



Sir Peter Leitch Club

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Newsletter

25th July 2017

#180

Vodafone Warriors v Cowboys



Roger Tuivassa-Sheck passes.



Mason Lino steps Cowboys Te Marie Martin. Everyone thought Mason made a great comeback after two years away from the top squad.



Bunty Afoa charges through.



Jason Taumalolo taken down by a pack of Warriors.

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz

This Game Just Isn't Fair

By David Kemeys

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



IT REALLY could only happen to us. Seconds ticking by and hanging in there, up goes the bomb in a last chance desperate attempt to cross the line and possibly even up the scores at the death.

But we spill it, an opposing Cowboy sweeps it up and runs the length of the pitch to consign us to a defeat.

There's nothing else to do except laugh.

If you scripted it, it would not end more tragically than that.

To say the rub of the green seldom goes our way is an understatement, and that goes, at the risk of blaming refs, for the whistlers too, since both second half penalties that led to Cowboys tries were, to say the least, soft.

I thought we actually played well, especially given our injury circumstances, and despite the loss, it was one of the more enjoyable watches of late.

At least we stayed in the contest, ground it out, played with courage and didn't quit, and that is as much as I ask.

Clinging to anything positive, it might be something to build on at least ahead of the Cronulla Sharks visit this week.

That's three straight losses, even if this one, 24-12 at the death, flattered the Cowboys, because by and large our defence was actually quite good.

Everyone says the Cowboys can't win without their talisman Johnathan Thurston, but that is four on the trot, so everyone is wrong. Credit to them, they were excellent and would not give an inch.

Everyone also says that is us up the well-known creek without a paddle, staring down the barrel of our sixth straight failure to make the top eight.

I have vowed to remain optimistic.

Last week I admitted my stupidity, revisiting my bold prediction of two weeks earlier that we would need five wins from our remaining eight, and start by beating the Panthers but losing to the Cowboys.

That was a misprint I admitted last week, and should have said we would lose both, but beat the Sharks, the Knights away, and the Raiders at Mt Smart.

This game is easy, three in a row, but by then we will be so full of confidence we will smash the Bunnies, and Manly, and tip over the Tigers for an astonishing 12 points from a possible 12, and go into the finals unbackable favourites on form.

I tell you what, this optimism lark is hard work.

Optimists' view, on life support; realists' view, reaching for the plug; pessimists' view, tripped over the cord and accidentally pulled it out ages ago.

Kearney Vows To Keep Fighting

Hard to imagine he was going to say much else, but coach Stephen Kearney is hanging on in there and vowing not to quit. "If there is a possibility, then we'll keep fighting."

Bloody oath mate, we will fight them on the beaches...and all that stuff.

The performance against the Cowboys was good, so there is an outside chance we can lift, and Kearney was focussed on that. "The effort and the energy was there and if we can repeat that then we'll give ourselves an opportunity on Friday."

Foran Answers Critics

Nice to see Kieran Foran put in a decent shift, though I have to admit, I have not been his biggest fan either, so I can hardly pour cold water on former Kiwis boss Frank Endacott- who goes by the nickname Happy Frank – but who was anything but, when talking about the Bulldogs bound playmaker last week.

He questioned Foran's commitment to the cause, and in his defence, he would not have been a lone voice given that Foran has not exactly shone of late.

But Foran, apart from having the ball knocked from his grip when over the line (when I may have used several uncomplimentary phrases) , had a good game, kicking well and directing traffic too, taking some of the heat off Mason Lino, in after a two-year absence from first grade because of Shaun Johnson's injury.

The pair generally combined well, although it has to be said our fifth tackle options were not always what they could have been.

And that summed up our night really, attack letting us down at crucial stages.

I don't Care What Anyone Says...he Ain't Worth \$10 Million

Ahead of the game the media did the obvious and went to talk to Jason Taumalolo about how close he really came to crossing the Tasman and swapping the Cowboys for the Warriors.

Who knows how accurate it is, but there has always been talk we offered him a \$2 million contract in 2015, but he stayed, so we went again, with what you would have to assume was a better offer.

The Cowboys countered with 10-year deal worth \$10 million – or so it is said.

“They wanted me,” Taumalolo told the Courier Mail. “But I saw where the club was heading. I enjoy where I am and how I play. I didn't want to change that.”

Pardon me, but bullshit.

It would be a hell of a lot more believable, and good luck to him if the Cowboys are willing to pay it, if he just said: “\$10 million. Do I look like an idiot?”

He might well be the biggest metre-eater in the game, but \$10 million. That's just plain crazy.

Doubts Creep In For Kata

I was astonished to read the excellent Michael Burgess piece at the weekend that revealed our centre Solomone Kata had contemplated chucking it all in, after dealing with injuries and some off-field issues too.

Bloody hell, he is only 22, so he must have been in a dark place.

“I was really close. It was hard, physically and mentally. I had a few problems with myself and my family.”

You wouldn't wish it on your worst enemy, and here we all are, imagining it is all beer and skittles being a professional athlete.

To be fair, he did shine in his debut year, then did even better in his second season, but has found things a bit tougher this year, just one try in 11 games, though he added two more against Penrith.

If you did not know Kata was away in Tonga recently for the funeral of his brother, you must have been living in a cave. But he spent some of his time at home talking to his mum and dad, and immersing himself in family time.

Before I went there were too many things on my mind and I couldn't handle it.”

It reminds us it is way to easy to forget these are young men dealing with everyday life issues, as the well as the pressure-cooker environment of NRL footy, so I for one wish him all the best.

Cruel Blow For Gavet

We just can not catch a break can we?

Well I say that, but poor old James Gavet, who has been one of the pluses in a year when we have not had too many, certainly can, although he will wish he didn't, out for six weeks or so with a broken arm.

He has probably been our best front-rower this season, now he has joined Shaun Johnson in the not my season is over club.

Apparently he hurt his arm against Penrith, but a break did not show up in the x-rays after the game, and in something you would absolutely expect of a man who just would not quit this year, he went to training during the week.

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Hardly surprisingly, he was a bit sore, and further x-rays revealed a fracture.

It is one hell of an injury ward- Gavet, Johnson, Ryan Hoffman, Charlie Gubb, Nathaniel Roache, Albert Vete, and I've heard the tea lady isn't feeling well either.

We still have four, probably meaningless games, to go, and we certainly is the fire and consistency Gavet has brought this year.

He has averaged more than 100 running metres a game, as well as almost 20 tackles.

Debut For Satae

Every cloud has a silver lining, and Gavet's injury opened the door for Tongan-born Chris Satae, who became Warrior No 219 against the Cowboys, and I thought he made a pretty good fist of it too.

I will confess to not knowing much about him, but at 192cm and 115kg there is plenty of the 24-year-old.

He played NYC for Penrith in 2012 and has been going well in our Intrust Super Premiership side so certainly earned his call-up.

Women In League

A lot gets written and said about Women in League, an initiative I personally support for a very simple reason, my wife loves coming to watch the Warriors. But there are still too many incidents where clubs let themselves down, and not too many clubs have women represented at a high level. Raelene Castles at the Bulldogs is an obvious exception, but look what happened to her.

The Vodafone Warriors do, with Nikki Schuck on the board.

Now I need to declare that my path crossed Nikki's during my time in the media and I think she is one damned smart cookie, and quite apart from that, was always good fun to be around, and she had a pretty well-honed bullshit detector too.

Her introduction to league came in a pre-season game in Invercargill of all places, when the boys played the Dogs, and she was hooked.

Nikki has worked with the club for a long time, but was still a bit taken aback when she was asked to join the board. She reckons she can't keep still when she

watches them play and must be a nightmare to sit alongside.

But she has some advice for anyone, male or female, looking to get involved in the game.

"Recognise what your skills are, build your networks, and look for opportunities that allow you to showcase your skills. There are lessons for any new board, so understand what the organisation is looking to you for, listen, and most of all have the courage to ask questions."

Women in League, more than just splashing a bit of pink on your jersey...

You Go Ricky

Now let's get one thing clear from the start, I think Ricky Stuart is an angry little man with a chip on his shoulder and a big gob, but that does not mean an angry little man with a chip on his shoulder and a big gob can not be right from time to time.

He went off – surprise, surprise - after the Storm beat his Raiders, launching a five-minute tirade against the officials, which if nothing else was hugely amusing to watch online.

In what must have been the weekend's biggest understatement, the NRL said it was likely to come under scrutiny.

You think!

Little Rick reckoned he copped about 50 texts slating the refs after the 20-14 loss, and called out the refs and their boss Tony Archer, who I have always believed is denying a village somewhere a good idiot.

I will go he if Ricky does not cop a fine, and a decent one, which incidentally, will be his 11th in 14 years as a coach, although Michael Maguire, Trent Barrett, Nathan Brown and Des Hasler have all done something similar this year and got away with it.

It pains me to say it, Ricky is right. It is obvious the NRL fines the hell out of him to shut him up, but he has a point. The NRL refs, and the bunker in particular, never have to explain themselves, when patently obviously many of the decisions are rubbish.

I've been sick of it for a long, long time, and I'm not the only one.

"I'm accountable. I've got to sit here every friggin' week and answer questions. Let's make everyone in the game accountable."

Rodney Is In Big Trouble

Ricky blaming refs wasn't the only controversy in the Storm v Raiders encounter, Iosia Soliola nearly taking Billy Slater's head off in a blatant late and high shot.

But how is Melbourne Storm CEO Dave Donaghy saying publically that his club will be asking the NRL serious questions about why Soliola wasn't sin-binned or sent-off, different from Stuart questioning the refs?

Sure, he might be doing it a hell of a lot more politely, and the video evidence is certainly on his side, but it is still casting aspersions.

Slater was left unconscious after Soliola whacked him, and was stretchered off, something none of us want to see.

Soliola was put on report and can expect a hefty punishment unless he has Perry Mason as his lawyer, but Donaghy was all over Twitter during the game.

The incident has caused outrage in Oz, Andrew Johns saying he fears for the future of the game calling it a cheap shot that should have seen the Raider marched. "What about mums sitting at home watching that, what are they going to think?"

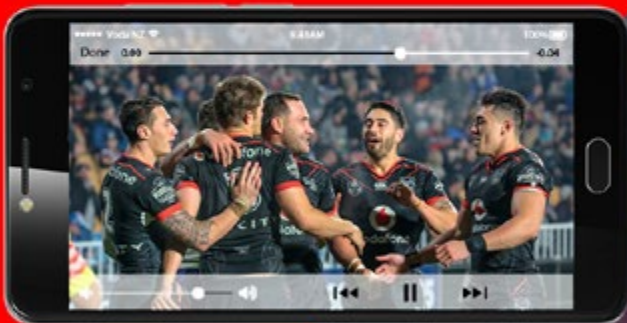
The ref was Matt Cecchin, and his boss – the afore-mentioned Tony Archer – has not hesitated to throw him under the bus, saying it was a clear sending-off.

So then, the angry little man is right, you all do need to be accountable?

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Lino named to replace Johnson

by Richard Becht

AN UNCHANGED Vodafone Warriors side has been named to face defending premier Cronulla in Friday night's 21st-round NRL clash at Mount Smart Stadium (8.00pm kick-off).

With second rower Ryan Hoffman (foot) and hooker Nathaniel Roache (hamstring) still sidelined, head coach Stephen Kearney has stayed with the same line-up which went all the way with North Queensland before losing 12-24 last Saturday night.

It means halfback Mason Lino, who had his first NRL outing in almost two years last week, will again be teamed in the halves with Kieran Foran while big front rower Chris Satae is retained on the interchange after his cameo role on debut against the Cowboys.

"Mason brought a lot of energy to the team and Chris did exactly what we expected of him," said Kearney.

Besides directing the team, Lino (23) ran the ball nine times for 90 metres, was the dominant kicker making 249 metres from 12 kicks, made 15 tackles and had the team's most supports with 25.

Used off the bench for 10 minutes, Satae (24) marked his appearance as Vodafone Warrior #219 with four strong carries for 50 metres and made eight tackles without a miss and no errors.

Kearney was full of admiration for the effort the Vodafone Warriors delivered against the Cowboys while disappointed with some of the execution.

Among those who excelled was Foran who had the most runs (24) and made the most metres (176) as well as having a vital hand in each of the side's tries scored by Bunty Afoa and Simon Mannering.

Back rowers Mannering, Afoa and Bodene Thompson all played the full 80 minutes with Mannering again making a colossal contribution. He finished with 54 tackles lifting his tally to 221 tackles in the

last four games (an average of 55.25 a game); his total for the season is 719, fifth highest among all players so far. He also made 133 metres as well as scoring his 62nd career try.

Wing David Fusitu'a and Thompson will this week extend their sequences of appearing in every match this season while Jacob Lillyman, Sam Lisone, Issac Luke, Ken Maumalo, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck and the now-injured Shaun Johnson have missed just one game.

The Vodafone Warriors have enjoyed reasonable success over Cronulla during their history with a 16-20 win-loss record in 36 encounters. In 16 matches at Mount Smart Stadium they have a 9-7 edge but the Sharks have won seven of the last nine matches between the two sides.

VODAFONE WARRIORS v CRONULLA SHARKS *Mount Smart Stadium, Auckland* 8.00pm, Friday, July 28

Vodafone Warriors

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Roger Tuivasa-Sheck c | Interchange: |
| 2 David Fusitu'a | 14 Mafoa'aeata Hingano |
| 3 Blake Ayshford | 15 Sam Lisone |
| 4 Solomone Kata | 16 Ligi Sao |
| 5 Ken Maumalo | 17 Chris Satae |
| 6 Kieran Foran | 18 Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad |
| 7 Mason Lino | 20 James Bell |
| 8 Jacob Lillyman | 21 Jazz Tevaga |
| 9 Issac Luke | 22 Isaiah Papali'i |
| 10 Ben Matulino | |
| 11 Bodene Thompson | |
| 12 Bunty Afoa | |
| 13 Simon Mannering | |

30 Years Ago: Lang Park Boilover

By John Coffey QSM

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



LANG PARK (now Suncorp Stadium) has been the scene of many great Kiwis successes. It all began in 1963 with a spectacular 16-13 Second Test win. There was the one-off 1983 Test when the Kiwis performed a post-match victory haka and Rugby League Week reported they “Danced on the Graves of the Invincibles,” the nickname given the unbeaten 1982 Kangaroos in Britain and France. And, of course, the resounding New Zealand triumphs in the 2008 World Cup final and the 2010 Four Nations final. Thirty years ago an unheralded coach and his team of “no names” also earned their position of honour on that hallowed turf in Brisbane.

Rotorua-based Tony Gordon, himself a former Kiwi, was chosen from ten candidates to succeed Graham Lowe as Kiwis coach in 1987, when New Zealand was due to host France. But the French pulled out of their scheduled tour and the NZRL hastily arranged to play two warm-up matches in Australia and one-off Tests in Papua New Guinea and Brisbane. New Zealand did not have an abundance of overseas-based professionals to call upon and the list shortened alarmingly when captain Mark Graham retired, Dane Sorensen was injured, and Kurt Sorensen and Kevin Tamati had stayed in Europe rather than return to play France.

No sooner had the Kiwis been named than they heard captain-elect Hugh McGahan (Eastern Suburbs) had suffered a severe shoulder injury in Sydney. Fullback Darrell Williams (Manly) was also ruled out of the PNG Test because of a leg injury. But Gordon had great faith in his amateur home-based players, bolstered only by outside backs Dean Bell (Wigan) and Mark Elia (St Helens). Bell led the Kiwis to beat Northern Rivers (NSW) 44-12, Queensland 22-16 and the PNG Kumuls 36-22. Teenaged centre Kevin Iro scored a world record 20 points, including three tries, on Test debut, while Elia and Bell crossed for two tries each.

Intensive treatment by doctor Lloyd Drake and physio Glenn Gallagher was required before McGahan, Williams, Shelford and Friend were cleared to play the Kangaroos. Gordon then dropped a bombshell by omitting Canberra prop Brent Todd, his only overseas-based tight forward. Front-rowers Ross Taylor, Wayne Wallace and Shelford had all come through the grades with the Hornby club in Canterbury. They, and most of their mates, were stepping up from amateur football while the Australians had not only been unbeaten on their off-season tour of Britain and France but had been primed for action by a tough State of Origin series.

The guys in green and gold were a Who’s Who of Australian rugby league: Garry Jack, Michael O’Connor, Gene Miles, Brett Kenny, Dale Shearer, Wally Lewis (captain), Peter Sterling, Greg Dowling, Royce Simmons, Peter Tunks, Wayne Pearce, Bryan Niebling, Bob Lindner and reserves Brian Johnston and Les Davidson. Coach Don Furner admitted he was having trouble motivating them to take on the seemingly rag-tag bunch from across the Tasman. Down in the other Lang Park dressing room Gordon, a former soldier, was stirring up his men by playing a tape recording of the rousing wartime Maori Battalion song.

The Kiwis were Darrell Williams, Mark Elia, Kevin Iro, Dean Bell, Gary Mercer, Shane Cooper, Clayton Friend, Ross Taylor, Wayne Wallace, Adrian Shelford, Mark Horo, Sam Stewart, Hugh McGahan (captain) and reserves Gary Freeman and Dean Lonergan. Most of them were to go on to illustrious professional careers in Australia or Britain, their deeds on the famous 1987 night in Brisbane inevitably attracting the talent scouts. None of that would have been on their minds when Sterling darted over for an early try, converted by O’Connor, for a six-point lead. But the Australians did not score again.

Incredibly, the Kiwis led by 13-6 at halftime and by 13-6 at fulltime. Taylor supported a Stewart break for the first New Zealand try. Mercer crossed for the second, created by McGahan and Bell. Just before halftime Cooper kicked the field goal which completed the scoring. A third Kiwis try had seemed certain, until New Zealand referee Neville Kesha ruled a forward pass between Friend and Cooper, when Cooper and Bell were in the clear. At halftime Gordon laid it on thick, exhorting his players to “be proud to be Kiwis and be prepared to die for the next 40 minutes.” The chastised Kangaroos came back breathing fire.

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But the Kiwis were just as resolute on defence and refused to buckle under pressure. Despite Wallace taking the only tight head, they had possession from just three of the eleven fiercely contested scrums. McGahan damaged his shoulder again in his first game for a month. Yet he never flinched, passing and tackling with one arm, two when he could stand the pain. Bell was named Man of the Match. The Kiwis again “danced on the graves of the Invincibles” by performing another victory haka. The Aussies licked their wounds, none more so than Wally Lewis, who was hospitalised with bruising to his neck and leg after a heavy first-half knock.

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By Miles Davis

Tawera Nikau passes during the rugby league match between NZ Maori and Papua New Guinea, 09 October, 1996. Photo www.photosport.nz

Tawera Nikau

HUNTLY IS renowned for its coal but it has also unearthed some rugby league diamonds. None more prominent than Tawera Nikau.

Nikau learned his craft at the Otago Scorpions before spells in the UK with York Wasps and Sheffield Eagles before the dynamic loose forward was signed by Castleford Tigers.

He was to spend 5 years with the Yorkshire outfit playing over 160 games. In his first season he helped his side to the Challenge Cup Final at Wembley. Unfortunately it wasn't to be a winning appearance as Castleford went down 28-12 to a Wigan side including fellow Kiwis Dean Bell and Frano Botica.

2 years later Nikau was to get a chance for revenge when Castleford faced Wigan in the 1994 Regal Trophy final at Headingley. This time the league gods were on his side as Castleford romped to a 33-2 win with Nikau helping himself to a try (Tony Kemp was also a member of that side).

In 1995 Nikau moved to Australia after signing for the Cronulla Sharks. Once again his presence was to inspire success within his team as the Sharks made the Super League Grand Final in 1997, going down 26-8 to the Brisbane Broncos.

After 61 games for the Sharks he signed for the fledgling Melbourne Storm in 1998 and was a major influence in the side as they made it through to the 1999 Grand Final. With his side 14-0 down at half time to the St George Dragons, Nikau put in an inspirational second half effort to lift the Storm to an unlikely 20-18 victory.

At the end of the 1999 season he returned to the UK and played 2 seasons for the Warrington Wolves.

Renowned for his fighting spirit on the field, Nikau was to show even stronger resolve to overcome tragedies off it. In 2001 he tragically lost his wife and was left with 2 children to look after. 2 years later he was to lose his right leg in a motorcycle accident.

The measure of the man is that he did not let the loss of a leg hinder him. In 2004 he took part in the charity boxing event Fight for Life. As if that was not enough he then ran the New York Marathon, helping an arthritic Frank Bunce complete the course.

In his career he also played 19 times for the Kiwis scoring 4 tries and would undoubtedly have made more appearances but for a period of absence for personal reasons. He was inducted into the NZRL Legends of League in 2008.

Nikau now runs a corporate training company and is on the board of New Zealand Rugby League.

No-one who saw him play will forget his powerful, intimidating persona on the field and there is no doubting his inner strength off the field.

1994 Regal Trophy Final Castleford v Wigan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLpvau2rjNQ>

1999 NRL Grand Final Melbourne v St George
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETgWxcurqlk>

Tawera Nikau discusses living in England
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHOGRZ_Fqvc

Tawera is a naughty boy and gets sent off for Warrington v Wigan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAFL7jRdEuE>

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

By Barry Ross



The past week has seen some GOOD mixed in with some BAD and UGLY things in our game. Newcastle Knights half, Trent Hodkinson cannot be praised enough for taking 15 year old terminally ill, Hannah Rye, to her school formal last Wednesday night. Hannah is a pupil at Kurri Kurri High and the school brought forward the school formal by several months so Hannah could attend. She was diagnosed with Ewings Sarcoma when she was only 13 years of age. Hodkinson, 29, is a Rugby League veteran and has played 150 first grade game and scored 587 points since coming into first grade with Manly in 2010. He then had five years with the Bulldogs and is currently playing his second season with the Knights. He has played six State of Origin matches with NSW, including the three in the 2014 series win. To take the young lady to her formal was a selfless and very caring act and he and the school deserve congratulations.

One of our games nice guys celebrated his 300th first grade game on Friday night with a solid performance in his team's 26-12 win. Cronulla's Luke Lewis turns 34 in about two weeks on 11 August and at Shark Park on Friday night against South Sydney, he became the 28th player to reach the 300th NRL game mark. Since coming into first grade with Penrith in 2001, he has played 208 games with the Pasnthers and 92 for the Sharks. He has represented Australia in 16 Tests and NSW in 17 State of Origins, while he has a Grand Final win with both Penrith and Cronulla. With 116 first grade tries to his credit the popular veteran aims to pick up more this season and also next year, as he has re-signed with the Sharks in 2018.

The NSW womens team retained the Interstate Challenge Shield with their 22-6 win over their Queensland counterparts in Wollongong on Sunday. A physical and high standard game, it was a fitting spectacle on the Women in League round. Played before the Dragons-Manly clash at WIN Stadium, the NSW ladies scored five tries to one, with 19 year old Cronulla-Caringbah winger, Jessica Sergis, collecting three of these. NSW won the clash, 8-4 on the Gold Coast last year and in 2015 it was a 4-all draw at Townsville. Before that, from 1999 to 2014, Queensland had won 16 successive Shields with their last win, 26-10 at Leichhardt Oval on 19 July 2014. There were eight mothers on the field from both sides at Wollongong on Sunday and this season, there are more than 12, 000 females playing Rugby League in NSW. For the first time, 30 girls have been signed to contracts by the NSW Rugby League this year. They were paid to be in camp and were paid to play against Queensland.

There was a nice father-son touch at WIN Stadium during the Dragons 52-22 win over Manly on Sunday. Dragons ball boy, 6 year old Brayden Widdop, is the son of five eighth and goalkicker, Gareth Widdop. The Dragons star bagged 20 points on Sunday with a try and eight goals from nine attempts and when young Brayden took the kicking tee out for the conversion after his father's 80 metre try, he gave his dad a hug before the conversion attempt. Now 28, Widdop has played 156 NRL matches and scored 670 points from 37 tries, 258 goals and six field goals. He played four seasons with the Storm and is now in his fourth season with St. George/Illawarra. In 2012 he was a member of the Storm's Grand Final winning team and also a member of the Melbourne side who beat Leeds in the World Club Championship at Leeds in February 2013. Born in Halifax England, Widdop came to Australia with his parents when he was 16 and since then, he has played 21 Tests for England.

On the BAD side of the ledger, can anyone explain to me why Cowboys centre, Kane Linnett, was not sin-binned about 10 minutes before halftime in the game against the Warriors at Townsville on Saturday night? He had tackled and then held up Warriors half, Mason Lino, over the tryline. When referring it to the Bunker, the referee said that it was no try and Lino was held up, but added that Linnett was offside. In other words an offside man had prevented a try. In the very least it should have been a sin-bin and a penalty try should have been considered. Late in the Dragons-Manly game at Wollongong on Sunday, a Dragons forward interfered with a Manly forward close to the line as he chased after a grubber kick. When sending it to the Bunker the referee said, if a try wasn't scored by another Manly player a penalty would be awarded against the Dragons and the offender sent to the bin.

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This wasn't done as both the two Manly men, who were involved in chasing the kick, were in front of the grubber kicker and so offside. But the referee intended to use the sin bin, but this wasn't the case in Townsville. Yet again this is a lack of consistency by the whistle blowers and a bad look for Rugby League. It was also a bad thing when referee boss, Tony Archer came out just two hours after the Raiders-Storm match in Canberra on Saturday night to say that the lead referee, Matt Cecchin, was wrong in not sending off Raiders forward, Sia Soliola for his tackle on Bill Slater. It is not the first time this year that Archer has admitted his men have made mistakes.

The Warriors gave everything they had against the Cowboys for the full 80 minutes of the game. The scoreline was not a true reflection of their efforts and the fifty-fifty calls went mostly to the home team.

The UGLY was the Soliola tackle. To see Slater lying prone on the ground for several minutes and then being taken off the ground on a minicab, was terrible. To me there was no doubt the Raiders forward should have been marched and as Storm coach, Craig Bellamy said, "if that wasn't a send-off I don't know what is." Several commentators and others tried to lighten the situation, by saying Slater was falling, but whatever happened, the contact was a swinging arm to the head. In modern times with concussion such a big deal, all contact to the head should be examined closely.

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It's Not Over Until the Calculator Says So

By Miles Davis



ANOTHER DISAPPOINTING result for the Vodafone Warriors has seen many give up all hope of a play-off spot but where there's life, there's hope.

My philosophy comes from decades of supporting a football team that regularly battles against relegation. You start getting your calculator out with about a dozen games left in the season. Logic tells you that your team has not shown signs of turning their fortunes around but as long as the maths indicates that salvation is a possibility your mind convinces you that things are going to change for the good. The only time you give up is when the gap between your team and safety can no longer be bridged by potential points gained in your remaining games.

I encourage all Vodafone Warriors fans to employ the same positive (some may say delusional) attitude towards this NRL season.

Currently the gap between the Vodafone Warriors and the top 8 is 6 points but there are 12 points still to play for. There are many examples in the history of the club that a poor run has been followed by a winning streak so why not now? Of course they will also be relying on other teams to have the odd stumble but such is the competitive nature of the NRL that most games could go either way.

Of course one could choose to be pragmatic and be miserable for the next few weeks waiting for the season to be over or one could choose to spend that time in anticipation of a stunning run of results. Until my calculator tells me that all hope is lost I am looking on the bright side.

Go Away Ricky

As a player I had nothing but admiration for the skills and tenacity of Ricky Stuart. As a coach I have nothing but contempt for him. A coach should be a leader of men, he should set a positive tone for his team and lead by example. Stuart does anything but. He is unable to take any adverse decision or result without venting his spleen and looking for someone else to blame. His lack of dignity in defeat is as poor as any sporting coach I have seen.

His abusive attack on referee Ashley Klein and rugby league official Stuart Cummings the morning after his Kangaroos 2008 World Cup Final defeat to the Kiwis was typical. This is a man who has been fined 10 times for his inability to conduct himself in a mature and gracious manner.

I am sure there will be those who enjoy Stuart's post-match rants and feel he is in the right but all I see is an obnoxious oaf who lacks the decorum and personal growth to be a true leader.

North To Alaska By John Holloway

WAY BACK in 1960 (for those that can remember) Johnny Horton sang
Where the river is windin big nuggets they're findin, North to Alaska go North the rush is on...

And that's where High Tackle is headin so no column this week or the next few weeks sorry Team.

Cruising in Alaska to celebrate 50 fun packed years of wedded bliss and not a crossed word between us.

OK Had my bags packed for me once or twice when Richmond footy training lasted till 4 in the morning but hey thats life eh!!

Might send The Butcher a pic or two in my travels...look after the mighty Warriors for me, will be watching from afar on my Warriors and League Live apps.

Back mid August.

Ka kite ano, High-Tackle Holloway.

Jack Knuckey Memorial Day

By Shane Hurdell
Hawkes Bay Today Sports Reporter



MENTION THE name Jack Knuckey at any rugby league gathering on either side of the Tasman Sea and you will get a lengthy response.

As former Kiwi Howie Tamati said when Taranaki league stalwart and former New Zealand Maori selector Knuckey died in 2009 at the age of 60:

“Wherever you go in rugby league circles everyone knows Jack Knuckey.”

For that reason and many more a huge crowd is expected at the Jack Knuckey Memorial Day to be held at Waitara’s Clifton Park on August 5. The club Knuckey played for, Waitara Bears, will be taking on the club he would later coach to several Taranaki Premiership titles, Western Suburbs, in a premier match from from 2.30pm and a reserve grade game from 1pm.

The prestigious Tai Ngaia Challenge Shield will be up for grabs for the first time in several seasons.

Former Bears captain and current Taranaki coach Alan Jackson said relatives of Knuckey’s are returning home from Australia to play in the games.

“I’m predicting there will be a massive crowd because the day is for Jack. People will remember the fierce rivalry between the Bears and Suburbs in the 80s when Jack was coaching Suburbs. It won’t be like that ... this is going to be more of a festive occasion to remember Jack.”

Knuckey first played for the Bears premiers as a teenager before moving to Auckland to play for the Otahuhu club. During that two-year stint he gained New Zealand under-19 selection.

When standoff Knuckey who was known as “the hit man” returned to Taranaki he went on to play 97 games over 14 seasons for the province. He was a Central Districts rep from 1979 to 1983.

Knuckey told me in 1987 he considered being part of a Central Districts team which beat Auckland over four consecutive seasons as one of the highlights of his playing career. The other was playing for the New Zealand Maori team in 1977 which went on to win the Pacific Cup Series.

He became a New Zealand Maori team selector in 1994. His successful Suburbs teams of the late 1980s included former Kiwis hooker and New Zealand Maori captain Barry Harvey and former New Zealand Maori prop Henry Katene.

I remember Jack not only as a successful coach and selector but as a father figure to so many. He would do anything for anybody.

He would regularly drop paua, crayfish, whitebait and kahawai to me during my days in the Naki. He told me to share it with my mates in the Taranaki Herald office and at one stage four of us were playing for Suburbs ... “anything for a feed of Jack’s kaimoana” the boys used to say.

There will be plenty of reminiscing in Waitara on August 5.

Knuckey always stressed the importance of discipline when he was coaching. I was disappointed with the discipline lapses from the Warriors in an otherwise commendable display as they lost 24-12 to the Cowboys in Townsville on Saturday night.

These lapses cost them at vital times in a loss which extinguished the playoff hopes. However the turning point for me was when standoff Kieran Foran had the ball knocked out of his grasp as he was about to score by Cowboys secondrower Gavin Cooper.

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This was a huge play from Cooper. While Foran had his best game since the round 14 win against the Titans six weeks earlier kudos must be heaped on “Mr Consistent” Simon Mannering. His try which tied the score at 12-all was a beauty and he finished the game with 41 tackles.

An ideal way for the Warriors to bounce back will be a win against the reigning premiers Cronulla in Auckland on Fridaynight. After the Townsville trip there should be no shortage of belief.

It was a quiet weekend on the rugby league scene in Hawke’s Bay. However the start of the Spring Comp isn’t far away and the whisper is eight premier teams will be in action.

Hopefully more information will be available on this for next week’s newsletter.

The Bay’s sole Kiwi Ferns training squad member, Chanel Huddleston, will be in Auckland this weekend for another training camp in the countdown to World Cup selection.

She should go close.

Jack was a personal friend of mine. Not only was a great Rugby League man he was a genuinely great person.
- Sir Peter Leitch



Former Taranaki rugby league stalwart Jack Knuckey played almost 100 games for the province.

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Glenora Retain The Roope Rooster For Final Defence

By Talei Anderson



THE GLENORA Bears have successfully retained the Konica Minolta Roope Rooster Challenge Trophy in their fourth defence last Saturday, winning 18-10 over Mt Albert at Harold Moody Reserve in Round 15 of the SAS Fox Memorial Premiership.

Their victory at home coupled with Howick's loss against Northcote moves them to second place on the competition ladder and only one defence away from securing the silverware for the 2017 season.

Despite the wet and windy conditions, Mt Albert made a great start to the game taking advantage of an early error made from Glenora to make yardage through the middle.

Standoff Manaia Osbourne kicked right over the top sending winger Tama Pasene over the line to collect points inside the first four minutes. The conversion went just left of the posts, and the Lions held an early 4-0 lead.

Finding their way into the contest, the Bears started to put together some nice footy.

On numerous occasions, hard-hitting prop Soape Kavaliku stormed towards the try line carrying up to four defenders.

Backing up in support, the Bears pressed hard on the right edge before hooker Zachariah Tippins darted out from dummy with a quick offload to prop Fatani Manukia who went over.

Halfback Phillip Kingi converted to take a 6-4 lead.

Glenora were again in on the action when second rower Daniel Reulu made a massive break on the left fending another two while blitzing 70 metres to score.

The Bears took a 10-4 lead at the break.

It was a match of high quality which left two sides battling it out in the middle of the park.

Four minutes into the second stanza and Glenora were rewarded with an early penalty to get up 12-4.

The score-line extended to 16-4 on the back of a loose ball taken up by Kingi.

Mt Albert hit back to get up 16-10, but it was too little too late with another penalty kick rewarded to the Bears in the final seconds of the match to secure an 18-10 victory at full time.

"That's one of the toughest games we've played this year," said Glenora captain Phillip Kingi.

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"After destroying Pt Chevalier in their previous match, we knew today's game was going to be a tough one."

"The Roope was key for us... [and] we wanted the two points to cement our spot in the finals.

"We played a hearty game, that's the only way I can explain it - especially in these conditions - so well done to the boys for their efforts."

Glenora have their final defence of the Roope Rooster when they come up against table leaders Pt Chevalier - the club they first won it off in Round 7 - in a top-of-the-table clash at Harold Moody Reserve this Saturday (2.30pm kick-off).

Glenora 18 (Phillip Kingi, Fatani Mankia, Daniel Reuelu tries; James Taumata, Phillip Kingi x2 goals) Mt Albert 10 (Tama Pasene, Manaia Osbourne tries; Trent Wallace x1 goal). HT: 10-4.

In other games, Northcote continue to showcase an impressive improvement to their season winning 14-6 over the Howick Hornets. Mangere East have escaped the last-place position with a 34-18 victory over Richmond. Te Atatu now sit one point behind them after going down 12-18 to Papakura while Pt Chevalier remain at the top of the ladder taking down the Marist Saints 44-4 sitting only two points ahead of Glenora on 26.

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Matchday: A Look Behind The Scenes With The Warriors

By Michael Burgess - Herald on Sunday Rugby League Writer

WARRIORS COACH Stephen Kearney is jabbing the air with his finger. He has a stare that could break a rock and he's not happy.

"How much does tonight mean to you?," he asks his team. "How much? You tell me?"

Some players don't meet Kearney's gaze, but a few answers come back; 'heaps', 'everything', 'a lot'.

"A lot?," asks Kearney. "F**king oath it does. So what are we prepared to do for it?"

We are inside the Warriors dressing room at Mt Smart, where the home side trail the Panthers 18-12 at half-time. Not only is this a must-win game, but also the farewell for legendary Warrior Manu Vatuvei.

5.00pm

Almost four hours earlier game night preparations began with a football staff meeting at Ellerslie Racecourse, shifted from Sky City due to concerns over Auckland's Friday traffic.

As the evening's timetable is discussed, and even brief plans for the impending trip to Townsville, players begin to arrive.

Youngsters Bunty Afoa and Ata Hingano are first, and after greeting everyone, chat in the corner.

Others filter in. Ken Maumalo and Roger Tuivasa-Sheck stretch on yoga mats, Shaun Johnson talks with Kearney about Penrith's attack and props Sam Lisone, Jacob Lillyman and Ben Matulino sip coffee together. There's a mood of mateship in the air.

The impressive spread of pre-match snacks- salad, chicken skewers, bacon and egg cases, boiled eggs and smoothies - lay almost untouched, though the tea and coffee machines are popular.

The players are put through warmup exercises (lunges, yoga poses and stretching), before Kearney takes centre stage. He touches on kick returns and defensive awareness and also reminds the team to be patient in attack, especially inside the opposition 20m zone.

"If we have to hand the ball over in the cage, then there we go - 95 metres to go. We'll take that. "

Vatuvei's farewell has overshadowed the build-up, but the "Beast" is only mentioned at the end of Kearney's speech.

"Run hard, like our mate, he only knew one way to play. One way to run. Run hard. That's how you bloody honour him."

As the team file off, Kearney pulls the props aside.

"It's about detail; first contact, three men in, and doing that for 80 minutes. We set the tone."

6:10pm

The bus journey is silent, as players contemplate their roles. A few supporters are there to meet the team on arrival - "That's the way boys", shouts one fan - and Vatuvei greets each player with a hug.

The dressing room area is a hive of activity.

Players are getting strapped, or massages. Matulino and James Gavet sit outside on wrestle mats, listening to head phones.

Kieran Foran chats to assistant coach Andrew McFadden while Kearney gathers his thoughts.

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“I still get anxious around this time,” says Kearney to a colleague. “And I wonder about that, but then I remember Wayne [Bennett] still gets nervous ... after all these years.”

Tuivasa-Sheck returns from the coin toss, to inform his team they are receiving.

“Let’s get into them from the start,” says Luke. “Big start boys.”

7:20pm

All headphones are off, and strapping, hydration and massages complete as players return to their allocated seats.

Some write messages on wrist tape, others chat quietly. Simon Mannering goes through his preparations for the 273rd time, spraying the inside of his boots and tying his laces methodically, before Kearney returns to the room.

“Tonight we don’t let up until the final whistle blows. What they want is time, and space. So you take that away from them.

“We have looked at all the technical stuff, but tonight is also about how we get the job done. The energy and spirit that we bring. I can feel it in the room. You don’t want to let anyone down tonight. You get your job done. Whatever it takes. “

The players leave for the warm-up, returning 15 minutes later for some final preparations.

David Fusitu’a and Solomone Kata say quick prayers, Matulino and Luke talk through plans while Foran gets help to pull his jersey on.

Johnson talks with Blake Ayshford and Bodene Thompson - “give me space, stay wide” - before the team is called outside. Tuivasa-Sheck, Luke and Mannering give final messages in the huddle before the team run out.

8:50pm Halftime Penrith 18-12

The players file back into a quiet dressing room. Some get knocks attended too as the medical staff monitor players, while others sit in silence. The fuel on the table; bananas, kiwifruit, watermelon, nuts, raisins and jelly beans is largely ignored, apart from a few energy shots and cups of Gatorade.

Kearney goes round each player one by one. Some are offered reassurance, others given stern reminders of their task.

The coach then addresses the team.

“Okay, so what do we need to fix. Any ideas?”

Mannering speaks up, pointing out various defensive issues and the lack of physicality.

Kearney agrees, but starts by emphasising completions and being smart in possession.

The coach also talks about the Panther’s line speed, encourages the team to “pull the trigger” on attack warns about Penrith’s running halves and reminds the team of their targets.

“They are kicking a lot to Ken [Maumalo], but their wingers, they’ve had nothing. Let’s test them out.”

The room is silent now, apart from some gulps of water or energy drink, before Kearney poses his question.

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“How much does tonight mean to you? How much? You tell me?”

The answers come back.

“It’s in our hands now,” says Kearney. “How much do we want to do something about this? Don’t worry about the scoreboard ... it will tick over as long as we get the process right.”

The players nod, as volume and energy fill the room.

“Let’s put some cage sets on those guys, because we have done stuff all of those,” says Lillyman. “Let’s turn the screws on them.”

“Don’t die wondering boys,” offers Foran. “Let’s leave nothing out there.”

Luke offers some more words while Tuivasa-Sheck stresses a good defensive start to the half.

Full-time Penrith 34 Warriors 22

The Warriors lead midway through the second half but lapse in the final 15 minutes and the Panthers run out comfortable 34-22 winners.

After an extended tribute for Vatuvei, the players face some home truths back in the dressing room.

“We let ourselves down,” says Kearney. “We all understood the circumstances of the evening ... but they came and beat us up. We’ll go through it on Monday and we’ll have to have some honest conversations.”

Article Courtesy of Michael Burgess and the New Zealand Herald

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All funds go to Mental Health Foundation NZ.

Waitemata Rugby League and Sports Club 50 Years Strong

By Leigh Bates



WAITEMATA RUGBY League and Sports Club celebrated its 50th jubilee from the 6th to the 9th of July, 2017. The club was founded on the 10th of September 1967 by people like Ray and Marion Bates, Gary Ford, Neil Cunningham, Cliff Cole, Ray Gubb, Ann and Ron Golley to name a few.

Guests to the jubilee celebrations came all the way from Brisbane, Perth, the South Island and from up north. It was an opportunity to meet friends they had not met in years. Stories were exchanged over drinks and it was also a chance for the current crop of players to meet some of our club legends in the flesh.

6 months of planning, hard work and fundraising by the Jubilee Committee and the Club Committee all led to the weekend of the 7th of July. The program was as follows:

- 6th of July was a meet and greet evening. It was a chance for former club members to meet current players and club management.
- 7th of July was the Jubilee Dinner. Eric Rush was the guest speaker. He was a revelation and kept the audience spellbound for over an hour.
- 8th of July was a social night with a live band. Most of the teams also had home games which was an opportunity for past members to watch some of the games and see how the club has grown through the years. Some of them were visiting for the first time in 45 years.
- 9th of July. A BBQ was held to farewell friends and past members who had taken the time to come for the jubilee celebrations.

Overall the Jubilee Celebration was a great success. The club would like to thank all those who took part in making this a success especially the Club Committee, with special thanks to Rita and Tona Fepuleai and the Jubilee Committee led by George Rodgers for an excellent job. See you at the 60th celebrations!

Panmure School Gets Special Winter Surprise

By Richard Becht



THE STUDENTS at Panmure District School had a pleasant surprise during a recent assembly when Vodafone Warriors players Charlie Gubb and Keanu Laumatia-Paki arrived to hand out brand new raincoats.

The Vodafone Warriors have once again teamed up with the good people at KidsCan in 2017 and are visiting low decile schools this winter to donate raincoats to all the pupils.

With a lofty goal of keeping kids warm and dry during the colder months, the “Raincoats for Kids” programme also aims to help children with their self-esteem.

“For us to give them a raincoat is something they can wear with pride, let alone have our logo on it, it’s probably as much a blessing for them as it is for us,” popular prop Gubb said.

A KidsCan spokesperson said the children love their Vodafone Warriors raincoats and the fact that all of the students wear them helps improve equality in the playground and reduces stigma.

“It’s awesome for the kids to see professional athletes that they see on TV like Charlie Gubb in real life,” Vodafone Junior Warrior Laumatia-Paki said.

“For myself, when the kids see a Vodafone Junior Warrior, they know I haven’t made it yet and that I have a long way to go in my journey. But I also see it as an inspiration for them to know that anything is possible.”

To support a child, visit the website where you can donate 50 cents a day or \$15 a month.

[Lean more about the KidsCan ‘Raincoats for kids’ campaign - click here.](#)

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ARL Results for Saturday July 22nd

SAS Fox Memorial: Round 15

Northcote 14 Howick 6
Richmond 18 Mangere East 34
Glenora 16 Mt Albert 4
Te Atatu 12 Papakura 18
Pt Chevalier 44 Marist 4

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Plate:

Round 11
Hibiscus Coast 18 East Coast Bays 60
Waitemata 26 Pakuranga 0
Manukau bye

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Premiership: Round 11

Bay Roskill 114 Papatoetoe 0
Manurewa 82 Ellerslie 6
Otara 42 New Lynn 18
Ponsonby 16 Otahuhu 26



NSWRL ISP Match Report

By Terry Rowney
Newtown RLFC

The New Zealand Warriors Intrust Super Premiership NSW team, pictured at Henson Park after their 20th round competition match against the Newtown Jets on Saturday, 22nd July 2017. Photo taken by Mario Facchini, mafphotography

THE WARRIORS run into a well-planned Henson Park ambush.

Last Saturday probably wasn't the best day to encounter the Newtown Jets at their historic home ground in inner-western Sydney, Henson Park in Marrickville.

Saturday was the occasion of the annual Beer, Footy & Food Festival, when 28 craft breweries and ethnic eateries displayed their wares at a large inner-city community festival, all combined with a Newtown Jets rugby league home game. More than 6000 people surged into Henson Park, creating a cauldron-like atmosphere that must have seemed quite surreal to the visiting Warriors players. By way of contrast, at one of their recent away games in Sydney playing the Canterbury Bulldogs at Belmore Sports Ground, there had been fewer than one hundred people in attendance!

In addition to the inspiration provided by the huge crowd, Saturday's match was also Jets crowd favourite Kurt Kara's 150th game in Newtown's royal blue colours. Kurt is a Waikato product and had previously played with the Warriors under 20's some eight years ago. His team-mates had sworn to deliver him a win on his special day, plus the Jets were desperate to win to stay in touch with the top eight.

Newtown turned on a near-faultless first half display, running up a 28-0 lead at half-time. The Warriors had very little ball and worthwhile field position while the Jets took full advantage of every opportunity made available to them.

The second half was more even with the Warriors scoring two converted tries, one each to Taniela

Palavi and Manaia Cherrington, and two conversions kicked by Junior Fetalaiga Pauga. The Jets ran out winners 38-12 and one of their supporters said after the game, "where the heck did that come from". Warriors coach Ricky Henry observed after the game, "we made every mistake possible in the first half and we encountered a Newtown team totally fired up for the big occasion".

One special highlight of the day was the tribute Haka performed for Kurt Kara by members of his Whanau, and also his Newtown Jets team-mates and New Zealand Warriors opponents of Maori heritage. The post-match Haka honouring Kurt Kara (and his 150 games for Newtown) is shown on this clip and is nothing short of spine-chilling:

<http://www.nswrl.com.au/news/2017/07/22/kara-it-s-an-honour.html>

Venerable Henson Park, for so long an Anglo-Celtic cultural fortress, has never known such a warlike Polynesian chant to reverberate around the old ground and the big crowd was enthralled by the spectacle.

The New Zealand Warriors are back at home in the ISP NSW at Mt Smart Stadium next Sunday, 30th July, when they play the Canberra Raiders partnership club, Mounties.



NZ Resident 16s Steal the Win

By Brooke Hurdell - NZRL Digital Content Producer

RAIN, HAIL and tornados were predicted for the Bay of Plenty but the stormy weather pressed pause at Rotorua's Puketawhero Park for the NZ Resident 16s v NZ Maori 17s clash on Saturday.

Three years on from the NZ Resident 16s win against Samoa, the side picked up exactly where their predecessors left off with another win to add to the collection.

Despite playing up an age group, the NZ Resident 16s stole a 32-28 victory over the NZ Maori 17s, providing a thrilling game of footy for spectators.

With NZ 16s half Nathaneal Sasagi opening the scoring with a try in the first 30 seconds, the NZ 16s sent a message to their opposition that they meant business. This was backed up with a conversion from fullback Tuinamo Tepulolo who finished the game with a 100 percent success rate at goal.

NZ 16s hooker Temple Kalepo was rewarded for his hard work 10 minutes later when he crossed the line for his side's second try of the game taking the score to 12-0 after another successful conversion.

Just as the 16s were getting comfortable the NZ Maori 17s hit back with a try to Tyrin Ona-Murphy. Their captain Jordan Riki joined the action shortly after with another converted try to the NZ Maori 17s levelling the score at 12 all.

It looked like they would head to the changing rooms equal at halftime but the NZ Maori 17s had other ideas – the halftime score was 18-12 to the NZ Maori 17s.

The second half saw the Maoris come out firing as they gained a 24-12 lead with an aggressive attacking game and tight defence that halted the 16s' momentum from the first half. Caleb Pese and South Islander Caius Fa'atili came to the rescue for the 16s managing to level the score 24 all with two converted tries and only 15 minutes left on the clock.

Supporters were on the edge of their seats as both teams scrambled to string together set plays. Composure and strength in the forwards paid off for the NZ 16s who sent Nathaneal Sasagi over the line for his second try of the game. Ten minutes out from the full time whistle NZ 16s were leading 30-24, in front for the first time since the first half.

A successful penalty kick from the classy Tuinamo Tepulolo extended their lead to 32-24 with only minutes to play. A last minute try from the NZ Maori 17s wasn't enough to overtake the victorious NZ 16s who took home a 32-28 win.

New Zealand Resident 16s 32 (Nathaneal Sasagi 2, Temple Kalepo, Caius Fa'atili, Caleb Pese tries; Tuinamo Tepulolo 5 goals; Tuinamo Tepulolo penalty) New Zealand Maori 17s 28 (Te Mana Te Maari, Wipere Takitumu, Tyrin Ona Murphy, Jordan Riki, Tane Wiki tries; Samuel Kamu, Leighman Hohaia Katene 3 goals)

NZ 16s Team:

Tuinamo Tepulolo, Rayna Whaakari, Jonah Polata-Kopa, Junior Tuleisu, Marco Talagi, Xavier Stevens-Teo, Simi Sasagi, Leroy Fergusson, Temple Kalepo, Caius Faa'tili, Christian Tuipulotu, Aamon Dean, Semisi Tapa, Kaya Cuthers, Caleb Pese, Diaz Taihia, Griffin Neame, Jyris Glaumuzina, Cezia James

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Nigel Vagana on the air!

BE IN TO WIN AS WE CELEBRATE 100 DAYS TO GO UNTIL THE RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2017

*By Daniel Fraser
New Zealand Media &
PR Manager RLWC 2017*

LAST THURSDAY marked 100 days to go until the first match of the Rugby League World Cup in New Zealand when the Kiwis take on Samoa at Mt Smart Stadium on October 28.

To mark the occasion, former NRL, Kiwis and Samoa star Nigel Vagana helped us promote the tournament on three radio stations and the NZ Herald.

Nigel certainly entertained Daniel McHardy of Radio Sport, Coast's Brian Kelly and the morning team on Flava as well as the breakfast listeners of course with some some old tales from the two World Cups he participated in as a player.

Nigel played for the Kiwis in the 2000 Rugby League World Cup in England and then captained Samoa in Australia in 2008.

He also spoke with Laura McGoldrick for Herald Focus. Check out the interview here.

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz-herald-focus/news/video.cfm?c_id=1504018&gal_cid=1504018&gallery_id=179235

That wasn't the only stories we had to mark 100 days to go, new Kiwis captain Adam Blair also spoke to the NZ Herald about his strong belief that the Kiwis can lift the trophy come December 2 as they did in 2008.

The Broncos star also spoke about Broncos teammate Benji Marshall's chances of a Kiwis recall for the Rugby League World Cup.

Catch up with both stories here and here.

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/league/news/article.cfm?c_id=79&objectid=11891141

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/league/94769777/could-shaun-johnsons-injury-see-benji-marshall-back-in-black>

Finally, to celebrate 100 days to go, we're giving away an Auckland prize pack that includes two Category A tickets to New Zealand v Samoa on 28/10/2017, two nights of twin share 5 star accommodation at Sofitel Auckland and Auckland whale and dolphin safari trip for two. You can enter here.

<http://www.rlwc2017.com/auckland-100-days-go#overlay-context=sydney-100-days-go>

Follow RLWC2017'S Facebook and Twitter pages for similar competitions for the other three host cities in New Zealand, Christchurch, Hamilton, and Wellington.

<https://www.facebook.com/rugbyleagueworldcup/?fref=ts>

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Rugby League World Cup 2017 tickets and information at www.rlwc2017.com





Mt Albert Lions is turning 90

90th Celebration

1927 - 2017

*A weekends Celebration 25th,26th,27th August.
A fantastic reason to get together and
Celebrate the Clubs Successes over the Last 90 Years.*

26th August - Dinner

Alexandra Park : 3 Course Dinner, Cash Bar,
Formal Dress, 6pm – 12.00am

25th August - Golf

Chamberlain Park 18 holes, Shot Gun Start 12pm, BBQ & Beers
Back to Mt Albert Clubrooms

Dinner only \$ 55.00

Dinner and Golf \$ 110.00

**Tickets can be purchased on [facebook.com/MARL.Lions/](https://www.facebook.com/MARL.Lions/)
or direct debit BNZ 02-0192-0027012-06**

Particulars: 90th Code: Your full name

Register via email & pay online or register at the Bar & pay Cash or Eftpos.



THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S HUGE ROUND 21 ISSUE...

NRL, HOLDEN CUP, INTRUST SUPER PREMIERSHIP, INTRUST SUPER CUP AND RON MASSEY CUP TEAM LISTS, PREVIEWS AND STATS + SCORES AND RESULTS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY!

INSIDE

- He's the 19-year-old wunderkind at the foot of the mountains but as far as Panthers halfback **Nathan Cleary** is concerned, he's just playing footy with his mates. Seven players named in the Penrith squad this week are from the 2015 Holden Cup-winning team, a season Cleary himself was heavily involved in.

- Storm forward **Tim Glasby** has been through a whirlwind few months – going from relative obscurity to splashed on the back page of newspapers – but the humble prop hasn't lost sight of what it took to get him here.

- **Clint Gutherson's** injury is another blow to Parramatta's season, but they have been here before. They will field their ninth spine combination of the year this weekend but key players **Corey Norman** and **Mitch Moses** are unfazed by the constant change.

- **Michael Ennis** writes that it's time to go back to the one referee system following the **Sia Soliola/Billy Slater** incident, saying referees are feeling pressured by too many outside influences when they are trying to make decisions.

PLUS... The **Top 8 recruitment blunders**, **The Analyst** runs through the winning/losing record of **Cameron Smith at the Storm** and an **Josh McGuire poster**.



ROUND 20

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Hi Peter,

JUST WANTED to say thanks for my jersey received in the mail yesterday. Love it as well as your letter. I look forward to reading your newsletter each week and have been lucky enough to win a few prizes now. Keep up the good work . Go the Warriors!!!

Kurt from Brisbane



Their Finest Hour Winners

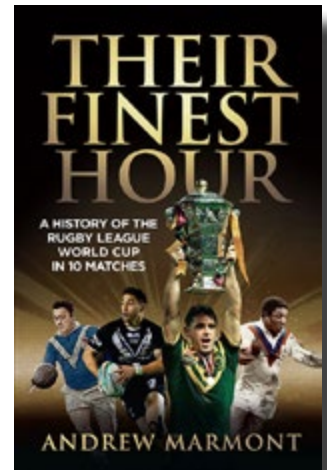
Tony Scragg – Gisborne

Steve Clancy – Tauranga

David Morris – Auckland

Michael Owens – Auckland

Bruce Pert – Auckland



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