



Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter ^{9th July 2015} #80

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Congratulations Highlanders!



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.co.nz

The Grand Final Produced One Of The Most Super Matches Of Them All

By John Deaker



THERE WAS huge anticipation building up to Saturday night's Super rugby final between the Hurricanes and the Highlanders and unlike many big games in a lot of sports the match more than lived up to the great expectations people had for it.

Individuals and teams sometimes tense up on the big stage or are coached into changing their game plan come finals time. Thankfully for those of us lucky enough to watch Saturday night's match both teams came to the big stage prepared to back the dynamic and expansive styles of play that had got them there.

Unfortunately for the Hurricanes they weren't as accurate with their execution as they had been for most of the season. The Highlanders also deserve credit for being prepared to meet fire with fire and put the Hurricanes off their game.

Two sporting clichés that were epitomized on Saturday night by Elliott Dixon's crucial try for the Highlanders just before halftime are: 'You make your own luck' and 'Sport is a game of inches'. Dixon's negative body language told the story that the replays also revealed to most viewers at home with big, HD screens – he'd done brilliantly to get to the line but he failed to ground the ball correctly. The TMO Ben Skeen saw things differently (as third match officials often do!) and history shows that Dixon's individual brilliance effectively won the match for the Highlanders.

Julian Savea butchered the best opportunity for the Hurricanes to bounce back in the match when he dropped the ball a few metres out from the line with 20 minutes left on the clock. A converted try at that stage would have bought the Hurricanes right back to 18-18. Savea's mistake was the worst error out of many that his team made throughout the match that prevented the favoured team with the bookies from ever taking control of the match.

In a World Cup year it's important that Savea moves on quickly from Saturday night ; it was such a costly mistake he made that undoubtedly his confidence will have taken a hammering. His ability to minimize the knock to his confidence when he pulls on the All Black jersey will be difficult for 'The Bus', who's already been so dominant in international rugby that the biggest threat to him being the number 1 winger in world rugby is probably himself.

Julian's brother Ardie's inability to overcome his knee injury was not only disappointing for the Canes chance of winning at the weekend – it also denied rugby lovers around the world the opportunity to watch one of the most exciting forwards playing the game.

Just like Julian's ability to quickly move on from Saturday night will be important, the All Blacks won't want Beauden Barrett to dwell too long on his poor goalkicking that was also very costly for the Hurricanes. People might say "It's only Super rugby" – but Savea and Barrett were reminded all week what a golden opportunity Saturday night provided for them to do something very special for themselves and their supporters.

Since Saturday night's match we've all seen the magical scenes from out of the deep south reinforcing just what the victory means to the Highlanders' community. Watching those scenes will have only served to make it harder for all Hurricanes players and fans to move on and forget the fact that on Saturday night they really blew it!



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.co.nz

WHAT A week. I was glued to TV for the Super Rugby final. Born and bred in Wellington, I'm a Hurricanes man but fair play to the Highlanders, they played brilliantly and deserved their triumph.

No one fancied them at the start of the year and even as they got better throughout the season, few tipped them to have any chance at the title. But every dog has its day. It's all down to how a team goes on the night, and the Highlanders went real well.

Then of course the historic first ever All Blacks v Manu Samoa rugby test in Apia. We did not that great, but got the win regardless.

Our friends in Samoa loved it. The reception the All Blacks received was special.

It might have taken a long time to get the All Blacks to Samoa but better late than never. Our island neighbours contribute a lot to our rugby so the AB's visit is long overdue. Bring on Tonga, I say!

Then of course the third and final State of Origin game between Queensland and New South Wales, which me and Dexter had the privilege to attend!

Full On In Brisbane

As I say, me and my old mate Dexter have been in Queensland for the SoO, and what a ball we have had, meeting some of the legends of the game and soaking up all the atmosphere and build-up.

We got to attend a lunch on Monday with Darren Brady from Papakura! He does all my charity auctions for me and is a top bloke, despite being Queensland born and bred and a huge Maroons fan.

We had a ball.

We managed to catch up with some of the legends of the game like super-coach Wayne Bennett, and Footy Show host Paul "Fatty" Vautin among others.

On the Wednesday we had lunch at a local league club and listened to State of Origin legends Gary Belcher, Kevin Walters and the one and only Billy Moore. I tell you what, if you were in the trenches with that bloke you'd know he had your back.

His speech was amazing, all about what it meant to be a Maroon. "To be a Queenslander is to help your mate when he has nothing left – no excuses," he said.

Dex and I were lucky enough to be in the same hotel as Queensland, so we got to interact with them a bit, which was something really special.

And Then The Game

Queensland are State of Origin champions again thrashing NSW 52-6 at Suncorp, and I could not believe my eyes.

The Maroons dominated the first half, scoring three tries and managing 65 per cent of possession to lead 22-2 at the break.

If there was going to be a comeback it was going to have to be something special, but instead things got even worse for the Blues, when David Klemmer spilt the ball close to the line shortly after halftime and a flick from Justin Hodges created a try for Matt Gillett to put the score out to 28-2.

Queensland's aggression in defence was awesome but the Blues gave away cheap penalties and dropped the ball far too often.

There were 52,500 fans in the

ground and the atmosphere was special, but since it was Brisbane, obviously most of the fans were Maroons, and they watching the most points Queensland have scored in an Origin match, and it is their biggest winning margin.

To make things even worse for the Blues, Trent Merrin and Trent Hodkinson were put on report for an ugly tackle on Corey Parker, and James Tamou joined them for a hit on Jacob Lillyman.

The Blues had hoped this would be a night they would start to create their own dynasty but Queensland have now won nine of the past 10 series, after NSW won last year.

Queensland won game one in Sydney 11-10, with NSW winning 26-18 in game two at the MCG.

Cameron Equals Lockyer's Record

Queensland captain Cameron Smith equalled Darren Lockyer's record of most Origin appearances with 36.

He said the Queenslanders were surprised with the ease of their win. "We were pretty disappointed with our efforts in game two. There was plenty of effort but we let ourselves down with decisions. We knew we were a better side. You look at the scoreboard. I think that explains tonight for us."

How Wrong The Papers Got It

All the talk in the lead-up to the game from the Sydney papers was that Queensland's dynasty had ended. They were too old, too slow, too static. It was a team of has-beens and as a unit they were past it.

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On the other hand, in Queensland it was all about how it was Mal Meninga's birthday and there was going to be something special to celebrate.

We know now that it would be the Queensland press with the last laugh and the headlines in the Courier Mail on Thursday morning said it all. On the front page was picture of Greg Ingles with the headline Respect. All class, all courage, all champions. On the back page they gave it to NSW. Golden Oldies the headline trumpeted. Beating Blues in child's play. Ouch!



Front page of the Courier Mail today.

Bring On The Storm

I was on an Air NZ flight back to Auckland just as soon as I could manage it, to give myself plenty of time to prepare for the Storm game at Mt Smart at 4pm on Sunday.

The big question is will our outstanding signing Ryan Hoffman make it, given he had to leave the field in the State of Origin injured.

And the Storm will be sweating on Cameron Smith backing up too. He was battered all week in the press in Australia, which I won't go into because you will all know why, and everyone was asking if it

would affect his game.

The answer was simple. No! What a champion he is, a truly inspirational leader.

But in a season laden with both team and individual milestones, Vodafone Warriors halfback Shaun Johnson will move within one appearance of becoming the club's 23rd 100-game player on Sunday.

With the Michael Moore Trophy at stake, the contest rounds off another home tripleheader that starts with the Vodafone Warriors facing Illawarra in the New South Wales Cup (11.40am), followed by the NYC clash between the Vodafone Junior Warriors and the Storm (1.35pm).

Johnson's 99th appearance leaves him on track for his 100th against the Roosters at Allianz on July 19. He made his debut against the same side in 2011.

The 24-year-old has collected 34 points in his last two outings against the Gold Coast Titans and the Canberra Raiders to take his career tally past 500 points (and 100 for the season).

With 526 points, he has gone past Ivan Cleary (439) this season and is poised to overtake James Maloney (547) to move into third position on the club's all-time list. The top two spots belong to Stacey Jones (674) and Manu Vatuvei, who has an all-tries total of 584.

Johnson is paired in the halves with Chad Townsend for the 16th consecutive time this season in the Vodafone Warriors' return from their second bye.

They feature in a consistent selection as the Vodafone Warriors seek a run of three straight wins for the second time this season.

After beating Gold Coast 36-14 and Canberra 30-8 they have won five of their last seven to have a share of fourth on 20 points - they're seventh on points for and against.

[BUY TICKETS | Rd #18 v Storm](#)
[Sunday 12 July](#)

Team: Sam Tomkins, Tuimoala Lolohea, Konrad Hurrell, Solomon Kata, Manu Vatuvei, Chad Townsend, Shaun Johnson, Jacob Lillyman, Nathan Friend, Ben Matulino, Bodene Thompson, Ryan Hoffman, Simon Mannering. Interchange: Siliva Havili, Raymond Faitala-Mariner, Charlie Gubb, Albert Vete, David Fusitu'a.

Good News On The Contract Front

Extensions have been confirmed for NRL rookie Albert Vete, Jonathan Wright and promising NYC players Nathaniel Roache and Marata Niukore.

Vete has been signed until the end of the 2017 season after appearing in 12 of the club's 15 NRL games this season. Roache has also been signed for two seasons, while Wright and Niukore have signed for one.

The signings follow the club recently securing Kiwi stars Issac Luke and Roger Tuivasa-Sheck on three-year contracts, along with new deals for three other NRL rookies - Tuimoala Lolohea, Solomon Kata and Sam Lisone - as well as outstanding Vodafone Junior Warriors captain Toafofoa Siple, who will join the NRL squad next year.

Ben Matulino, Konrad Hurrell, Manu Vatuvei and Ben Henry had their contracts extended earlier this season.

But Some Go Too

A number of players are leaving the Vodafone Warriors this year. Fullback Sam Tomkins has been released and will rejoin Wigan, while veteran prop Sam Rapira is in his 10th and last NRL campaign with the club before he links up with Huddersfield in the English Super League.

Prop Suaia Matagi, Nathaniel Peteru and Api Pe-whairangi have already departed for other clubs. Also leaving at the end of the year is Vodafone Junior Warriors fullback Brad Abbey.

Another player finishing with the club is standoff Chad Townsend, who has been released at the end of the season to return to Sydney.

Doyle Says It's All Part Of The Process

Vodafone Warriors managing director Jim Doyle says there has been a lot of activity in terms of players being signed or retained, along with a number being released.

"This is all part of the process we're working through with head coach Cappy McFadden and his assistant coaches to realign our NRL squad to meet the needs they have identified.

"Some hard choices have been made and there are likely to be more, but this is critical in our mission to build and improve our NRL squad to a point where it is as strong as any in the comp."

While McFadden said the 2015 campaign is his priority, he's excited about the outlook for 2016.

"We've made two terrific signings in Issac and Rog-

er and we've also worked hard to retain a lot of our experienced and emerging players," he said.

"We'll always be a development club given the great pool of players we can draw on here in New Zealand, but retention and recruiting quality players is a key to ensuring we have the right blend."

McFadden said he was delighted with the progress Vete had made. Along with Lisone he had earned selection through his deeds and his form.

Roache and Niukore will still be eligible for the NYC next year but McFadden said they both appealed as players who would play a big part in the future.

Book Now For Wellington

The Wellington game is fast approaching on Saturday, August 8 for a 5pm kick-off at Westpac Stadium against the Dragons. This is your final heads up if you are keen to get down to Wellington. Grabaseat has a great deal going. Look for the details in the newsletter and I've attached a letter from Te Haua Taua, who is a lounge member and has compared costs to this game.

"My dad and I are heading down to Wellington to watch the Mighty Vodafone Warriors v the St George Illawarra Dragons at Westpac Stadium. I've looked at Jet Star flights and accommodation for two people and it works out the same as the Vodafone Warriors Air New Zealand Grabaseat deal. I'm flying with the Air New Zealand on the deal because when you add up the cost of the game ticket (\$50) it's easier to buy the Grabaseat deal!

Regards, Te Haua Taua



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OPTION 2: Return Flights + Match Ticket

Deal includes return flights to Wellington (seat only) and match ticket to see the Vodafone Warriors take on the Dragons at Westpac Stadium.

FROM
\$279
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Black Sticks Finish Fourth at World League

THE BLACK Sticks Women have finished fourth after being defeated 4-2 by Australia in the bronze medal match at the FIH World League Semi-Final in Antwerp.

The result sees the Kiwis miss out on a top three placing and automatic qualification for the 2016 Rio Olympics, with the Hockeyroos having now booked their tickets to Brazil.

New Zealand's next shot at Olympic qualification is at October's Oceania Cup in Stratford, where they can claim a spot by winning the Oceania title.

The top four finish has however earned them the right to compete at the FIH World League Final in Rosario, Argentina from 5-13 December.

At the conclusion of the tournament New Zealand come away with a record of five wins and two losses, along with 29 goals scored for and six against.

Captain Anita Punt said it was disappointing to allow Australia to take hold of the game in the first quarter and a gutting result.

"It was a really disappointing performance from us today. We didn't start the way we wanted to and that had us on the back foot," she said.

"We have to be better in situations like this and unfortunately it didn't come off for us today so we will go home, regroup and come back fighting harder."

Australia had the Black Sticks rattled early thanks to two goals in the first five minutes, with Emily Smith and Jane Claxton both capitalising on loose balls in the circle and beating goalkeeper Sally Rutherford.

To compound matters, the Kiwis lost Punt for most of the opening quarter after she copped a heavy blow to the foot and limped from the field. After medical attention she returned after the break.

Mariah Williams added to the tally late in the period to give Australia a daunting 3-0 advantage after the opening quarter.

It was a much more balanced second quarter with the best chance coming just out from halftime when Gemma Flynn dove onto a hard cross from Punt but her deflection went just wide.

Stacey Michelsen sparked some magic in the 34th minute with a brilliant solo run, dribbling side to side and beating six defenders before slipping the ball

past the keeper.

But the Hockeyroos kept the pressure on and delivered a fourth goal just seconds out from three quarter time through a strong shot at the top of the circle from Georgia Nanscawen.

Punt pulled another goal back for the Black Sticks early in the fourth quarter when she rocketed a penalty corner drag flick into the top of the net.

New Zealand fought desperately in the dying minutes but couldn't find the two goals they needed to force a shoot-out.

Vote for your favourite Black Sticks Men's and Women's player from the FIH World League Semi-Final and help decide the 2015 People's Choice Award winners. [CLICK HERE](#) to vote now

[CLICK HERE](#) for more on the World League Semi-Final

BLACK STICKS 2: (Stacey Michelsen, Anita Punt)

AUSTRALIA 4: (Emily Smith, Jane Claxton, Mariah Williams, Georgia Nanscawen)

Halftime: Australia 3-0

Photo courtesy Kiwi Hockey



COMMUNITY ADVISORY - How to handle Player agents

By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



WITH THE rep season looming and NRL clubs shopping for fresh Kiwi talent, it's important for our young players and their families to know how to cope with the attention.

NZRL well-being & education manager Joe Harawira warns that how you manage this relationship could determine a players' professional future.

"Making good decisions when it comes to player agents can be the difference between having an agent who is prepared to work for you or one that takes advantage of you," he says.

"With more than 100 accredited NRL agents, we want you to make the best possible decision when it comes to working with agents or not. There are six simple rules you can follow to help with your decision making."

1. You do not need an agent to play NRL.
2. Agents need permission from parents or guardians to talk with anyone under 18 years of age.

3. Ensure agents are NRL accredited by:
 - Checking out these websites www.nrl.co.au or www.rlpa.com.au or
 - Contact joe@nzrl.co.nz or go to our face-book page - Joe Harawira NZRL & NRL
4. When reviewing a standard player agent agreement/contract, make sure it has an NRL logo.
5. Never sign any contract straight away. Make sure you read and understand all terms of the agreement before signing.
6. Players do not need to relocate to Australia prior to finishing school to further their rugby league careers. If a player is happy at school and at home, then our recommendation is for them to stay in New Zealand, until they have completed their schooling.

Please pass this advice on to your junior players and families. For more information, visit our new player well-being page on the NZRL website.

Nikau, Edwards Added to NZRL Board

KIWIS GREAT Tawera Nikau will finally take a seat at the NZRL board table later this month, after being confirmed as a director at last week's annual meeting in Auckland.

The addition of Nikau (Kiwi #614) and Cantabrian Reon Edwards, along with the retention of incumbent Jen Rolfe, has restored the board to full strength at seven.

For the past 12 months, the NZRL board has operated one member short, after its 2014 nomination was rejected by the zones.

In announcing the appointments, chairman Garry Fissenden conceded his board had learnt its lesson and had tried to become more inclusive in its management of the game in New Zealand.

"Last year, our members told us that we needed to promote board candidates who had come through our governance pathway at zone or district level," he wrote in his annual report.

"This year, with advice from our board, an independent panel has nominated two candidates that we feel will add significantly to the knowledge base of our group and are consistent with that message."

Nikau had missed out on a previous nomination attempt, because he lacked that governance experience, but had since served on the Upper Central Zone board.

Edwards, on the other hand, has considerable grassroots grounding, as Canterbury RL chairman and

Southern Zone director.

Both will now surrender their provincial posts, although Nikau will remain on as Kiwis selector.

At the annual meeting, former internationals Jack Fagan (Kiwi #401) and Brian Reidy (Kiwi #383) were honoured with life membership, along with former NZRL chairman Sel Pearson.

Their induction brings the total number of life members to 18, out of a maximum 20.

Gordon Gibbons (Akarana), Pat Carthy (Akarana), Graham Pitts (Northland) and Carey Clements (Southern) were also given Distinguished Service Awards.

PHOTOS FROM AUSSIE



My great mate Darren Brady pouring me a beer in Brisbane mate don't give up your day job.



The boys at lunch.



At lunch as Darren Brady guest for a surf and turf meal and his mates on Monday was a fantastic day Dexter was not to good Tuesday.



Bryan Fletcher and Gordon Tallis who was filling in for Nathan Hindmarsh (hence the wig) who missed his plane were at the Broncos training ground filming for the MATTY Johns show which.



Bryan Fletcher, Stephen Kearney (KI-WIS COACH) Gordon Tallis at the Broncos training ground in Brisbane.



Duane and Maree Hawkins from the Pacific Sharks RLC in Tokoroa. Maree was NZRL female volunteer of the year and on Tuesday they had a tour of the Brisbane Broncos facilities.



At lunch at the North Logan Magpies RLC in Brisbane with 2 former Queensland state of origin stars Gary Belcher and Billy Moore great company.



Former Vodafone Warriors Bret Tate is looking forward to his book coming out and always tells me how much he loved his time in NZ.



Just warming up Jacob Lillyman's seat in the Queensland Maroons changing room on Tuesday.



Me and Dexter out for an early morning walk in Southbank Brisbane.

MORE PHOTOS FROM AUSSIE



Always great to catch up with coaching legend Wayne Bennett on Tuesday at the Broncos club in Brisbane.



Rugby league legend Gordon Tallis played 20 games for Queensland, 16 for Australia and 214 games in the NRL WITH HIS SONS ETHAN AND JACKSON.



Always great to catch up with this rugby league legend he played for the Brisbane Broncos, Queensland state of origin and Australia and a real gentleman Darren Lockyer always very friend.



The main entrance to Suncorp stadium with the statue of the King Wally Lewis outside and the giant maroons Jersey hanging at the entrance.



The poolside bar at our hotel not bad.



Was great catching up with Steve Renouf former Broncos player who played 183 games and 11 games for Queensland and 10 for Australia he even had a stint at the Wigan Warriors in the UK . .



Was great chatting to Adam Blair regarding the reunion for the 2005 Kiwis coming up over the grand final week which he was part of.



Was great to meet this young man Daniel Vidot has played 110 games in the NRL SO FAR. FOR THESE CLUBS CANBERRA, dragons, Broncos and 10 games for Samoa very pleasant young man.



Was nice to catch up with former Broncos player Jharal Yow Yeh who played 3 games for Australia, 3 games for Queensland state of Origin and 60 games for the Brisbane Broncos before his ca.

EVEN MORE PHOTOS FROM AUSSIE



2 legends of the game of rugby league Dean Loneragan and Billy Moore. Deano is the only rugby league player to have a dance named after him called the Dean Loneragan shuffle. Dean was a.



It was great catching up with me old mate Compass Kallis. Former strapper for the kiwis since 1984 to just recently. He never got paid and done it for the love of the game..



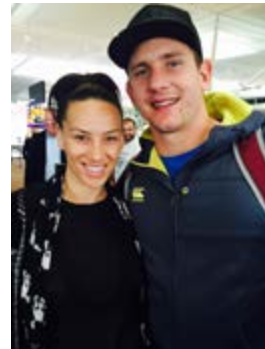
Legendary state of origin Queenslander and Australian player Billy Moore loved the plate and book from the kiwi luncheon..



Caught up with me old mate Wally Lewis and his lovely wife Jackie. At there home this morning in Brisbane and I've got to say what a fantastic guy he is and 1 very happy Queenslander..



We had the privilege of catching up with 3 of my mates all rugby league legends. Paul Vautin, Brent Tate and immortal Andrew Joey Johns. 2 of them will be happy and 1 will be sad the.



1 happy Jacob Lillyman who played in the state of origin last night for Queensland at the airport with his fiancé Tui on there way back home to get ready to play the Melbourne Storm.

POSTERS FROM INSIDE THE MAROONS CHANGING ROOMS



Mike and Sean Loved it in the Stacey Jones Lounge

MIKE AND Sean from Invercargill were guest in the Stacey Jones lounge for the raiders game

Hello Sir Peter,

My name is Mike Mika. I was with my mate Sean Bellew (Auctioneer dude from Invercargill) and his wife Becky in the Mad Butcher's Club last Saturday for the Raiders game.

I'm one of the many Vodafone Warriors supporters down here in Invercargill and it was a real buzz to watch a game in your Club rooms. Absolutely loved it.

Thanks again.
GO THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS!!
Cheers,
Mike.



Confirmed Vodafone Warriors Games and Dates

Here are the confirmed dates for our remaining home games at Mt Smart Stadium and 1 game in Wellington

This Sunday 12 July 4pm - Storm

Saturday 25 July 5pm - Manly - This old boys day

Saturday 1 August 5pm - Sharks - *As part of the Vodafone Warriors 20 year celebrations the club have told me that they would like to acknowledge my passionate support when we take on the Sharks on 1st August. They're keeping me in the dark about what this will entail but would love to have you with me on the day.*

Saturday 8 August 5pm - Dragons in Wellington

Saturday 22 August 7.30pm - Cowboys last home game at MT smart at this stage



Round: 18

Vodafone Warriors vs Melbourne Storm

Venue: Mt Smart Stadium

Date: Sunday 12 July

Gates Open: 11:30 pm

NYC Kick Off: 11:40 pm

NSW Kick Off: 1:35 pm

NRL Kick Off: 4:05 pm



Menu for Lunch in the Stacey Jones Lounge **this Sunday at 3PM** - \$19.50 WHAT A DEAL!

Cold Selection:

- Freshly baked bread roll with butter.
- Mix leaf salad with tomato, cucumber, red onion and feta

Hot Selection:

- Roast beef with garlic and rosemary gravy.
- Roast Potato
- Garden peas
- Carrots

i a Rāpare/Thursdays 8:30pm on

MĀORI
TELEVISION

code

TONIGHT'S GUESTS

PAUL HENARE

NZ Tall Blacks Coach

COREY WEBSTER

NZ Tall Black

SAM SMOOTHY

World Freeride Skier

CHARLIE LYONS

World Freeride Skier

BROOK RUSCOE

Pro Basketballer

LEVI HOLLEY

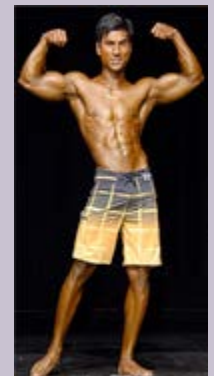
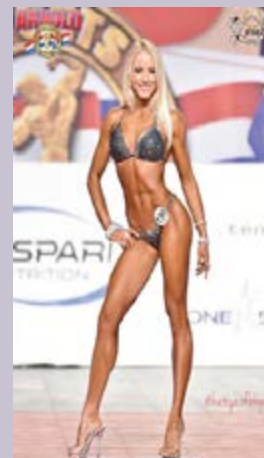
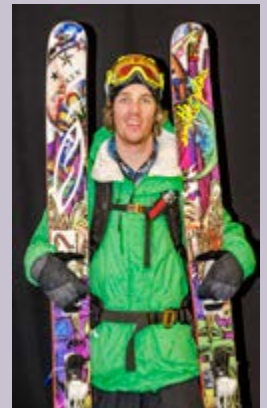
NZ 100kg Arm Wrestle Champ

IRSHAD ALI

*NZ's 1st Mens Physique Pro
Athlete*

KATYA NOSOVA

*IFBB & Arnold Classic Amateur
USA winner*



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Join the crew this week and enjoy the top class guests on the CODE couch.

Scintillating conversation. . .
laughs. . . irreverent reporting. . .
giggles. . . and dangerous demos.
. . yeah right!

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Wellington Vodafone Warriors Supporters Gear

YOU CAN now buy the NEW 2015 WARRIORS WELLINGTON BEANIE & SCARF. Ideal if you're a keen Vodafone Warriors supporter and your heading to the Wellington game against the Dragons at Westpac Stadium on August 8th.



Click here to purchase:

[Scarf - Click Here](#)
[Beanie - Click Here](#)



Trevor Chetham

Hello Peter

I'M JUST writing to inform you that we just lost another extraordinary Rugby League player on the 20th June 2015 only 66 yrs old.

Name:- Trevor Chetham from Takahiwai Rugby league club.

Trevor Chetham, you may remember, played for the NZ Kiwi's under 21's and also played for

the NZ Maori's, with a several tours under his belt.

Trevor would most definitely have watched the State Of Origin tomorrow night, he loved his league as do

you.

We met Mel Meninga at the Poenamo Hotel in Northcote on the Nth Shore Akl back in the early 90's and have always been big fans of his & his team 'Brisbane Bronco's.

So have a great birthday Mel

Cheers!

Yvonne Chetham (Trevor's wife)

We'll be watching the game for Trev

Poster Giveaway - Courtesy of ASICS

My mates at ASICS have given me these awesome signed posters to give away showcasing our boys Shaun, Sam T and Manu. Remember that ASICS is the official footwear supplier of the Vodafone Warriors so check out any good sports store to get yourself into the same boots that the boys are wearing on game day.

To be in to win 1 of 5 signed posters just send a stamped, addressed envelope or postcard to me in the mail with your name, address, phone number on the back to the address.



Poster Comp
P. O Box 54295
The Marina 2144,
Manukau, Auckland

Name:
Address:
Phone Number:

Drawn on: 20th July

Canterbury Rugby League Grand Final

CANTERBURY RUGBY League is excited to announce the code will be returning to its spiritual home, Rugby League Park in Addington, in 2015.

After negotiations between Canterbury Rugby League and the Christchurch Stadium Trust, the CRL club Grand Final and all three of the Rockcote Canterbury Bulls' home games in the upcoming National Premiership will be staged at AMI Stadium.

"It will be good to see Canterbury Rugby League being played again at AMI Stadium," Christchurch Stadium Trust Chairman Jim Anderton said.

"The Stadium Trust welcomes Canterbury Rugby League back and wishes all teams involved every success.

"This stadium is for every sport in Canterbury to share, and we are pleased to again to welcome Rugby League to join us."

The Crusaders and Canterbury Rugby Union took up residence at the venue after Lancaster Park (also known as AMI Stadium) was damaged beyond repair in the February 2011 earthquake.

The 2012 CRL club Grand Final was the last to be played at Rugby League Park, while the Bulls have not played at their traditional home ground since 2013. Canterbury Rugby League has predominantly used Denton Oval in Hornby as its base over the past few seasons.

"From Canterbury Rugby League's perspective it's great as we're trying to lift our profile, lift our brand and give our players exposure by playing at an international-quality stadium," CRL chief executive Terry Williamson enthused.

"It must do something for their confidence running out onto the spiritual home of Rugby League in Canterbury.

"It's also given our sponsors a bit of a lift. No disrespect to Denton Oval, but playing at an international-quality stadium gives us that profile we're after. From a sponsor's perspective, it provides a lot more opportunity for them from a branding and exposure point of view.

"And we hope that we'll get a lot more people to the games than we would have at Denton Oval, with the improved car-parking and access. It just takes us to the next level.

"There's also the feel-good factor that we'll get from playing at home, on our home ground. I think that's what everyone's been waiting for over the last few years. To have our club Grand Final and our three Canterbury Bulls home games there, it's just going to be fantastic.

"So we're encouraging people to get behind the move back to Rugby League Park, get behind the Canterbury Bulls and join the stampede."

Rockcote National Sales Manager Simon Petrie was similarly enthusiastic about the Rockcote Canterbury Bulls' return to Rugby League Park.

"With the growth and expansion of Canterbury Rugby League, we are thrilled to hear the announcement that AMI Stadium will be the home ground for the Rockcote Canterbury Bulls in 2015," Petrie said.

"This is an exciting time for the sport and we are extremely proud to support Canterbury Rugby League."

RUGBY LEAGUE AT AMI STADIUM

CRL Premiership Club Final

Sunday, August 9 - CRL club Grand Final 2.00pm

NZRL National Premiership

Sunday, September 13 - Rockcote Canterbury Bulls v Akarana Falcons 2.30pm

Saturday, September 19 - Rockcote Canterbury Bulls v Central Vipers 2.30pm

Saturday, October 3 - Rockcote Canterbury Bulls v Counties Stingrays 2.30pm

For the full draw of the 2015 National Premiership go to

www.nzrl.co.nz or
www.canterburyrugbyleague.co.nz





THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S ROUND 18 ISSUE...

The big hitters of rugby league

FEATURES

- After **Steve Matai**'s crunching hit on Dave Tyrrell in Round 16, we started looking into some of the game's best tacklers and discovered Manly have a history of big defence men. We look at them and what Matai does that's different;
- Wondering who the best hit men are? We rank the **Top 5 Hit Men** of rugby league;
- They're chalk and cheese off the field, but on it, Gold Coast's **James Roberts and Anthony Don** have learnt all about each other and have formed a surprisingly lethal combination;
- **Mark Hughes** received the shock of his life when he was diagnosed with brain cancer, but he's remained positive, fought it and now he's doing everything he can to raise awareness and funds for more research;
- Brenton Lawrence received a late shot at a rugby league career, now his managers the Orr brothers have set up a **player combine** with the aim of allowing other late bloomers the chance of making it to the big stage;
- **Ben Henry** suffered a huge blow when he had another season-ending injury. He's made mates with his rehab group and they're laughing all the way back on to the paddock.

PLUS... **Ben Hunt** tells us how his combination has developed with Anthony Milford and what he expects from the Bulldogs this weekend; **Matt Elliott** says the Origin hangover could stretch on for weeks for some players; **Nathan Brown** thinks the Cowboys will continue their run but don't write off the Dragons yet.

AND: Official team lists; Warren Smith's Big Clash preview of Panthers v Roosters; News: Watene-Zelezniak may go on a mission, Robert Lui looking for a club, Hoppa will re-sign, Moses seeking market value; Top 8 player-club rivalries; and Josh Reynolds & Rd 17 poster; Warriors v Sharks cheerleaders.



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NewsLifeMedia

With New Zealand rugby league at an all-time high, Shaun Johnson has his sights on a Warriors premiership. By **WILL EVANS**

THE dazzling footwork, the blinding speed, the mind-blowing sleight of hand – they're the trademarks that have rendered Warriors and Kiwis superstar Shaun Johnson as one of the game's most exciting players.

But they're simply components of his No.7 kitbag, as the reigning Golden Boot winner continues his quest to become the complete halfback. Johnson's motivation isn't accolades and individual honours, it's a determination to become the player capable of steering his club to a long-awaited maiden premiership.

Warriors coach Andrew McFadden has seen that dedication first hand.

"Shaun's terrific to coach. He's a motivated person. Although he's had success at a young age, he's very driven around improving his performance – he knows he's not the finished product," McFadden says. "We've got a young team. That puts more pressure on your organisers because they've got to do more directing, as opposed to just looking for opportunities.

"Shaun's trying to find that balance between managing the game and allowing his individual attributes to come out."

McFadden, a halfback for 100 first grade games for Canberra, Parramatta and Melbourne, has noticed a gradual shift in Johnson's mentality regarding his role within the team and what is required of him during games.

"I think early on in his career he rode on the back of his raw talent and ability to do special things. Now Shaun's really aware of what [a complete] performance is," he says. "We sit down regularly and discuss how to manage a game. He's certainly a much better halfback than I was, but I understand what the role entails. He wants to be a halfback like Johnathan Thurston, who can really understand how to

The evolution of Shaun

play a game out and how to adjust and adapt during a game."

TAKING THE LEAD

Another sign of the 24-year-old's burgeoning maturity is his willingness to take on responsibility, accepting his role as a leader with confidence and enthusiasm.

"[Leadership] comes with the territory. Any player who's played a few seasons in first grade falls into that role and when you're the halfback of a side you're doing that anyway," Johnson says. "I'm not going to try and change the way I go about things, it's about taking ownership when things aren't going right and trying to be the person to change it."

"This year there have been a few games where I haven't made the highlights reel but I've done the little things that I needed to add to my game. Early in my career all I was doing was waiting for that big play. I'm starting to find that balance now."

Johnson's five-star turn in the Warriors' 36-14 defeat of Gold Coast in Round 15 shows he's on the right track to becoming the game manager the Warriors need, as well as maintaining his ability to change the course of a match with a flash of genius.

In the final 25 minutes he scored two solo tries and set up two more with deft kicks to spearhead the club's biggest win of the year. His calmness and control, his ball-on-a-string last-tackle plays and his vastly improved defence would have been the most pleasing aspects for McFadden and Johnson himself.

While uncertain about the focus on his individual performances, Johnson admits the criticism he was subjected to during a quiet start to 2015 didn't match his own assessment of how he was travelling.

"I guess you could say it's been over the top this year. A lot of people were making [my form] feel a lot worse than it actually was," he says. "It's funny, what the media and public see as a bad game and what they see as a good game. Most of the time it's different to how I've viewed them. I've always believed in what I'm doing and I'm heading in the right direction, improving on little things every game."

"I'm a person who doesn't let things affect me too much and I've been able to do that through the good and bad times."

A stellar display in New Zealand's Anzac

Test victory in May proved a turning point in the eyes of pundits and fans. An unforgettable try snatched a last-gasp win over Cronulla six days later and Johnson was top of the pops again.

"It was pretty satisfying. I was copping a lot going into that Test against Australia. I performed well and we won. It doesn't take much for people to get off your back."

Johnson is proud of being involved in an almost unprecedented period of Kiwi dominance and his passion for raising the code's standing in the Shaky Isles is as endearing as his humility about his part in that success.

"It's really good. It's a buzz. It feels surreal that I've been part of a side that's beaten Australia three times in a row," he says.

"We've had our fair share of downs, so to have New Zealand rugby league on top at the moment and looked upon in a positive way is really special."

TO BE LIKE THE BEST:
Johnathan Thurston is
one Johnson models
his game on and
strives to emulate.



JOINT VENTURE

For many fans, supporting the Kiwis and Warriors is intertwined. The Kiwis' recent accomplishments after years of underachievement have heightened expectations of the Warriors.

Johnson views that as a positive.

"There's always been that expectation for the Warriors to do well, and that's good," he explains. "When people believe that you can do something, it means you probably can. All these expectations on me, the Warriors and the Kiwis are because people see that you can achieve something. It's about us believing that."

"I want rugby league in New Zealand to grow and be a dominant force. A big part of that is how the Kiwis play, but also how the Warriors do. I think it's a good thing that they go hand in hand."

The Warriors are clinging to a spot in the top eight on a 7-7 record with 11 rounds to go, but Johnson takes umbrage at the 'inconsistent' tag.

"People look at the Warriors [as inconsistent] and I feel like that's an easy title to put on us," he says. "We're playing against quality sides every week. You win some, you lose some," he says. "I think the only game that we've played really poorly was against Souths [in Round 13]. To label us inconsistent is disrespectful to the teams that have beaten us, because we're playing in such a tough competition."

Meanwhile, the acquisitions of marquee Kiwi Test men Roger Tuivasa-Sheck and Issac Luke have prompted many to declare the Warriors major title threats for 2016, seemingly overlooking their immediate credentials.

"Whatever happens next year will happen, but like every other club we've put too much into the pre-season and worked too hard to just wait for next season. We want to make something of this season and I think we've got the squad to do it," Johnson says. "We've got to sort it out on the field and continue to work hard. I believe we can start showing people that."

Encouragingly, the Warriors' current record is equal to their best return after 15 rounds in any season since 2003, and a characteristic late-season charge would almost certainly secure the finals berth they so crave.

Their linchpin's evolution into the complete halfback could mean the club challenges for the title as early as this year.

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Memories of Two Show Grounds

By John Coffey QSM



WITH THE Warriors and seven other teams sitting out byes, my customary eight-match NRL diet was halved last weekend. One's mind tends to wander onto other subjects at such times. In my case it was memories of two iconic playing fields once known to their respective locals as "the Show Grounds".

The first, at Addington in Christchurch, was more recently Rugby League Park before being taken by a Government, City Council and Rugby Union post-earthquakes consortium and given to the Crusaders. They then sold the naming rights to AMI, thus causing confusion because the wrecked former Lancaster Park was similarly named.

Despite promises of rent-free days for the code which had given up its spiritual home, rugby league has not been played there for two years because the basic costs of opening the gates were too high. There is also an ongoing suspicion the cash-strapped council will never give the venue back – despite a long and legal lease – but instead sell off the valuable real estate.

So it was pleasing last week to hear CRL chief executive Terry Williamson announce the club grand final (August 9) would return to Addington, and that the Canterbury Bulls would play their home matches there against Auckland (September 13), Central (September 19) and Counties Manukau (October 3).

The Addington Show Grounds hosted the first game in Christchurch in 1912. Rugby league became the Canterbury A and P Association's winter tenant from 1951 and remained after the city council assumed control 40-odd years later. But the Show Grounds were falling into disrepair when, in 2008, council staff announced a plan to evict rugby league so it could sell the property and fund facilities for other sports. Our game was to be homeless.

We fought hard to ward off that threat but the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes did the job for the council. AMI Stadium is flashier than the Show Grounds ever were, even if it is labelled "temporary" as the rugby union lobbies the government and council to build them a roofed stadium of such size that it will financially burden generations of city rate payers.

But the Show Grounds were revered by those who played there or watched generations of great players

– Kiwis turned out for their clubs on a weekly basis – and memorable club, provincial and international fixtures. I was lucky enough to spend at least one day each winter weekend, and some midweek evenings, there as a journalist from 1963 to 2007.

Not all of my personal playing memories were happy ones. My Marist-Western Suburbs club played seven grand finals there and lost the lot. Don't blame me: I only featured in one of them. But the fact I played alongside six Kiwis in a short senior career testified to how strong club football was in that era.

"My" other Show Grounds was in Wollongong. I was watching the Cowboys and Dragons playing at what is now WIN Stadium, but could not resist casting my mind back nearly 50 years. As a youngster I spent several months in that city, either side of covering the 1967 Kiwis tour of Australia, and lived in an adjoining street.

In those days the footy field was encircled by a greyhound track and was the Wollongong club's home venue. I played reserve grade for the Western Suburbs Red Devils, wearing a jersey handed down from the 1966 first grade squad. It had previously been worn by Bob Fulton before he signed for Manly. Suffice to say, Fulton did not leave his footballing genius in the jersey for me to inherit.

But I did manage to regather a chip kick and score a try at the northern end for Wests against Wollongong. Two years later Marist-Western Suburbs played Wests in Wollongong on an end-of-season trip. That time I burrowed over for a try from a scrum at the southern end.

For years I have driven my family nuts during matches at WIN Stadium by reminding them, "I've scored tries at both ends of that ground". From my viewpoint it will always be the Wollongong Show Grounds – just as that patch of grass in suburban Christchurch will always be the Addington Show Grounds to me.

Week in Northland Sport

By Ben Francis



Rugby Union

BEFORE WE talk local rugby, I want to congratulate the entire Highlanders organisation on a terrific season and capturing the 2015 Super Rugby Trophy after beating the Hurricanes 21-14 in the final. The Highlanders becoming the fourth New Zealand organisation to lift the trophy and eighth overall, also becoming the third franchise to win the Final away from home (Crusaders 98-2000 and Bulls 07) also a congratulations to Elliott Dixon who was most deserving of Man of the match honours. I was very close with my predicted score, I had Highlanders winning 18-14 and it was on pace to be that before Marty Banks slotted the drop goal.

I know in the Bayless Southern District Premiers I have been speaking about Otamatea a lot over the last few weeks but I think they are probably the in form team heading into the playoffs. Otamatea now sit in third place after they notched their sixth straight win over Kamo, the final score was 39-13. Mid Northern secured a home playoff after they had a convincing 47-0 win over Hikurangi. Waipu beat HoraHora in a close encounter 21-15, Old Boys Marist are now on four game win streak and remain in the playoff hunt after they crushed the Western Sharks 47-5 and Welsford beat Mid Western 40-22. Welsford remain top of the table and also will be hosting a home semi final. One round left to play in the Regular Season before the Playoffs begin, will be an exciting last round.

Rugby League

ROUND 15 of the Scott Electrical Premiership was an exciting one for some and a disappointment to others.

The Northern Wairoa Bulks kept their slim playoff chances alive after they had a convincing 50-10 win over HoraHora, Muriwhenua beat Otangarei 22-10 and Moerewa had a 10all draw with Takahiwai. But the bad news from the weekend was in the match between Hokianga and Portland. This game was abandoned after 50minutes after a sickening injury to Hokianga player Alex Lennox. It appears Alex will most likely need full knee reconstruction after doing in his ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) and all surrounding ligaments. Hokianga was up 30-16 when the game was abandoned. A final decision on the game will be made in the coming day. The possible options are use the score when the match was called off, replay the game within 14days or split the competition points.

Hope Alex has a speedy recovery from this devastating injury.

Football

SOME GREAT matches for Northland Football over the weekend, in the Men's Premier division Kaitaia beat Bream Bay 1-0, Tikipunga got past Onerahi 3-2 and KeriKeri had a convincing 5-1 win over Kamo. The game between Central and Whangarei/Madhatters was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch. In the Woman's Premier Division Kamo crushed Onerahi 13-0, KeriKeri had a default 3-0 win over Northern Wairoa and KeriKeri High School beat Central 3-2.



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The Kiwis

By Ray French, Ex Rugby & Rugby League Player - Our Man in the UK

THE KIWIS are coming! And if we are to believe their recently produced 46 page glossy brochure and an innovative, ceremonial luncheon plate they mean business. Yes, having received both from my good friend "The Mad Butcher", Peter Leitch, now Sir(!) and the biggest backer and patron of the New Zealand RL, there is little doubt that England will face a confident nation in the forthcoming three Test Match Series in November of this year. Good for the game and all credit to the Kiwis for knocking the all too complacent Aussies off their No. 1 international perch.

Having played against and defeated Australia three times over the past twelve months it is the first time the Kiwis have beaten their rivals in three consecutive games in 63 years, not since 1952/53 when they defeated them in four matches in a row. There is no doubt that over the years New Zealand have had, and still do today, many of the greatest players in world rugby league and some of the toughest of forwards. I only need to mention the names of Roger Bailey, Jack Butterfield, Roy Christian, Cec Mountford, Charlie Seeling, Dean Bell, Kurt Sorensen, Lance Todd, Des White, Stephen Kearney, Gary Freeman, Shaun Johnson, Mark Graham and more to indicate the quality of player under those famous black jerseys. But, having played against the Kiwis, commented upon, and written about the New Zealand team for over fifty years I have always felt that many times in the past, whatever their talents, whether because of a mystifying lack of confidence in their ability or a sense of mistaken inferiority, they have rarely shown Australia or Great Britain what they could really achieve. Not so today as their coach, Stephen Kearney, rightly insists that a reassessment of his team's culture and the need to select players who are prepared to buy into the team's mentality is vital for success,

"We had a set of values like the Kiwis have always had but we weren't living them 100%. That's everyone, me included. Every team, business, company has core values, but if you ain't living them they don't mean a lot. We had to start living the values rather than just talking about them."

I am sure there will be plenty of people talking about the Kiwis, currently No1 in world rugby league, during the forthcoming three Test Series And in the likes of halves, Shaun Johnson and Kieran Foran, a duo who have played together more times than any other Kiwi half back pairing, powerful pack stars Jesse Bromwich and skipper Simon Mannering, and giant wing Manu Vatuvei, the scorer of seven tries in eight Tests against Great Britain and England, they have the players to attract some huge crowds to the match venues in Hull, London, and Wigan.

And what of the Aussies' contribution to international rugby league, the spreading of the code worldwide, and the enhancing of media coverage for the 13 a side game? Well, after their exertions, and admittedly success in the State of Origin extravaganza, they are giving their players a complete rest from rugby. Only allowing the England rugby Union team to play a three match Test Series in Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney next summer for the first time. And as their coach Stuart Lancaster says, "A Test Series in Australia is a massive challenge and one to really look forward to. We all saw the excitement generated by the three Tests on the Lions Tour in 2013. "We certainly did, Stuart. Pity the excitement couldn't be once again also generated by the Australian Rugby League.

At least the two nations which were the instigators of international rugby league back in 1907, when the New Zealand All Golds undertook their daring and revolutionary visit to the North of England, are still prepared to promote all that's best for the promotion and expansion of the 13 a side code. International competition!

Continued on next page...

Continued from previous page...

And finally..... I know that recently I have written about the prevalence of serious injuries in our game and I hope that I have never been one to glorify the physical heroics of the past in comparison to the present. But it really is time we had an enquiry of some sort into the vast number of serious injuries which large numbers of our players are suffering regularly. Is it coincidence, chance or what? Are there genuine and obvious reasons why the weekly injury levels are far higher than in days of yore? Is it better treatment, enhanced medical techniques, or greater care and attention given to an injury which now keep our players away from the action for so long?

The physicality of the code is one of its huge attractions and the power and ferocity of the forward play is admired by all but have we reached the limits? Do we need to be running at each other from a shorter distance than 10 metres? We once ran from only three yards and then five yards – admittedly creating a different style of play and game. Do we need forwards to remain in a scrum and push? Actions which would slow them down, tire them, and lessen the effects of the “Big Hits” the fans enjoy today. Do we need to look again at the Interchange of Players ruling? I don't know, but we do need someone to look closely into why we are losing so many of our top crowd pulling attractions on the pitch every week.

Lets Celebrate!

To celebrate the Warriors back-to-back wins as well as Queensland Winning the State of Origin **we are offering a 1 time special!**



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A contemporary re-imagining of Marvel's original and longest-running superhero team, centres on four young outsiders who teleport to an alternate and dangerous universe, which alters their physical form in shocking ways. Their lives irrevocably upended, the team must learn to harness their daunting new abilities and work together to save Earth from a former friend turned enemy.

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HALSWELL HORNETS

RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

2015 Supporters Luncheon

The 2010 & 2011 Canterbury earthquakes caused a devastating amount damage to people and property, Halswell was no exception to this.

Halswell RLFC clubrooms require significant repairs and upgrades as a result, some sections need to be demolished and rebuilt, others upgraded to meet the building code. Unfortunately insurers aren't able to cover the full repair and upgrade costs, which means this is up to the club and a supporting community.

Each year the Halswell RLFC runs a fundraising luncheon to get business members and club members together to enjoy a relaxing day with great speakers with a auction, this raises funds to help in these costs.

In 2015 we have another great event planned and would like you to attend.

Where: Addington Raceway - Christian Cullen Room
When: Friday 28 August 2015 - 12:30pm onwards
Guest Speaker: Petero Civoniceva - Rugby League Legend

Petero is a real star of the game, appearing in over 300 NRL games, for both the Brisbane Bronco's and Penrith Panthers. He played 33 State of Origin matches for Queensland and 45 tests for Australia, more recently he represented Fiji in 6 tests. Petero will be very entertaining for both corporate attendees and league supporters, with plenty of great stories.



Order your table now: Tables seat 10 guests maximum. The cost per table is \$1200+GST. Full table orders are sold first. For those requesting a specific number of seats this will only be available after July 20. All interest is to be registered via a Halswell RLFC Luncheon Committee member or via the email address below.



Halswell Rugby League Football Club
Halswell Road - Halswell - Christchurch
halswell.luncheon@gmail.com



Found this lovely picture of our Editor in Chief, David Kemeys, on the Warriors Website.



My mate Dexter had a blast in Brisbane.



If you wish to **subscribe** or **unsubscribe** please email Stephen Maier at stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz

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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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