claimed their third straight win over the weekend scraping past top four side Hikurangi 34-30, whilst Portland had a hard fought 18-4 win over Otangarei. Northern Wairoa claimed their first win over Takahiwai in eight seasons winning 39-28, also Muriwhenua won a close encounter over Hokianga 24-22.

Rugby Union

IT'S also the halfway point of the regular season in the Bayleys Southern District Premiers. Waipu claimed win number three for the year beating Otamatea 37-15, Welsford still remain unbeaten their 2015 campaign beating Horahora 41-22, Mid Northern now have five straight wins and six wins for the season after dismantling the Western Sharks 47-19, Mid Western continue to impress beating Hikurangi 39-15 and after three straight games of scoring eight points Old Boys Marist ended their three game losing streak beating the winless Kamo 45-13.

In round six of the Bay Of Islands Premiers KeriKeri now have five wins on the trot after beating Okaihau 54-0, Moerewa now have three straight wins after dominating Kaikohe 88-7. Ohaeawai also had an impressive win beating Otiria 47-7 and Kawakawa had a close 35-33 over Kaeo.

Football

IN the Men's Northland Premier Football Division both Bream Bay and Tikipunga had 1-0 wins over Whangarei/Madhatters and Kaitaia respectively, KeriKeri had a good 4-0 victory over Central and Kamo beat Onerahi 4-2. In the Woman's Northland Premier Division KeriKeri Siteworx claimed a 2-0 over Northern Wairoa, KeriKeri High School beat Central 4-1 and Kamo dominated Onerahi 7-0.



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**FIGHT
AGAINST
OBESITY**

WRL Premier Grand Final to be played at Westpac Stadium.



WELLINGTON Rugby League is now able to confirm that the 2015 Premier Grand Final will take centre stage at Westpac Stadium on Saturday 8th August as the first of 3 games on the day followed by the Holden Cup 20s match then the Vodafone Warriors v St George Dragons.

WRL General Manager, Jason Hemson said "We are very excited for this great opportunity for our premier players and the local supporters to be a part of a big day at Westpac Stadium. We have been working with Shane (Harmon) at the stadium and Jim (Doyle) and his team at the Warriors to lock this down and it is fantastic that we can now proceed with the planning of the day."

Vodafone Warriors, Managing Director, Jim Doyle commented "The Vodafone Warriors are delighted to be able to offer this opportunity for the local Wellington rugby league players and the grassroots league community. It will be a big day for the Warriors and WRL."

Wellington is a renowned breeding ground for NRL players with over 25 current NRL and Holden Cup players coming from the region including Kiwis coach Stephen Kearney, Warriors Ben Matulino and former greats Johnny Lomax and Paul Whatuira.

Tickets are now available from
www.ticketek.co.nz/vodafonewarriors



Support our
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Buy Tickets for Vodafone Warriors vs St George Dragons:



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**Vodafone Warriors
v
St George Dragons
Westpac Sat 8th August**



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IT'S a bugger I can't make it as I'm at Monty's big boxing night otherwise I would have been there but my mate Jimmy Cowen has donated a signed Blues Jersey he is a top bloke our Jimmy!



This Sat Team James Auction Night

Worthy cause - James has Spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy. We want to help James get to America for an operation that will change his life!



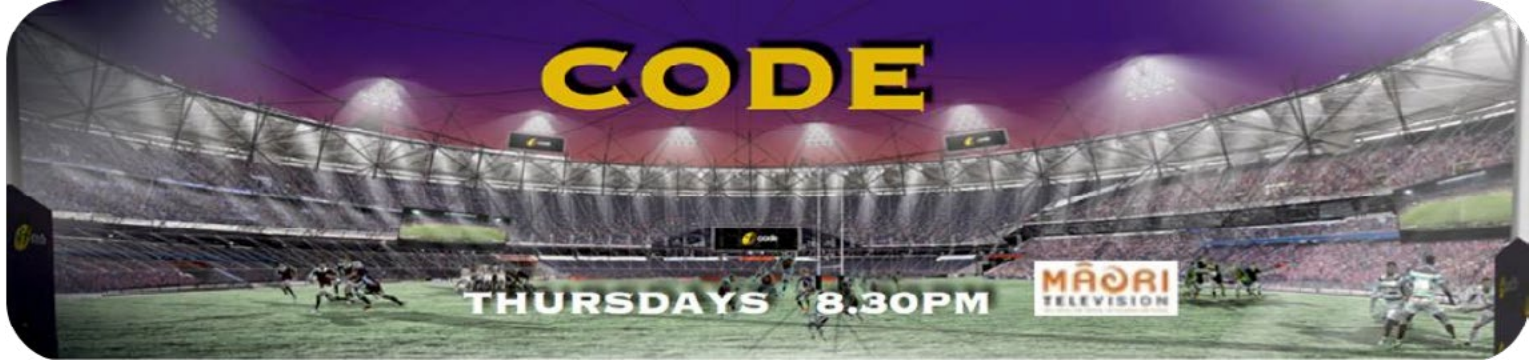
**Goldfinch Bar
Viaduct Basin, Auckland**

Tickets cost \$45

Includes cocktail &
finger food

Enquiries & Tickets

karen_drent@yahoo.co.nz



TONIGHTS GUESTS:

MANU VATUVEI

Warriors

GLEN OSBORNE

All Black & ex CODE Presenter

MONTY BETHAM

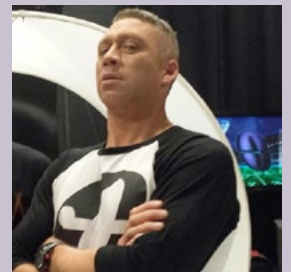
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THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S ROUND 11 ISSUE...

The coaching issue. What style works best and what's the best way to the top?

FEATURES

- He's the master coach and is still holding his position at the top. How does **Wayne Bennett** do it? We assess his inspirational method of coaching against the innovative styles we see today;
- How do you make your way to the top of the coaching pile? With just 16 jobs up for grabs in the NRL, we break down the different paths a coach can take to the head coaching role;
- There's plenty to be said for experience on the job, but the **Penrith Panthers** are helping some of their players pick up the skills and knowledge needed for coaching through a course run in conjunction with TAFE;
- It's 10 years since **Wests Tigers** secured the joint venture's only premiership. They face their adversaries from that grand final this weekend and are celebrating the occasion at Campbelltown;
- The **women's** game has had plenty of coverage in recent times, but it's not the first time there has been focus on them. We take you back to the 1920s when exhibition matches were first played;

PLUS... **Anthony Watmough** says the Eels' inexperience is contributing to their poor form, but they won't use that as an excuse. Plus he talks about his non-selection for Origin, Game One; **Matt Elliott** breaks down the different types of coaches and who will lead the game into the future; **Nathan Brown** looks at the impact of Origin on teams, both positive and negative.

AND: Official team lists, Warren Smith's Big Clash preview of Raider v Bulldogs, lower grade reviews, News: Michael Gordon in limbo, Bennett says NSW are copycatting, Cronk crucial for Queensland, Jeremy Smith on the market; Top 8 grounds of choice; and special Origin captains poster.



THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

On sale at newsagents, supermarkets and at the ground from

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THE GRILL BY SEAN CONNOLLY



JUST had lunch today at the Grill, Skycity. It was fantastic. I was joined by Jimmy Cowan (53 games for the All Blacks) whose favourite league player was Hitro Okesene, Culum Retallick (current Blues player, BOP, former Highlanders and Chiefs player) whose favourite player is Matt Ridge, Jerome Kaino (current Blues Captain, 55 games for the AB's) and his favourite league players are Stacey Jones and Monty Betham.

They are three top blokes and it was my pleaser to have lunch with them. GO BLUES THIS SATURDAY. I'm supporting the Blues this weekend as the Vodafone Warriors are on a well deserved rest after 2 wins away in Sydney!

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The Newsletter Team

Here is the team that help me make the newsletter each week. Between us we make the newsletter happen - and like everything it's a team effort.



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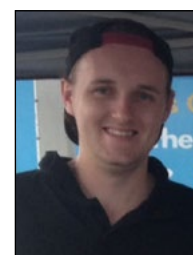
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