



# Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

## Newsletter

17<sup>th</sup> September 2015

# #90

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**I** WENT TO the Vodafone Warriors' 21st Annual Awards at the Sky City Convention Centre on Tuesday night and it was superb.

From the moment I stepped out of my car and entered the SkyCity Grand Hotel the night rocked. There was a red carpet treatment and when you got upstairs there were player banners hanging from the ceiling, giving the whole place a wow factor.

You used to hang about outside in the lobby but this year it was straight into a room to mix and mingle, and the awards themselves were presented in cinema style, with everyone seated.

The food and atmosphere was a 10+ that's for sure.

You will know by now that Ben Matulino was named player of the year for the second time in four years, joining Steve Price (2006-07) and Simon Mannering (2008, 2011, 2013 and 2014) as the only other players who have won more than once.

The rookie of the year went to Tuimoala Lolohea, after a season where he finished with 11 tries including a double in the final match against the Dogs.

Also announced were the two premier awards for the club's New South Wales Cup side, with prop John Palavi winning player of the year and halfback Mason Linothe the rookie award.

The awards began with the club's departing players being acknowledged, and a number of milestones marked, including Shaun Johnson getting his 100-game ring, and a special presentation to Manu Vatuvei for being the first player in NRL history to score 10 tries or more in 10 consecutive seasons.

Rookie NRL prop Albert Vete was awarded Canterbury of New Zealand clubman of the year.

There was a new award too – the Sir Peter Leitch member of the year award - which went to Tauranga's Graeme Lee. I could not be more pleased because he travels to all the games, acts as an ambassador, but best of all, does not run around the place trying to make out he owns the club! Great bloke and well-deserved.



ME AND MY TEAM AT THE VODAFONE AWARDS. WAS A FANTASTIC NIGHT.



This was the entrance to the awards it was mind blowing.



Dan Floyd and Bianca Bush from the Vodafone Warriors.



Janice just had to have a photo with Shaun Johnston.



Sam Tomkins and his partner Charlotte flew out on Wednesday back to the UK we wish them both well.



Me and Petrece from the Vodafone Warriors. I love her coat..



Mr and Mrs McFadden (the coach) and Mr and Mrs Cupples (he is Head of performance at the Vodafone Warriors).



Sam Tomkins partner Charlotte and Thomas Leuluals wife Natalie.



Two great mates of the butcher Stacey and Shaun love these guys.







# AWARD WINNERS - VODAFONE WARRIORS AWARDS



Photos courtesy of [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



Clubman of the Year - Albert Vete.



Legacy Award - Sam Rapira.



NRL Player of the Year - Ben Matulino.



NRL Rookie of the Year - Tuimoala Lolohea.



NSW Cup Player of the Year - John Palavi.



NSW Cup Rookie of the Year - Mason Lino.



NYC Player of the Year - Iulio Afoa.



NYC Rookie of the Year - Mafoa'Aea-ta Hingano.



Peoples Choice Award - Shaun Johnson.

## 2015 VODAFONE WARRIORS AWARDS



Sir Peter Leitch Member of the Year - Graeme Lee.

Vodafone Warriors 100-game Award  
NRL Record 10 tries in 10 Seasons  
SKYCITY Legacy Award  
Sir Peter Leitch Member of the Year  
Vodafone People's Choice Award  
Canterbury of NZ Club Person of the Year  
TNT NYC Rookie of the Year  
Vodafone NSW Cup Rookie of the Year Award  
Vodafone NRL Rookie of the Year  
Vodafone NYC Player of the Year  
Vodafone NSW Cup Player of the Year  
Vodafone NRL Player of the Year

Shaun Johnson  
Manu Vatuvei  
Sam Rapira  
Graeme Lee  
Shaun Johnson  
Albert Vete  
Ata Hingano  
Mason Lino  
Tuimoala Lolohea  
Buntty Afoa  
John Palavi  
Ben Matulino

Photos courtesy of [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



20th Anniversary team as decided by the public. It was a privilege to hand out these awards..



Stacey Jones receiving his award.



Manu Vatuvei receiving his Anniversary team award.



Shaun Johnson receives his award.



Steve price and I.



Ex Kiwi Duane Mann now who now works at the Vodafone Warriors.



Some of the boys did a haka to honour Sam Rapira..



Sam Rapira joins in..



The boys looking sharp in their suits..



The boys hanging out..



Tony Iro and Wife with Steve Price and Wife as well as Simon Mannering and Partner..





# Matulino Becomes Two-Time Winner

**B**EN MATULINO capped his eighth NRL season by being named the supreme Vodafone Player of the Year Award for the second time in four years at the Vodafone Warriors' 21st Annual Awards at the SKYCITY Convention Centre last night.

The 27-year-old Wellingtonian joins Steve Price (2006 and 2007) and Simon Mannering (2008, 2011, 2013 and 2014) as the only other players who have won the award multiple times.

The other finalists for the award were Mannering and halfback Shaun Johnson, who missed the last six games of the season.

Matulino, first named player of the year in 2012, again imposed himself as one of the NRL's top front rowers in a season when he appeared in 21 matches – the only games he missed were through a three-match suspension – lifting his career tally to 173.

Despite missing those three games, he topped the Vodafone Warriors' lists for most runs (349 for an average of 16.6 a game) and for most metres gained (3245 for an average of 154.5 a game). In the last outing of the season against the Bulldogs he carried the ball 194 metres from 17 runs while he topped 150 metres 12 times with a best of 222 metres against the Titans in round 15.

He was also the club's most prolific off loader with 53, ranking him second among all players in the NRL, while he made 566 tackles averaging 27 a game.

"It was a really tough decision choosing between Ben, Simon and Shaun for the award," said Vodafone Warriors head coach Andrew McFadden.

"In a season that provided its challenges they all made huge efforts for the team but in the end Ben won through. He impressed with the consistent quality of his performances and his durability.

"He's certainly up there with the best few props in the game today and just gets better and better every year."

Of a possible 149 games in the last six seasons Matulino has missed just four through injury – two in 2012 and two in 2014 – and five through suspension. He was the first NYC graduate to appear in both 100 and 150 NRL games.

Vying for the Vodafone NRL Rookie of the Year were centre Solomone Kata, utility Tuimoala Lolohea and

props Sam Lisone and Albert Vete with Lolohea taking out the award.

Still NYC eligible this year, the 20-year-old Lolohea had a stellar season finishing with 11 tries including a double in the final match of the campaign against the Bulldogs.

He underlined his versatility by starting 11 games at fullback, five at halfback, four in the centres and three on the wing. He was also singled out as a finalist for the NRL rookie of the year category at the Rugby League Players' Association annual awards.

Also announced were the two premier awards for the club's New South Wales Cup side which was eliminated from the finals on Sunday.

Finalists for the Vodafone NSW Cup Player of the Year were David Bhana, Charlie Gubb, Viliami Kaveinga and John Palavi with the ultra-consistent Palavi receiving the accolade.

The Vodafone NSW Cup Rookie of the Year award was won by halfback Mason Lino, who made his NRL debut late in the season. He headed off the other finalists James Bell, Ata Hingano and Nathaniel Roache.

While the Vodafone Junior Warriors had their awards evening last Wednesday the winners of the two principal accolades were acknowledged last night. Vodafone NYC Player of the Year and Sonny Fai Medal winner Bunty Afoa was presented with his award as was TNT NYC Rookie of the Year Ata Hingano.

The awards presentation began with the club's departing players being acknowledged. Those finishing with the Vodafone Warriors are Sam Rapira, Nathan Friend, Chad Townsend, Sam Tomkins, Sebastine Ikahihifo, Suaia Matagi (departed mid-season), Ngani Laumape, Glen Fisiiahi, Dominique Peyroux, Siliva Havili, Nathaniel Peteru (departed mid-season), David Bhana and Brad Abbey. For the first time plaques were presented to departing players who had represented the Vodafone Warriors at NRL level, gold for 100 games or more, silver for 50-99 games and bronze for 1-49. Rapira, the last player presented with his plaque, received a standing ovation from the 600 guests in attendance.

*Continued on next page...*

A number of milestones were acknowledged including Johnson receiving his 100-game ring for becoming the 23rd player to reach 100 appearances for the Vodafone Warriors while a special presentation was made to wing Manu Vatuvei who this season became the first player in the competition's history to score 10 tries or more in 10 consecutive seasons.

Rapira was honoured with the SKYCITY Legacy Award acknowledging his immense contribution to the Vodafone Warriors since his NRL debut in 2006. He finished his 10th and final season with a tally of 173 appearances before continuing his career with Huddersfield in England.

After his heartfelt speech a group of team-mates rose to acknowledge Rapira with a rousing haka.

During the year the Vodafone Warriors ran a poll to pick the People's Choice 20th Anniversary Team. The line-up voted by fans was: Brent Webb (#97); Francis Meli (#65), Brent Tate (#137), Clinton Toopi (#66), Manu Vatuvei (#115); Shaun Johnson (#168), Stacey Jones (#24); Steve Price (#121), PJ Marsh (#96), Ben Matulino (#142); Ali Lauitiiti (#55), Simon Mannering (#125); Micheal Luck (#126). Interchange: Lance Hohaia (#99), Ruben Wiki (#123), Jacob Lillyman (#146), Kevin Campion (#86).

Sir Peter Leitch presented special trophies to nine

of the team who were able to make last night's event – Meli, Vatuvei, Johnson, Jones, Matulino, Price, Mannering, Wiki and Lillyman.

For the first time the club created the Sir Peter Leitch Member of the Year award. This was presented to Tauranga's Graeme Lee.

Rookie NRL prop Albert Vete was awarded with the Canterbury of New Zealand Clubman of the Year. Besides making 21 appearances in his rookie NRL season, the 22-year-old impressed in his off-field contribution, personifying the club's values.



Ben Matulino

NRL IRL MATCH OFFICIALS - FINALS WEEK 2			
GAME: ROOSTERS V BULLDOGS		DATE: FRIDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2015	
VENUE: ALLIANZ STADIUM		NRL KICK OFF: 7.55PM [NINE]	
REFEREE:	Matt Cecchin	VIDEO REFEREES:	Bernard Sutton
ASSIST REFEREE:	Ben Cummins		Ben Galea
TOUCH JUDGES:	Jason Walsh		
	Nick Beashel		
STANDBY REFEREE:	Alan Shortall		
STANDBY TJ:	Russell Turner	JERSEY COLOUR:	Lime
GAME: COWBOYS V SHARKS		DATE: SATURDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2015	
VENUE: 1300SMILES STADIUM		NRL KICK OFF: 7.40PM [NINE]	
REFEREE:	Gerard Sutton	VIDEO REFEREES:	Ashley Klein
ASSIST REFEREE:	Gavin Badger		Luke Patten
TOUCH JUDGES:	Steve Carrall		
	Brett Suttor		
STANDBY REFEREE:	Jared Maxwell		
STANDBY TJ:	Michael Wise	JERSEY COLOUR:	Lime
NRL HOLDEN CUP MATCH OFFICIALS - FINALS WEEK 2			
GAME: SEA EAGLES V TIGERS		DATE: FRIDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2015	
VENUE: ALLIANZ STADIUM		KICK OFF: 5.15PM	
REFEREE:	Matt Noyen	VIDEO REFEREE:	Steve Chiddy
	Jon Stone		Henry Perenara
TOUCH JUDGES:	Lawrie McDonell		
	Kasey Badger	JERSEY COLOUR:	Teal
STANDBY:	Ziggy Przeklasa-Adamski		
GAME: BRONCOS V WARRIORS		DATE: SATURDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2015	
VENUE: 1300SMILES STADIUM		KICK OFF: 5.00PM	
REFEREE:	Adam Gee	VIDEO REFEREE/MD	Jared Maxwell
	Peter Gough		Luke Phillips
TOUCH JUDGES:	Anthony Elliot		
	Belinda Sleeman	JERSEY COLOUR	Lime
STANDBY:	Wyatt Raymond		



## Centre Signs On

**I'M EXCITED** by our latest signing, centre Blake Ayshford, who is joining on a two-year contract.

The 27-year-old has 124 NRL games, 104 for the Tigers from 2009 to 2013 and 20 for the Sharks.

Vodafone Warriors head coach Andrew McFadden says: "We're undergoing a thorough process of reshaping our NRL squad. While we're always seeking to create depth and competition, we have also identified the need for more experienced and durable players and Blake will bring those qualities to the club."

Ayshford has generally been used in the centres but also has some NRL experience on the wing, at standoff and loose forward. He played in two finals campaigns with the Tigers in 2010 and 2011, including the play-off the Vodafone Warriors won 22-20 en route to the 2011 grand final.

### Finals Wrap-up

Storm warning: At the start of the season Melbourne coach Craig Bellamy had his doubts about his side's credentials but their 20-18 win over minor premiers the Roosters has him believing again.

The result brought the Roosters' 12-match winning streak to a halt and you have to say that since no one gave them a bolter's chance after Billy Slater was injured and ruled out for the year, it has been some performance from the Storm.

Broncos march on: The Brisbane Broncos won the all Queensland game against the North Queensland Cowboys 16-12, but what few realise is that it was the Broncos

first win over the Cowboys in a finals match-up. Much has been said about the Wayne Bennett coached side's attacking prowess, but this was one where their defence carried the day.

Dogs slay Dragons: A field goal propelled Canterbury to golden-point 11-10 NRL qualifying final win over St George. It just shows how cruel this game can be because Dragons five-eighth Gareth Widdop levelled the scores on the siren with a penalty then went from hero to zero when he kicked out on the full to hand the Dogs field position and gift them the chance to win the game.

Sharks gobble up Bunnies: I was excited to see this one but I can't think why, because there was only ever one team in it. The Sharks, led by the inspirational Paul Gallen, were too good for last year's Premiers, South Sydney. In all honesty, I thought it was actually a pretty poor game, but there will not be a Sharks fan alive who cares.

### It's All Gone To Script – Almost

After week one of the finals the sides that finished seven and eight in the regular season are the two sides eliminated. St George can feel a bit unlucky, but Souths were well off the pace.

Brisbane and Melbourne are the two sides who get the week off, and the elimination finals see the Sharks in North Queensland to face the Cowboys, and the Dogs facing the minor premiers the Roosters.

### Big Crowds Turn Up To Support Their Teams

It was a new record for attendance at the first week of the NRL finals, with 131,794 people turning up at the four matches. Who knows

how many were watching on TV on either side of the Tasman, but you can expect the crowds to keep rolling up at the business end of the season. I thought the sight of the Cronulla flags waving was pretty good I have to admit.

It was nice to see the colours of a side that hasn't had much to shout about on show.

### NRL and NYC Finals

Friday, NYC, Manly v Tigers. NRL, Roosters v Bulldogs. Saturday, NYC, Broncos v Warriors. NRL, Cowboys v Sharks.

### All Over For NSW Side

The Bulldogs ended our New South Wales Cup finals hopes 33-20. It was locked 16-16 at halftime

But the momentum was all the Dogs in the second spell. They dominated possession with four repeat sets at one point, and while we defended superbly we couldn't last, yielding a try.

It was tit-for-tat and we levelled again before suddenly the Bulldogs hit us twice from long range to bolt to a 32-20 lead. They added a field goal to their tally but were able to control the game.

### Juniors Dispatch Roosters

Marata Niukore bagged a hat-trick as the Vodafone Junior Warriors beat the Roosters 32-22 in the NYC elimination play-off. The treble lifted Niukore's try tally for the season to 11 in 15 games.

Through Niukore's efforts and tries to hooker Tyler Mohi and standoff Kauri Aupouri the Junior Warriors largely had the game under control.

*Continued on next page...*



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That is 16 final victories in 21 matches since the competition began in 2008.

Starting prop Paul Tuli was immense with 176 metres plus 35 tackles, and the result of all that hard work is a date this weekend to face Brisbane in Townsville on Saturday.

The Broncos take us on, while the other all-Sydney match-up is between Manly and the Tigers.

The Vodafone Junior Warriors met the Broncos only once in the regular season, winning 40-14 in Auckland in March, but Brisbane went on to finish the season in third.

### **Juniors Name Team**

Player of the year Bunty Afoa and standoff Ata Hingano return to the Vodafone Junior Warriors' line-up for their sudden-death NYC semi against the Broncos on Saturday (7pm NZT).

After missing the last two matches with a knee injury, Afoa is set to make his 50th appearance joining 13 other players who have previously achieved the milestone for the Juniors.

Afoa won the Vodafone NYC Player of the Year and the Sonny Fai Medal this year.

Hingano returns after making 10 appearances for the club's New South Wales Cup side including its two finals matches against the Mounties and Dogs.

Afoa will take up his regular starting spot in the front row with Tualima Tualima going to the bench.

*Vodafone Junior Warriors: Brad Abbey, Tomas Aoake, Marata Niukore, Semisi Tyrell, Paul Ulberg, Ata Hingano, Erin Clark, Bunty Afoa, Casey La-*

*faele, Paul Tuli, Ofahiki Ogden, Matiu Love-Henry, Jazz Tevaga. Bench: Tyler Mohi, Mattais Heimuli, Amoni Tufui, Tualima Tualima Kauri Aupouri.*

### **Warriors Overlooked**

The Junior Warriors have missed out on having a player in the NYC Team of the Year for the first time in the competition's history. In the first seven years of the comp we had at least one player. This year's team is dominated by players from North Queensland and Brisbane.

NYC team of the year 2015: Fullback Tom Trbojevic (Manly), wings Gideon Mosby (Cowboys) and Joseph Manu (Roosters), centres Jordan Drew (Broncos) and Addison Demetriou (Manly), standoff Te Maire Martin (Tigers), halfback Ashley Taylor (Broncos). Props Viliame Kikau (Cowboys) and Joe Ofehengaue (Broncos), hooker Jayden Berrell (Broncos), second row Coen Hess (Cowboys) and Tevita Pangai (Raiders), loose forward Jai Arrow (Broncos). Bench: Latrell Mitchell (Roosters) Brent Naden (Panthers), Jayden Nikorima (Broncos), Danny Levi (Knights).

### **Three In Line For Awards**

Three Vodafone Warriors are in line for Rugby League Players' Association Awards, announced in Sydney this week.

Wing Manu Vatuvei and halfback Shaun Johnson are two of the three finalists for the New Zealand Representative Player of the Year, after they both excelled for the Kiwis in the Four Nations last year and the Anzac Test win over the Kangaroos.

Vodafone Warriors utility Tuimoala Lolohea has been named as a finalist for the Rookie of the Year, after he appeared in 23 of our 24 games this season, playing in

every backline position.

### **New Signing Roger Tuivasa-Sheck Is On The List Of Five Finalists For The Players' Player Medal.**

Players vote for their opponents on a 3-2-1 basis after each game of the NRL season and the votes are tallied after round 26 to determine the Players' Player and Rookie of the Year.

Players' Player Medal: Ben Hunt (Brisbane), Greg Inglis (Rabbitohs), James Tedesco (Tigers), Johnathan Thurston (Cowboys), Roger Tuivasa-Sheck (Sydney Roosters).

Rookie: Tuimoala Lolohea (Warriors), Cameron Munster (Storm), Jake Trbojevic (Manly).

NYC Player: Viliame Kikau (Cowboys), Te Maire Martin (Tigers), Latrell Mitchell (Roosters)

Australian Representative: Greg Inglis, Corey Parker, Cameron Smith.

NZ Representative: Shaun Johnson, Jason Nightingale, Manu Vatuvei.

Rest of the World: Marika Koroi-bete (Fiji), Joseph Leilua (Samoa), Josh McGuire (Samoa).

### **Contracts Will Be Honoured**

The Warriors will honour the contracts of players they're looking to offload, John Palavi, Ngani Laumape, Matt Allwood, Sione Lousi, Siliva Havili and David Bhana.

Laumape is going to rugby, Havili to the Dragons, but the others haven't been able to find clubs. The Warriors will keep them on, although only for reserve grade footy.

*Continued on next page...*



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"A contract is to give security to the club and player," McFadden said. "There has got to be some sort of amicable deal that's done so both parties are happy. When you're moving players on it's not easy, but you try to be open and transparent. Sometimes it works out, sometimes it doesn't."

Bhana captained the NYC and reserve-grade sides and signed a two-year contract last year, and he posted on Instagram that he won't be staying, and saying he was heartbroken never to play in the NRL. "It's been my dream to play for the Warriors and gutted I didn't get a shot to pull on that NRL jersey but if I want to make that dream true I have to move on."

#### **Wrestling The Next Challenge**

All the talk is about Jarryd Hayne and American football but Bris-

bane's Daniel Vidot has had an offer from the WWE, to compete in professional wrestling.

The 25-year-old has been negotiating for a month after attracting the attention of US wrestling talent scouts who believe Vidot has what it takes.

Last year Vidot played 23 times for the Broncos, scoring eight tries, but he fell out of favour with Broncos coach Wayne Bennett and has been restricted to playing in the Queensland Cup.

Moves to other NRL clubs have fallen through and Vidot will fly to America later this month for a three-day trial.

Apparently Vidot has an offer from the Reds to join their Super Rugby squad but he's focusing on making it in the WWE.

#### **Storm Wing To Join Blues**

Melbourne Storm wing Matt Duff-

ie has signed a two-year deal to join Super Rugby's Blues.

Blues coach Tana Umaga says he's excited about the Auckland-born former schoolboy rugby standout's arrival. "Matt is a fantastic athlete, and was a highly promising young rugby player. He has developed into an excellent league player at fullback and wing and that experience fits ideally to the role of an outside back in rugby."

Duffie was signed by the Storm as an 18-year-old and has played 61 first grade games since his debut in 2010, scoring 37 tries. He was of course being linked to the Warriors, but that is obviously not going to happen.

#### **Blast From The Past**

My old mate Ray Mears Sent this BLAST FROM THE PAST. WORTH A LOOK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aG6RA-RJtmk>

## **The 2005 Kiwis that beat Australia 24 - 0 are having a reunion in Sydney on Grand Final weekend!**

**On FRIDAY NIGHT 2 OCTOBER AT THE MENZIES HOTEL SYDNEY**

**14 Carrington Street, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia**

**Phone: +61 2 9299 1000**

**They are having a mix and mingle and would invite any former Kiwis that are in Sydney to join us.**

**It will be held at the Menzies Hotel with kick off 7.00pm.**

**Please contact [pat.c@aucklandrugbyleague.co.nz](mailto:pat.c@aucklandrugbyleague.co.nz)**

**- Sir Peter the teams football manager will be in Sydney from Monday 28th September staying at the Menzies Hotel his mobile is +64 2193 6105.**

**We would love to see plenty of ex KIWIS AT THE GATHERING**



# Canterbury Bulls v Akarana Falcons

**T**HE ROCKCOTE Canterbury Bulls have taken a huge step towards retaining their NZRL National Premiership crown, notching 34-18 defeat of fellow heavyweights Akarana Falcons in Round 3 at Christchurch's AMI Stadium.

The Bulls scored seven tries to three in a magnificent all-round performance, keeping their unbeaten 2015 record alive after two outings. The Falcons slipped to a record of one draw and one loss.

The Falcons were denied an early try after a clever grubber by five-eighth Morgan Timoti-Cook, with the chasers ruled offside after referee Aaron Donald consulted with his touch judge.

The Bulls capitalised on the let-off, forcing a line drop-out before fullback Erwin Sauni – a three-try hero in the centres last week against Wai-Coa-Bay – floated a beautiful cut-out pass to send winger Sua Ailloilo in for the opening try after 11 minutes.

After withstanding more pressure on their own goal-line, the home side extended their lead to 8-0 after a superb backline shift. Centre Matt Sauni delayed his pass beautifully to put winger Jack Mundy outside his opposite Semisi Fotu. Mundy skipped 20 metres down the touchline to score in the right-hand corner.

The Bulls received another gilt-edged opportunity immediately afterwards, marching down-field following a penalty. James Baxendale scored their third try via a determined last-tackle run from dummy-half, but the second-rower's radar was astray again and the score remained 12-0 with 11 minutes remaining until halftime.

The Falcons belatedly hit the scoreboard in the 35th minute after a break by Timoti-Cook, who positioned lock Peni Misinale to dive over near the posts. Halfback Eko Malu slotted the simple conversion to halve the Bulls' lead.

But Canterbury landed a crucial blow just before halftime, with livewire halfback Tevin Arona backing up another powerful burst by Erwin Sauni to score under the posts. Baxendale landed his first successful conversion of the afternoon to send the Bulls into the break with a handy 18-6 lead.

After Ailloilo was denied a second try in the early stages of the second stanza via a forward-pass call, Baxendale barged over from close range to bag his second try and extend the Bulls' advantage to 16

points.

Akarana centre Saimone Makahili scored a timely try for the visitors with a barnstorming charge from 10 metres out, however, with Malu's conversion setting up a 22-12 scoreline.

The Bulls then repelled a string of Falcons attacking raids before veteran captain Chris Bamford scored a typically inspirational try, bursting through several tackles off the back of a scrum and plunging over for the hosts' sixth try. Baxendale's conversion restored the Bulls' 16-point lead with 15 minutes left on the clock.

Makahili waltzed over to complete his double and keep the Falcons' chances alive, but interchange forward Sam Alipusi was sent off for an alleged head-butt on Bulls second-rower Kyle Leka when the visitors were hot on attack, effectively ending their hopes of a late comeback.

Phil Nati iced the Bulls' comprehensive victory by diving on a loose ball in the Falcons' in-goal.

Bamford was named man-of-the-match after an outstanding team effort by the defending champs, with Erwin Sauni, Alex Todd, Leka, Arona and Wihongi all producing outstanding individual displays.

Canterbury Bulls 34 (James Baxendale 2, Sua Ailloilo, Jack Mundy, Tevin Arona, Chris Bamford, Phil Nati tries; Baxendale 2, Arona goals) defeated Akarana Falcons 18 (Saimone Makahili 2, Peni Misinale tries; Eko Malu 3 goals) at AMI Stadium, 2.30pm, Sunday, September 13. Halftime: Bulls 18-6. Goalkickers: Baxendale (Bulls) 2 from 6; Arona (Bulls) 1 from 1; Malu (Falcons) 3 from 3. Referee: Aaron Donald. Touch judges: Jason Wilson, Daryl Mataiti.

**CANTERBURY BULLS:** Erwin Sauni, Jack Mundy, Matt Sauni, Jordan Kane, Sua Ailloilo, James Wihongi, Tevin Arona, Chris Bamford (c), Alani Kakoi, Alex Todd, James Baxendale, Kyle Leka, Agaese Fiso (vc). Interchange: Nathan Saumalu, Phillip Lavea, Paradise Mann, Phil Nati. Coach: Darrell Coad.

**AKARANA FALCONS:** Levi McBirney, Corey Setaor, Falepa Rome, Saimone Makahili, Semisi Fotu, Morgan Timoti-Cook, Eko Malu, Palu Tapaevale, Semisi Mau, Trent Schaumkel, Dion Snell, Paea Manukia, Peni Misinale. Interchange: Marcus Fraser, Sam Alipusi, Kitona Pasene, Soape Kaualiaku. Coach: Steve Buckingham.



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# Brisbane's Successful Season Adds to the Legend of Wayne Bennett

By John Deaker



**W**AYNE BENNETT was already renowned as one of the greatest rugby league coaches the game has seen before the start of this season. The way that he has converted the Brisbane Broncos back in to a genuine Premiership contender in 2015 has now added to his legendary status.

The Broncos' uncompromising victory over North Queensland at the weekend now has them as the bookies' favourite to win the NRL and their defensive effort at the weekend demonstrated the type of character Bennett's been able to train into this 'new-Broncos' culture within a remarkably short period of time.

When talking about their defence after Saturday's match, Bennett said "The [players] buy into it and at the end of the day they drive it and I just facilitate it."

Bennett's statement is very modest - when to most onlookers it appears that the Broncos players have bought in to his return to the club - which has therefore THEN made their turnaround in fortunes in all aspects of their game ( especially their defence ) possible.

Not everyone was initially convinced that going 'Back to the Future' by bringing Bennett back to the club would be the best thing for the club to move forward. However, as the season has progressed it's become apparent that he hasn't lost the midis touch that saw Brisbane win 6 Premierships with him at the helm between 1988 and 2008.

Bennett's banning of mobile phones at training is one of the more obvious examples of the type of 'old-school' values that he insists upon that help him to secure respect and results from his players.

"Phones are the greatest distraction of all time," Bennett told members of the media prior to the start of this season.

"When you are trying to build teams mobile phones have no part to play. One guy is trying to talk to another guy and he is looking at his data or his messages. It does not work.

Young men need discipline and direction. When they don't get it you get absolute chaos in the organization," he said.

Many players - including Darius Boyd who Bennett bought back to the club with him - have referred to him as a 'father figure.' His knack for treating players as individuals and taking genuine interest in their lives outside of football are what has helped to see him viewed as more than just a coach to so many young men and make him the great coach he is today.

The phone rule is just one of many that Bennett has bought back to Brisbane. He's even bought in a small but significant rule about players paying for lost gear. A common theme that is clear regarding so much of what Bennett is trying to impart on his players is that they need to be accountable for their actions and communicate well on and off the park.

A team's defence often says a lot more about the culture of a team than their attack - and the way the Broncos' defence has improved this season remains as strong indication as anything that many of Bennett's values have rubbed off on the players.

Early in the season they were a long shot - paying \$18 to win the NRL at one stage. Now they are favorites for the title paying \$3.50. If they do go all the way it will rank right up there with Wayne Bennett's very greatest achievements in a remarkable coaching career.





# RTS A Challenge For The Warriors

By John Coffey QSM



**A**USTRALIAN RUGBY league legend Andrew Johns recently predicted Roger Tuivasa-Sheck would evolve into New Zealand's finest rugby league player. Johns was referring only to our country's gifts to his country's club competition. His fellow panel members backed him up by tossing in a few names, Jones, Williams, Graham.

New Zealand's influence on Australian club footy was initially largely provided by bulky blokes who could bullock their way upfield – Bill Noonan, Henry Tatana, Dane Sorensen, Brent Todd and company – so the Aussie fancy dans could capitalise on their momentum and score the headline-grabbing tries.

In recent years we have given their game much more than that. There have been any number of outstandingly skilful second-row and loose forwards, wings and fullbacks. Nigel Vagana, Manu Vatuvei and Shaun Kenny-Dowall have all run in more than 100 tries. We still need to produce more hookers and halves for our own good.

RTS has indeed been a revelation in his first season as the Sydney Roosters fullback after serving a perfect apprenticeship on the wing. He was a star in his own right in 2013, sharing in a Grand Final triumph and being named Dally M Wing of the Year and International Wing of the Year.

At the World Cup in Britain he scored eight tries in six appearances but broke down with a serious leg injury early in the final. Since then he has played in two Anzac Tests for a win and a loss but pulled out of the 2014 Four Nations because of "burn out". We look forward to him emulating his record-breaking metre-eating for the Kiwis in England in November.

So who does RTS have to surpass to become New Zealand's finest player in Australian club football? Johns and his cohorts mentioned Mark Graham, Stacey Jones and Sonny Bill Williams, and they were certainly at the top of their game in their respective decades.

Graham was named New Zealand's Player of the Century in 2007 and thoroughly deserved the honour. Between 1981 and 1988 he made 146 appearances for North Sydney and in many of those carried the Bears on his own broad shoulders. But despite his efforts he could not get Norths through to a Grand Final, let alone a premiership. On the internation-

al stage Graham was without peer, the finest second-rower of his time.

At club level, Jones went one better than Graham by spearheading the Warriors into their first Grand Final, even scoring a sensational try to give them a brief second-half lead. He was also inspirational in the Kiwis jersey, playing in 46 Tests and amazingly circling the world in 2005 to attend the birth of his son in Auckland and win the Tri-Nations final at Leeds.

I still vividly remember SBW's stunning 2004 debut for the Bulldogs against Parramatta. He went on to win NRL titles with the Bulldogs and the Roosters. But, before and between his quest for lofty goals in rugby union, boxing and sevens, SBW has been an international rugby league failure. In seven attempts, he never enjoyed success over Australia and, either through injury or by choice, he missed significant Kiwis triumphs in 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2014. His greatness was only at club level and that is where Johns was rating him.

Personally, I would add Ruben Wiki to that list, for his deeds with Canberra (including a premiership) and the Warriors, as both a back and a forward, and for his remarkable 55-Test international career which peaked with that 2005 Tri-Nations triumph as captain. For the record, the Kiwis with most Grand Final appearances are Brent Todd and Steve Matai (four each, two wins apiece).

RTS is about to join the Warriors. Some Australians have already suggested that might not be a smart career move. If he is to realise his immense potential he will need the full support from his team-mates. There are also concerns the New Zealand Rugby Union will offer to fast-track him into the All Blacks and NFL scouts will come knocking. The Warriors need to keep RTS happy and motivated.

Andrew Johns' views deserve respect. But to many on this side of the Tasman the greatest New Zealander in the NRL will be the one who most inspires the Warriors to their maiden Grand Final victory lap on the first Sunday in October.

# Week in Northland Sport

By Ben Francis



## Rugby Union

**N**ORTHLAND ARE still out without a win the the 2015 ITM Cup season after going down to Manawatu 42-17 in Palmerston North on the weekend. Northland came out firing in the early stages of the game before Manawatu put the foot down to score three in thirteen minutes to lead 21-7 at the break. Once again Northland had a fast start to the half but couldn't break the line, and Manawatu made the, pay to run out 42-17 winners. Northland will play Counties Manukau on Saturday at Toll a Stadium 7:30pm kickoff.

Northland will be without two key players for the remainder of the season with head coach Richie Harris announcing loose forward Dan O'Rourke out with ongoing concussion symptoms and first five Daniel Bowden needing surgery on his groin.

Despite the poor results Northland has had a super tough schedule so far playing against two Premiership teams (Manawatu and Taranaki) and two teams who should be in the Premiership and two of the form teams this year in Wellington and Hawke's Bay.

Other Northland Rugby results over the weekend were not to pleasing either with the Northland Secondary Girls team going down 45-0 to Auckland A, while the Northland Development squad went down 27-17 to the Counties Manukau Development team and the Northland Under 19s lost 32-18 to Auckland A

## Rugby League

**T**HE NORTHERN Swords had the bye this week in the New Zealand Rugby League Premiership, however they did play the Auckland Vulcans development team in Moerewa. This was a a great opportunity for the Swords to give their young players a run. The Vulcans won 78-10. The Swords will play the Wellington Orcas in Round Four of the NZRL Premiership in Kaikohe on Saturday. It will be a 12pm kickoff.

## Football

**T**HE STAFFORD Choat finals were played at Toll Stadium on Saturday. In the Cup final the Kamo Reserves beat Tikipunga 2-1 to return the Choat Cup to Kamo after a two year absence. It is believed the Kamo reserves team is the first Reserve team to win the Cup since it started back in the 1970's. Kamo dominated the majority of the game, a late goal by Tikipunga set up an exciting finish but it wasn't meant to be with a number of chances going wide. The Kamo woman's team also gained victory in the Woman's Knockout Cup 2-0 over KeriKeri High School. Kamo led 1-0 at the break and wore the young High School team to cap off a successful day for the club.

In the Stafford Choat Bowl final the Whangarei Reserves team crushed the KeriKeri Pioneers 9-0 in a one sided final.

Stafford Choat Plate final between Northern Wairoa and Tikipunga development went right down to the wire, before an injury time penalty goal (Pictured Above) by Evan Montgomery Northern Wairoa saw them claim a 3-2 win and gain their first piece of silverware since 1985.







## THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S FINALS WEEK TWO ISSUE...

Semi-finals – who will come up with the big play?

### FEATURES

- The **Sydney Roosters** have a camp each season and this year they took the time to share their family history which has helped bring the team closer together;
- Talk of being buy of the year doesn't concern **Michael Ennis** too much, but he has found a new lease since joining the Cronulla Sharks and has helped lift them to premiership contention;
- We tried to look into our crystal ball to predict what may happen in this week's matches with our **semi-finals playbook**... with a little help from some industry insiders;
- Most premiership-winning teams need the big-name star to lead the way, but without the toilers and hard-workers they don't get a chance to shine. We take a look at some of the most **under-rated players** from past winning teams;
- Last week we brought you the top five tries of 2015, this week it's the defensive players with the **Top 5 hits**;
- The **Triple M** NRL coverage has gone to new levels in 2015, so we snuck behind the scenes to see how an afternoon unfolds.

**PLUS...** **Anthony Watmough** thinks any remaining team has the potential to win—including those from outside the top four; **Matt Elliott** examines the importance of game-plan and being able to adjust on the run; **Nathan Brown** analyses the strengths for this weekend's sides.

**AND:** Official team lists; Warren Smith's Big Clash preview of Roosters v Bulldogs; News: Storm hit back at complaints about the wrestle, Anthony Tupou's off-field struggle, Sonny Bill still playing a part, Bennett's buy of the year; Top Eight finals match upsets.

**PODCAST:** Finals Week Two & Rugby League the Musical.



### THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

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# Capital Men Stay Strong, Northland Women go top in Round 5

**T**HE CAPITAL Cobras have stayed in touch with front runners Auckland after a dominant 5-0 win over Northland in Round 5 of the Ford National Hockey League.

With goals from Blair Hilton, Benedict van Woerkom, Ollie Logan, Brad Read and Stephen Jenness, the Cobras have consolidated second spot on the men's table with 14 points.

Meanwhile, Auckland extended their winning streak to five in a row after a narrow 2-1 win over the Canterbury Cavaliers. Goals from Jared Panchia and Johnny Bilkey led the Aucklanders to a result which sees them untouchable on the points table with a maximum 20 points.

North Harbour snuck home with a 4-3 result over the Central Mavericks, coming back from a two goal deficit to secure all four points. Harbour were first to score through Genki Mitani before Steve Davison caught fire and scored a hat-trick for the Mavericks. But Central's hopes were dashed when North Harbour went on to score three unanswered goals to snatch the win.

The Southern Dogs earned a vital four points from their 2-1 victory versus Midlands thanks to goals from Kieran O'Connor and Richmond Lum.

In today's women's games, Northland muscled their way into top spot on the table after a convincing 4-2 performance against Capital.

The hosts were in control from the opening whistle with goals from Jasmin McQuinn, Ella Gunson, Brooke Neal and Carli Michelsen. Capital's goals came from Charlotte Eastman and Kelsey Smith. The result leaves Northland on top of the table on 16 points.

It was an emphatic outcome for Midlands, who ran rampant over the Southern Storm 8-1. Midlands led 2-1 after a tight first half before the floodgates opened in the fourth quarter with Midlands scoring five goals in the final seven minutes. Gemma Flynn scored a brace while Sam Charlton, Shiloh Gloyn, Natasha FitzSimons, Kim Tanner, Amy Robinson and Nicky O'Donnell also netted.

Auckland grabbed two points from a 4-2 shoot-out win over the Canterbury Cats after the game was locked up 0-0 at fulltime. Both sides played a high energy game but neither could crack the opposition defence in regulation time.

The Central Mysticks kept themselves in finals contention with a well earned 3-0 victory against North Harbour. Rebecca Herbert scored a double and Michaela Curtis added her side's third goal.

Tomorrow is a rest day in Whangarei, with Round 6 kicking into action from 12:30pm on Wednesday with Auckland vs Capital Cobras opening the day's play for the men, before the Southern Storm take on Central Mysticks on the women's draw at 1:00pm.

The Ford National Hockey League is proudly supported by the Whangarei District Council and Trillian Trust.

[Learn more, Click Here.](#)



Photo Credit: Planet Hockey



# Pure South Sharp Blacks Three Time Champions

**N**EW ZEALAND'S national butchery team, The Pure South Sharp Blacks, have won the Tri-Nations Butchers' challenge; their third consecutive win.

The competition held at Shed 10 in Auckland, once again proved our butchers to be the best in the world, bringing the trophy home for the third time in a row.

Following many months of refining their skills, the intense competition was three hours long and saw the butchers turn a side of beef, pork and a whole lamb into value added cuts to produce a world-class display based around a Kiwiana theme.

Team Captain, Corey Winder says he is absolutely ecstatic with the win.

"We have put in a lot of hard work, blood, sweat and tears. The team is so pumped, words can't describe the feeling of accomplishment," he said.

Held on the same day, Alana Empson from New World in Hillcrest was announced winner of the Alto Young Butcher category, while Hohepa Smith from Countdown Meat and Livestock topped the Competenz Butcher Apprentice of the Year category.

Alana says it is her dedication to pursuing her passion in butchery that helped her win.

"I think if you really want something you'll do whatever you can to get there, and for me it was practice. I did eight rehearsals and practiced at work," she said.

Hohepa is excited to see what future career prospects winning the competition will grant him.

"I have always been hard working, motivated and dedicated and that's what I credit my success to," he said.

Head Judge of the Alto Young Butcher and Competenz Butcher Apprentice competition, Matt Grimes, says the quality of the butchers improves every year.

"We found it hard to take points away from the contestants. The standard is impeccable, and I am blown away by the skill of our young butchers," he said.

New categories to the competition this year, Best International Practical – Young Butcher went to Alana Empson and Best International Practical - Butcher Apprentice went to Hohepa Smith.

The Pure South Sharp Blacks, a team of six of the nation's best butchers, were selected after a nomination and trial process which attracted more than 50 butchers from around the country. The team is managed by Heller's founder, Todd Heller.

This year's team members include Greg Egerton of New World Mosgiel, Abigail Lane of Neat Meat Queenstown, Phill Pirie of Clark's Organic Meat Specialists in Auckland, Matthew Spires of PAK'nSAVE Te Awamutu, Bruce van der Net of PAK'nSAVE Taupo and Corey Winder (captain) of Elite Meats in Christchurch.



Hohepa in action.



Pure South Sharp Blacks in action.



Pure South Sharp Blacks.



Alana in action.

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**MEGAN CRAIG**

*Tall Black / Mystics Netball*

**JIM DOYLE**

*Warriors CEO*

**KAPI HURIA**

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