



Sir Peter Leitch

THE NEWS LETTER

VODAFONE



Welcome to the first newsletter we have ever produced in lockdown. The first matter I need to clear up is around some speculation about my giving up the lounge.

I want to make it very clear it was my decision and no one else's - or maybe Janice had a little bit to do with it. The days of my style of humour are gone and I'm 77 very soon so my memory is not as good as it used to be either. The club said I could do the lounge for as long as I wanted to, but I thought it was time for me to give it up.

What a ride it has been running the four different lounges we used over the years. It has given me so many good memories and made so many fantastic friends, and of course none of it would have been possible without our magnificent sponsors.

Who knows when we will sort Covid-19 out? Nowadays, Janice and I are spending most of our time on Waiheke. I'm loving it, but Janice is not so keen. In the meantime, we all need to take care and look after each other because we don't know when will get back to normal? But like I always say, the main thing is that we woke up today and that makes it a bloody great day.

Don't hold your breath on the Vodafone Warriors playing at home this year though, I don't think that's going to happen because of all the current rules and costs around managed isolation.

If you have a spare second pop over to my Facebook page at Sir Peter Charles Leitch and check out some of the chats I've had over the last month or so with Stacey Jones, Adam Blair, Ruben Wiki and Motu Tony.

I've done many more over the last year and I've also caught up with three former stars in Sam Rapira, Ben Matulino and Simon Mannering over the phone, and I am hoping to catch up with them in the future to have a chat to see what they're up to now they have retired from league, which I'll also post.

Finally, can I say how courageous it was of former Kiwi international Richie Barnett to share his story on his health problems on TV the other night.

Can't wait for the season to kick off, there were some fantastic signs from the hit out against the Gold Coast Titans last weekend even though it was a low scoring affair.

So enjoy the read and go the Vodafone Warriors!!

Sir Peter Charles Leitch KNZM QSM

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



I hope you are all coping with these latest lockdown restrictions, and you and your loved ones are safe and well.

It's been a really tough year for the Vodafone Warriors, as I'm sure it has been for all of you. COVID has turned our world upside down and I fear it's not done with us just yet.

Grit, determination, good strategy in the back office, and a lot of goodwill from our staff, our members, our suppliers, and our sponsorship family have helped us get through. We're bruised and battered but we live to fight on, and we will !

We are in a much better position this year. Our step back into Australia was well planned, and this time around we could open the door and support families taking the trip with us. The team are embracing the opportunity to be "in camp" and have been developing really strong bonds that we trust will be visible in our on-field performance.

We're still working to our plan of assessing the border situation and potential home-coming over three blocks through the season. Unfortunately I can't see quarantine-free travel anytime soon, so at this stage we're planning for an extended stay in Australia. I really hope I'm wrong, because we can't wait to be back home at Mt Smart with the noise and raw energy of our fans !

Nathan Brown, Craig Hodges and Justin Morgan have settled in really well, and honestly we couldn't be happier. Sully has recruited well and we've got a strong team for 2021. Personally I'm really looking forward to Kodi and Chanel continuing to gel in the halves. They were great to watch last year and I hope they continue to bring back the exciting and dynamic attack-style of footy that the Warriors of past are remembered (and feared !).

It is true..... Roger is leaving us at the end of the season, and we'll miss him! His ability and commitment on the field is there for everyone to see, but he's much more than that off the field. He's a terrific role model and we're super proud he's worn our jersey. We sincerely wish Roger all the best in his move to rugby union. There's no doubt that Roger will want to leave the Vodafone Warriors on a high and having stamped his mark. I'll call it now; watch out – Roger will be dangerous this season!

We're working on a range of events throughout the season where we can bring fans together to watch our games and have some fun. We're also trying to bring you closer to the team in Aussie and share our stories. If you haven't seen Cameron George's Facebook Blog (on the road with the Vodafone Warriors 2021) do check it out! We'll keep you updated with events as we get the details finalised.

On behalf of everyone at the Vodafone Warriors; thanks for your love and support. We're strong and determined, and we'll make you proud!

Rob Coot
Vodafone Warriors Chairman.

MY TIME IN CAMP WITH THE VODAFONE WARRIORS



Warrior # 50 Jerry Seuseu

My name is Jerry Seuseu, I am the Wellbeing and Education Manager for the Vodafone Warriors. I'm currently in quarantine in Auckland having returned from a 6 week stay with the team in Australia. The Butch asked me to share some insights with you.

The team travelled across on the 3rd Jan while most of the country was on holidays. We spent four weeks in Tamworth based at the West Tamworth Leagues club and staying at the Mercure hotel. The boys spent the time doing very hard training and getting to know each

other a bit better... Off the field, there were cultural nights, storytelling, visits to local sites and so much more in that first 4 weeks.

The most visited place was Coles supermarket down the road. No disrespect to Tamworth but there wasn't much else to see. Most distinctive memory of Tamworth. It was Hot.. No, it was 'stinkin' HOT, the mercury was up near 40 degrees on some days, there was no gentle South Auckland breeze to keep it cool. Another thing, plenty of flies.. aggressive never say die flies too.. like your typical Howick Hornets player (just kidding).

The coaching staff led by Coach Brown are very professional and have a sunny disposition. Personally, I'm impressed with our roster for 2021, without disrespect to any previous squad you can't help but nod with approval at the current team. It think it is a very strong team and one all Warriors fans should get excited about. Our pack has depth and has a fair bit of size, talent and grunt about it. Our backs look sharp and quick, Marcelo and young Vili are players to look out for. Euan Aitkin is a very good addition. Experienced, strong and smart, and not just footy smart, he is studying an MBA this year having just finished a degree in business.

Anyway, Football Manager Dan Floyd and CEO Cameron George have done a good job of setting the boys up with good training facilities and living accommodation over in Australia. At the start of February the boys moved to Terrigal to live at the Star of the Sea (google it) the place is impressive. Dan put me in an apartment with 3 bedrooms and a roof top hosting/viewing area. I could not help but express gratitude for the experience. God is good.

So, the boys are in good hands, and are well cared for. It goes a little way towards off-setting the fact they will be away from their aiga, whanau and wider family support networks for the next few months. Im sure many of the young boys like Taniela Otukolo and Jyris Glamuzina are enjoying hanging with the older players and learning to be elite pro League players.

I had the opportunity to take my lovely wife Kim along to keep me company and so we were able to host a few dinner evenings before we returned. Having her there I realised the massive importance for the partners and families of the players to be there with them. Not just important for their wellbeing but really sets the team up for a best possible start to the 2021 season.

SO, that's my little insight into the trip over to Australia and preseason with the team.



TRAINING IN SUNNY TAMWORTH



A WORD WITH DAN FLOYD?

by David Kemeys



After a decade with the team, Vodafone Warriors football operations manager Dan Floyd is quite happy the side going under the radar in Australia.

The side's 12-12 trial match against Gold Coast was played outside the glare of the Sydney media, barely rating a mention.

The Titans will be the Warriors first-up opponents when the new NRL season proper kicks off, and they are talking up their chances of a good season in Queensland media.

Like all trial matches, Floyd cautions against reading too much into any result. "It was a chance to blood a few of the new boys and to try a few things out. I thought we went pretty well."

The former New Zealand Rugby League and Auckland Rugby League development manager moved to the Warriors under Brian McClennan and says this year's campaign is much more organised than last year's, when Covid-19 caused major disruption.

"Last year was more of a case or reacting to the situation but this year we have been able to plan much better."

And that includes getting used to the prospect of once again being unlikely to play games at Mt Smart.

"I think everyone knew that was a possibility from the moment we got on the plane to come here, so it's not a surprise and it's also not something we can control, so we just have to get on with it.

"You are seeing that around having more family around the camp, and there are others still to join. It makes the situation much better for the players because no one wants to be away from family for extended periods."

Kept busy organising the Warriors off-field operations, from training venues to liaising with the NRL, getting them to the first whistle is no small feat, and Floyd is responsible for the logistical challenge that is moving a professional sports team from Auckland to Australia.

"We're used to travelling," he says. "It's dealing with the protocols, quarantine and health requirements that throws up challenges."

Despite facing another season with the odds heavily stacked against them, Floyd says the mood in the camp is good and the players are looking forward to the season.

"We are in the background out of the spotlight and that's a good place to be with a full season ahead."





THE **KIWI** WAY™
LeagueSmart

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY LEAGUE NATIONAL 20'S COMPETITION



From New Zealand Rugby League Chief Executive - Greg Peters:



New Zealand Rugby League has kicked off 2021 with its inaugural National 20s competition, showcasing New Zealand's best U20s development talent by providing a further elite pathway for our potential future Kiwis.

This year the NZRL National Youth Tournament moves to a under 16's and 18's age group format instead of its previous 15's and 17's structure to coincide with Sport NZ's 'Balance is Better' philosophy, as well as the NSW and QLD age group competitions.

This shift in age categories means NZRL provides an additional three years of growth and development opportunities for players here in New Zealand with 16s, 18s and now 20s pathways.

We will take this a step further come 2022 by entering an NZRL U19 team into the NSW SG Ball competition.

You can catch all National 20s games live on Sky Sport as well as Fox League, Kayo and Watch NRL, providing great domestic and international coverage for our development players.

CONTINUED...

Off the field, the 'Wellbeing Waka' with Ali Lauitiiti and partners LeVa has been visiting rugby league clubs across the country to deliver suicide prevention and mental wealth workshops to Rangatahi and parents.

You can keep up to date with the Wellbeing Waka journey and upcoming locations on NZRL's Facebook page.

Despite the uncertainty around Covid-19, we are well underway with the planning of our 2021 International Calendar. A doubleheader Trans-Tasman Test is scheduled for October in Townsville against our Australian rivals, and we are working to follow that with a doubleheader Test back home against either Tonga or Samoa, all before we depart for the Rugby League World Cup (Oct 23 – Nov 27).

The Kiwi Ferns already have had a series of high-performance camps this year as they continue to build towards a successful World Cup campaign come October. Despite the pandemic's unpredictability, we are confident the Kiwis will be back in the Black and White jersey in front of fans this 2021.

*Greg Peters,
CEO - New Zealand Rugby League.*



HAVE YOU MET JENNIFER POPE?

Rugby League On the West Coast

Rugby League is still alive and competing hard with other codes on the West Coast of the South Island. Some say this is the heart of Rugby League in New Zealand and the volunteers involved down this way are working hard for it to continue to beat.

Even though the West Coast is a vast stretch down the coast line of the South Island Greymouth and Hokitika are the only towns currently playing this great sport. We have five clubs continuing to offer schoolboys games from Under 13s to Under 7's and a skills and drills programme for our Under 5 enthusiastic kids.

For our older kids we offer them games every Sunday and the die hard, strong and determined young men go out and put on a display with a high

level of skill which surprises me when they are

only playing for the love of the game. We continue to offer a gateway with the help from Southern Zone and NZRL for players who want to go on with their career with half a dozen players who either have played their schoolboy league on the coast or who travel over for trainings in the new New Zealand Under 20 South Island side.

Griffin Neame who hails from Greymouth is plying his trade in the North Queensland Cowboys system, hoping to make his debut this year. Brad Campbell is working hard in the Brisbane competition forcing his way into a Queensland cup side. We have a group of dedicated players age range from 13 – 16 who are part of our academy programme and have been training hard in the offseason to impress at an elite development camp in Christchurch in April. We may not have the biggest players but they all have big motors and won't give in and are incredibly tough.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mad Butcher for his generosity and media coverage he gives us off his own back. The Cobden Kohinoor Club received a generous box of donations, from posters, training booklets to drink bottles and a signed Warriors ball we will be able to raffle off and help raise money for this great West Coast club that Slade Griffin played for when he was young. All this goes to our young players who don't get the opportunity to support the Warriors with going to the games, and who love the sport as much as our city neighbours.

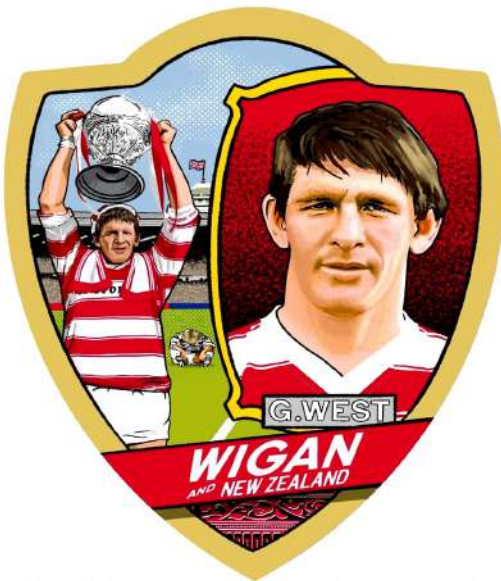
A little bit about the writer, my name is Jennifer Pope and played this great game from the age of 14 starting out for the Hokitika Pioneers on the West Coast, then Randwick Kingfishers in Wellington, moved to Brisbane, played for West Mitchelton Panthers and South Logan Magpies. I made my Queensland debut in 2005 player number 57 and made the Australian Jillaroo's team in 2007 player number 88. I am currently the Secretary for the West Coast Schoolboys Board of Control and also for the Cobden-Kohinoor Rugby League Club.



Jenny Pope - former Jillaroo #88, and Queensland #57 player.

DID YOU KNOW?

by Sir Peter Leitch...



I had this artwork sent to me by my good mate Graeme West's son in the UK .

I personally think Westie is one of our most underrated kiwi rugby league players so I thought I'd share a little bit with you...

He started playing in 1971, and his first club was Stratford. In around 1973 they decided to start a club in Hawera his hometown so he played for them.

In 1982 he signed for Wigan in the UK and went on to play 202 games for Wigan and then coached them in 1996 and had an 80% win rate . He played 17 test matches for New Zealand and captained the kiwi's in 1983 in Brisbane when they beat Australia.

He did get offers to play for other clubs including Mount Albert in 1980 and then Canberra Raiders and Illawarra in 1982. He never signed with any club as he's a very loyal man. What he is doing these days is mowing lawns and loving it. To this day, he still has a great passion for the great game of rugby League.



How many Warriors players can you name in this team?

This week's nostalgia team from the not so distant past is the Newtown Jets line-up that played in the club's first competition game in the NSWRL First Division. After returning to rugby league football in 1991, the club played in the NSWRL Metropolitan Cup competition from 1991 to 1999, winning first grade premierships in 1992, 1995, 1996 and 1997. This debut appearance in the NSWRL First Division competition was played against St George-Illawarra at Redfern Oval on Saturday, 4th March 2000.

Back row, L to R: Tere Glassie, Adam Bennett (obscured), Jason Bell (obscured), Phil Howlett, Peter Howie, Odell Manuel, Clinton Toopi, Paul Carige, David Myers, Wairangi Koopu, Terry Hermansson.

Front Row L to R: Brad Westaway, David Howlett, Clinton McAulliffe, Luke Wardle, Luke Goodwin (Capt), Tony Catton, Jared Mills, Joey Bishop, Daniel Cross, Luke Ellis.

The Newtown team's coach was Colin Murphy.

Photo supplied by the Newtown RLFC.

HAVE YOU MET GLEN HARRIS?



Name: Glenn Harris
Position: General Manager, Marketing & Business Development
Vodafone Warriors

I often get asked if I'm related to Tohu Harris... *hmmm* 🤔

I joined the Vodafone Warriors in March 2020 after 15 years with Mazda New Zealand, one of the club's major partners.

As a nation and as a Rugby League Club, nothing could have fully prepared us for the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

I'm proud to be part of the team that took strength from the Warrior's core values of resilience, courage and togetherness to withstand this challenging period and move forward as a stronger, more connected organisation that will continue to represent the very best of New Zealand on the world stage. As a proud fan of the club since 1995,

I'm excited about Season 2021 and look forward to being part of New Zealand's biggest homecoming when the team returns to Mt Smart Stadium.



VODAFONE



2021 on sale now.



THE KIWIS ASSOCIATION

the history of...

The organisation for the men who have represented New Zealand at Rugby League was formed in 1950 to officially establish an annual reunion for current and ex- players . A successful function for the 1947/48 Northern hemisphere touring team and the 1948 tourists to Australia held on the eve of the yearly North v South Island clash in 1948 was the catalyst.

The evening dinner was arranged by Jack Redwood who had been the manager of the tourists , the group having developed a tremendous sense of comradeship while away for more than seven months , the tour continuing from August 4 , 1947 until January 25 , 1948 and four weeks of travel by ship on either side of that.It was enjoyed so much that it was decided that it should become a regular fixture and a committee was elected to arrange the event in future years.

Bob Doble , manager of the 1939 Kiwi team was the first president and Vic Belsham a 1948 Kiwi tourist to Australia was secretary. With a new constitution, the Association was called The New Zealand Kiwis Assn in 1950 and it began to expand its role in promoting the code.

Players travelled to various parts of the country to play exhibition games in the free flowing style of Rugby's Barbarian matches. These games were usually in aid of building projects, field development or some other support for the code.

From 1957 on all newly selected Kiwis have been invited to join the New Zealand Kiwis Assn. In 2003 the Auckland Association reverted to the original name the NZRL Kiwis Assn and the Canterbury Association changed its name to the South Island Kiwis Assn.

The tradition of the Kiwis Association reunion still continues and an event is held annually, usually in October, and at times the current Kiwi team attends if they are in camp in Auckland prior to an overseas tour or a test in New Zealand.

The expansion of our game gives us the opportunity to include members from the Kiwi Ferns and Disabled Rugby League who have provided us with many proud memories of their success at International level. Members from all over the country, and Australia attend the reunion which is currently run by the following committee:

Chairman : Ray Haffenden MNZM

Treasurer : Brian Keane

Secretary: Juanita Woodhouse

Committee: Shane Cooper, Graeme Coutts, Fred Ah Kuoi, Brian Tracey, Alan Messenger

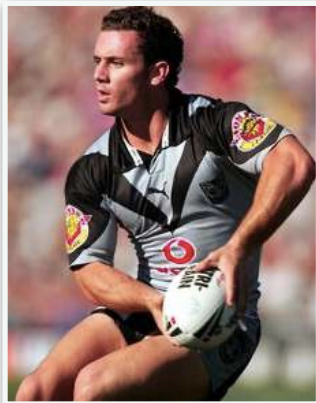
Life members : Ray Cranch MNZM, Don Hammond, Trevor Maxwell

President: Don Hammond

All enquiries to : Ray Haffenden 09 534 1026 , 027 453 7720

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

with... LANCE HOHAIA



Lance Koro Hohaia, Warrior number 99 recently sent an update to Sir Peter, here's some of what he had to say...

Hi Butch, I hope you are well.

Here is a little snippet about where I am in the world and what I have been up to recently.

I am currently living in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This will be my sixth year in the U.S. Including the four years I spent in England, I have been away from New Zealand for ten years now. It seems like yesterday that I was playing footy for the Warriors back in Auckland. I do miss home often and plan to get back there for Christmas, depending on what the world looks like at that point.

It took me a while to settle in here, but I have found my feet recently within the coaching and sports administration industry. Coaching has really helped fill the void that was present when I retired back in 2015. Although, I did take a break and step away from sport in general when I first moved here.

I wanted to focus on the kids and adjust to my new environment. After about a year and a half I started connecting with the local rugby community and things have progressed pretty quickly from there. I have been coaching rugby union full time for the past three years at the University level, or College level which is how they refer to University in the U.S. Collegiate Sport is big business here and it's really exciting being involved with the growth of rugby over the past few years.

The sport is starting to take off now and I see it continuing to grow over the coming years.

I was Head Coach for a team named Davenport University across town for two and a half years before accepting the same role at Aquinas College in January this year. Aquinas took notice of the success I had at Davenport (athletically, academically and growing the program) and recruited me to start their men's rugby program.

WELCOME TO AQ LANCE HOHAIA

AQUINAS MEN'S RUGBY
HEAD COACH



LANCE HOHAIA CONTINUED...

Aquinas have never had a rugby program at the school before and I am tasked with building the program from scratch. Being the first ever Head Coach of the team is pretty historical. It's a great opportunity for me and I am looking forward to the challenge.



Here is a link to our team webpage with a story about my acceptance of the job with the school. <https://aqsaints.com/news/2021/1/15/lance-hohaia-hired-as-aquinas-mens-rugby-head-coach.aspx>

This is a virtual tour of the school, it's an amazing campus. No need to input contact information to proceed. <https://www.youvisit.com/tour/aquinas>

later this year in August. Between now and then, my current day to day work involves recruiting student athletes to the roster, running rugby camps, generating exposure about our team/school and planning for our inaugural season.

We are recruiting both domestically and internationally for the team. We have the ability to offer academic and athletic scholarships.

It's a fantastic opportunity to get a U.S. degree and play rugby to a high level.

Anyone interested in studying and playing rugby with us can reach out to me via instagram or email me at lh006@aquinas.edu

Social media accounts to follow are below. I post regular updates about the team and my own individual activities.

Instagram:
[@lance_hohaia](https://www.instagram.com/lance_hohaia)
[@aquinasmensrugby](https://www.instagram.com/aquinasmensrugby)

Facebook:
[@Lance Hohaia](https://www.facebook.com/LanceHohaia)
[@AquinasCollegeMensRugby](https://www.facebook.com/AquinasCollegeMensRugby)

Twitter:
[@Lance Hohaia](https://twitter.com/LanceHohaia)
[@AQMensRugby](https://twitter.com/AQMensRugby)



***Talk to you soon mate,
Lance.***

RICHIE BARNETT

by Shane Hurndell



Hawks Bay Rugby League Correspondent Shane Hurndell gives us some insight of the great Richie Barnett who recently appeared on television highlighting his battles with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome / Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.

What do I remember most about former Kiwis rugby league captain Richie Barnett?

His courage under the high ball, gutsy defensive work against much bigger opponents and deceptive pace on the counter attack.

It was often easy for me to compare him with another Kiwis fullback from a couple of decades earlier, Gary Kemble, who had similar attributes. As courageous as Barnett, now 48, was during his six-year international career and 51-match 118-game NRL career spread across the Cronulla Sharks and Sydney Roosters clubs he admits situations he found himself in on the field don't compare with the tough battles he has fought off the field.

Those battles with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome were highlighted on Television One's Check Up programme this week.

"Nothing could prepare me for these tough times. It's the toughest situation I have found myself in," the Sky Television broadcaster admitted. Barnett was the victim of a devastating on-field head butt in 2000. It resulted in 10 plates being inserted into his face during a complete facial reconstruction.

"But I would rather go through that again than go through ME. Hands down. Because you know there's a start and there's an end," Barnett told the programme.

Barnett's wife Carrie said not knowing what was happening was tough on her. Her husband experienced brain fog, lost energy and positivity, depression and emotional chronic fatigue.

"It was hard to explain and very misunderstood," Carrie said.

"I lost my purpose. There were times when I thought it was better off not saying anything," Barnett explained. Medical advisors have told him management plans including sleeping plans are crucial in helping him cope with the illness.

Plans can be tailored for the individual. While the illness is difficult to diagnose people can get on top of it if they seek help and make plans.

"There is hope. I do things which make me happy and that helps," Barnett said.

It isn't surprising that Barnett was chosen to be the face of the Associated New Zealand ME Society (ANZMES) in 2013. He is displaying the same courage in this role as he on the field during his playing days.



THE MAIL BAG...

Sir Peter,

Just a big call out to all the members of the Sir Peter Leitch club who were part of the whanau in the Stacey Jones lounge over the years.

We have had some fantastic times in the lounge and Pete has been outstandingly entertaining. I hope you all enjoyed the journey.

I especially enjoyed guiding many of you around on the Mt Smart Stadium Mad Butcher museum tours. I also want to acknowledge the manaakitanga (hospitality) received from the staff of the mighty Vodafone Warriors.

I trust you and your family are safe and well in this COVID environment.

And finally to Sir Peter Leitch and Lady Janice thank you.

Your sometimes cultural advisor and friend.

Dexter (Wellington)

Sir Peter,

A real treat getting your call today. You are always so positive and humble. Yes we both are talkers, no doubt annoying at times for your Janice and my Sarah.

Stay in touch, love to receive your newsletters via email.

Andrew Wilson (UK)

Butch,

Hope you're well mate. I'm looking forward to kick-off next week. Can't wait to see our team in action.

Some good points out of last weeks trial (12 of them) but we need more. I hope Euan Aitkin finally gives us some much needed defence in the centres too. Ken needs all the help he can get.

Danny G. (Hamilton)

Keep the faith Danny!

Butch,

It seems like the Warriors will continue to struggle to attract top talent - Jahrome Hughes has rejected a 'lucrative' offer to join the club at the end of his Storm contract.

Any chance you can come out of retirement and offer them a meat pack or two to change their minds?

R. Thompson (Auckland)

Mate - as much as I would love to Janice would kill me!

Sir,

It was great to read on NRL.com how former Warrior Russell Packer has turned his life around and completed a Master of Business & Bachelor of Commerce.

He's now fulfilling the potential many people knew he had.

AJ Fretwell (Wellington)

Yes mate he's doing very well. Did you know he was the Dux of his high school? Its a great story

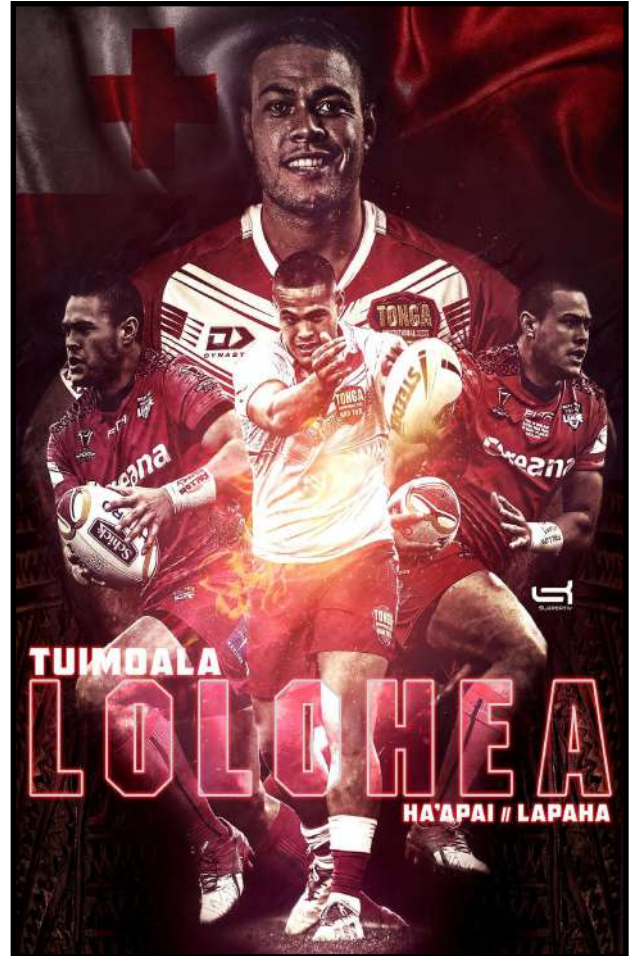
Too many rules!

Why does the NRL feel they have to add new rules every year? I can't keep up anymore (and neither can some of the players form the looks of it!)

Keep the scrums - just enforce the rules and penalise the buggers if they break too early.

Sid (Taranaki).

Thanks Sid, I keep my life simple and follow 2 rules,
1. Listen to my wife.
2. See rule number 1



Former Warriors player - Tui Lolohea, now turning out for the Salford Red Devils in the UK Super League.

I love watching the UK Super League and seeing all of the Pacific Island talent running around. Fingers crossed, there will be a Rugby League World Cup at the end of the year in England.

FOLLOW ME ON SOCIAL MEDIA:



@sirmadbutcher



Sir Peter Charles Leitch



@sirmadbutcher