



Sir Peter Leitch Club

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Newsletter ^{2nd August 2017} #181

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BLK

Optimism Proves Misplaced

By David Kemeys

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



LAST WEEK it was sickener, hanging in to the very death against the Cowboys, only to concede a last minute try to have the score blow out. This week it was even worse.

Having vowed to remain positive, I thought, at least the effort was there against the Cowboys, surely against the Sharks that is something we can build on.

Well, we could not build Lego.

Soft.

That's four straight losses, and it's the same old story. No finals footy for us.

Nothing new in that, we have not been there for the last five years, and 2017 just give the haters yet another stick to beat us with.

But I vowed to remain optimistic to the end, and we have five games to go. Surely even we can not go nine in a row without winning.

Optimism is a hard work, and leaves you with egg on your face.

My bold prediction was that we would need five wins from our remaining eight, and start by beating the Panthers but losing to the Cowboys. Instead we lost both of course.

Never mind said I, we could beat the Sharks at Mt Smart.

Wrong.

Maybe we can beat the Knights away then, and at least end the losing streak. Mind you, it's hard to find anyone with much confidence that is going to happen.

Then it is the Raiders at Mt Smart, the Bunnies, Manly, and the Tigers.

Optimists' view, we can still win a few before season's end; realist's view, the wooden spoon looms; pessimists' view, five more weeks of torture.

Opinions Are Like Arseholes...

The trouble with opinions is that everyone – including me – has one. Now I do not know Rob Cameron from a bar of soap. But Rob was online on www.stuff.co.nz this week, and if you wanted a stupider opinion than his, you'd be out of luck.

"The time has come I'm afraid," he thundered. "Yet again we have a season of underachievement and questionable mental strength. Put simply, it just isn't good enough," as he ranted, calling for a boycott of the side.

I am the last one to throw stones at Rob, given that I hurl a few myself, but stick it up your arse Rob.

Frustrating as they are, that's my team, and I'll join your boycott when hell freezes over.

"Most fans could handle losing, as long as they felt the team were trying their best and showing heart and pride."

In point of fact that is all I have ever asked, but generally speaking – maybe the Dragons in Hamilton accepted – they have looked a more committed side than previous ones.

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It is a bitter pill to swallow, this run of final-less footy, but there have not been the blowouts of previous years, and while we might be unhappy, I don't think it's fair to level a charge this time around that they somehow don't care. Tell that to Bodene Thompson, who was never going to make the tackle he tried to pull off when he laid his body on the line, and ended up with a serious injury.

Rob reached for the old chestnut, "it's a cultural thing". Does anyone know what that even means?

"Stop going to the games, stop watching the games on TV, and stop purchasing merchandise. If this occurs it will force the club to address the issues and it will remind the players of who ultimately they answer to.

Yeah, or you could just phuck off and buy a tee-shirt with "fairweather fan" on it.

And it didn't stop there. Hamish Bidwell, another on Stuff, laid the blame at the feet of Stephen Kearney, though graciously conceded "it's not all his fault", before roundly slating him.

Happy Hamish admitted there's no quick fix, but dismissed the idea you can't judge Kearney on one season, harking back to his 10 wins in 42 as Parramatta coach, and seven and 12 record so far in 2017.

So sacking the coach, boycotting the team and changing the culture is apparently the answer. Does anyone have anything constructive to actually offer?

Surprisingly, the answer is yes. Come in David Skipwith at the Herald, who had the opposite opinion on Kearney, endorsing him as the right man for the job.

He said we have the right to be pissed off, though he used politer language, but said the years of missing the eight had made it clear long-term thinking was the answer, calling for Kearney to be given time.

"Every new coach needs time to get a gauge on the players and environment he's walked into before trimming and recruiting to get the roster they want. Like it or not, that can take two seasons or more."

Kearney can't escape criticism, and some of our tactics and play have been mundane, but Skipwith is right, Bidwell is wrong, and Cameron is just dumb.

The start of the season seems so long ago. Remember all that promise we were meant to have, a much vaunted spine that was said to be among the best in the NRL, a coach eager to make a name for himself, and a new man in to fix the defensive problems that had plagued us.

Surely the Warriors would make a long-overdue impression. Instead here we are again, our finals drought set to stretch to a sixth season.

I must be the only man left standing who has sympathy for Jim Doyle and the management team. They must be dreading trying to spin this one.

Would you not love to be a fly on the wall at this end-of-year review? Here we are, trying to figure out, yet again, where it all went wrong.

Here's a helpful hint boys, just get out last year's review and change the date.

The season has been another disappointment and it looked that way from day one, when after fielding a weakened team at the Auckland Nines to concentrate on getting off to a better start to the NRL season, we did exactly the opposite and had to play catch up after winning only one of our first four.

Fix that and the season outcome might be the same, but at least you'd be in the hunt.

It is as plain as the nose on your face that we have to be fitter and stronger from day one, and not look to grow into the season.

Before any review can happen there is the small matter of getting this lot up to play their last five games, starting with the Knights this weekend.

A few weeks ago one of the TV commentators, I can't remember which, was moved to ask if we would see the beleaguered Knights win again in 2017. To which his co-commentator said: They have to play the Warriors.

I confess a soft spot for the Knights. They do what I wish the Warriors would. Keep battling.

Coach Stephen Kearney has a big problem on his hands because let's face it, we just don't look good, and now we are completely down.

There is an old saying: When you hit rock bottom, stop digging. But would you bet against the hole we are in getting deeper? Lose this one and we will be beyond disappointing.

We are physically bashed about and our injury list makes for depressing reading, and now we must surely be mentally bashed too.

Friday night's 26-12 loss to Cronulla means we are six points outside the eight, so expect endless bad jokes on radio about mathematical chances. I don't actually know why it bothers me so. I should be used to it, but I still went to bed feeling bitterly disappointed and, if I am honest, let down.

We invest a lot of time and energy in supporting our team, and it would be nice to get something back from it. Instead we are left with five to go and the prospect of things getting worse.

Even Kearney admitted in the post-match press conference that we are down on confidence. "There's no doubt there's a bit of lack of confidence at the minute. That plays a part, a bit of anxiety," Kearney said.

Take that attitude to Newcastle and the Knights, who know a thing or two themselves about adversity, will smell blood, especially when their own confidence will be up after beating the Dragons 21-14.

How Did We Manage To Go Backwards?

The Sharks are no mugs, but after the decent, if losing effort, against the Cowboys, was it too much to hope we would build on that?

At times our energy and effort was good. Just a shame it wasn't from the kick-off, when we absolutely gifted the reigning premiers the opening try.

Stevie Wonder could see what was going to happen, our defensive line, not so much.

It's hard to believe, but we actually outran the Sharks, I kid you not. The statistics show we gained more than 100 extra running metres. But we failed miserably to put anything on the end of them, our handling poor and passes going all over the shop.

"I think it was a lack of concentration from the boys, it was the pass not hitting the money and that's what cost us," Ken Maumalo said.

We hear so much about what is wrong, and how it is going to be a work-on, and won't be a problem that

we see again, but we do, and it isn't good enough.

Matulino Will Be Missed

I have not always been the biggest fan of Ben Matulino, but I thought he was our best on Friday – running for 143 metres and making 31 tackles.

He was willing, bent the line repeatedly, and was decent on defence. If he can do that for his new club, the Tigers, he will be a fan favourite.

Matulino came out after the loss, and was straight to the point.

"Definitely execution, a lot of dropped balls, we gave them the ball heaps, and we definitely lost it for ourselves with easy turnovers and soft tries."

Predictably, Matulino says the players have not given up. "Five wins in a row would be nice, and I definitely feel we can do that."

One win would be good actually Ben.

Big Ben has only two more games at Mt Smart before he goes, and I have to admit, this season is a sad way for his time to end. It's easy to forget he has been our player of the year twice.

"I love playing for this club and I know they will be alright."

And he thinks we are making progress. "I know a guy like Sam is going to carry this club and be a leader. It's exciting to see what he's going to be like in the future."

Does anyone really believe Jacob Lillyman, Charlie Gubb, Sam Lisone or Albert Vete are better than Ben?

Some decent props better be on the shopping list.

We Aren't The Bad Guys Over Stacey

News the Warriors had blocked Stacey Jones taking up a position with the Kiwis ahead of the Rugby League World Cup sent the knockers into overdrive, callers rounding on the Warriors for denying the Little General an opportunity.

We were the club that didn't care about the Kiwis, blah, blah, blah.

What a load of bollocks.

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Kiwis coach David Kidwell asked Kearney if he could have Jones as an assistant, but got a no, and that had people asking how the Warriors, who got their coach from the Kiwis, could do that?

This says more about the ineptitude of the NZRL than it does about the Warriors.

Steve McNamara worked with the Kiwis, and his departure to the Catalan Dragons, meant the NZRL came after Jones. But surely the Warriors only allowed McNamara to be in the Kiwis set-up because we also had Stacey and Andrew McFadden.

With McNamara gone, that would leave only McFadden, and remember, if Stacey did have a role with the Kiwis, he'd be due a month off after the tournament, plus all the usual Christmas and New Year holidays, so we would probably not see him at Mt Smart until February.

Anyone see the club agreeing to that considering what has happened?

Our preseason begins on November 1, while the World Cup runs from October 27 to December 2, and I for one just can't see how it could work for Jones to be involved with the Kiwis.

And to be fair, how long does it take to find an assistant?

McNamara quit in the middle of June, and organising coaches for a tournament that starts in October should have been sorted long ago.

Give The Kid A break

Poor Mason Lino has been thrown into the fire, and he is copping all sorts of baggings.

When Shaun Johnson did his knee, Lino got his first start in the NRL for two years, and somehow, some people seem to think he should have been Alfie Langer from day one.

The load he is being asked to carry is enormous, so it disappoints me to hear him being slated.

He starred back in the day for our NYC team but was released at the end of 2014, destined for France, only to have the deal collapse when he injured his shoulder in the NYC final against the Broncos - a match in which he played through the pain, set up two tries and kicked five goals.

Fair play to the Warriors, we found a place for him, and Lino has been an excellent professional ever since, building a reputation as an excellent trainer, a consistent performer at InTrust level, and not one of those blokes who constantly moans about not getting a chance.

He has a new deal with us, and that must be satisfying because he must have thought his chance would never come.

"I'm pretty happy. I'm here for another two years. I love this club and they've looked after me."

He was pretty good against the Cowboys, and yes, sure, he had a few glitches against the Sharks in the first half, but he bounced back well in the second.

He has trained with Johnson and Kieran Foran, and worked with Stacey Jones at under-20s, reserve grade and now in the NRL, so can only get better with more game time, and he may get it with Foran off to the Dogs.

Just don't expect him to be Cooper Cronk from the get-go. How about we give the kid a break?



Aussies Go All Out Over World Cup

The Seven Network in Australia is going overboard over the Rugby League World Cup, announcing an army of commentators and experts. Anyone think they fancy the Kangaroos' chances?

Seven has all the rights to the tournament in Oz, and is also the host broadcaster for all the games.

Its coverage will be hosted by Jim Wilson, Laurie Daley, Renee Gartner and Allana Ferguson.

The commentators are Mark Braybrook, Andrew Moore and Dan Ginnane, joined by Ferguson, Gary Belcher, Adrian Morley, Brett Kimmorley, Ryan Girdler, Scott Sattler, Brent Tate and Andrew Ryan. Glen Larmer, Daryl Halligan and Monty Betham get the job for the NZ games.

And the women's comp is being covered too, David Tapp, Drury Forbes, Bill Harrigan, Nathan Cayless, Andrew Ryan, Gartner, Mel McLaughlin, Michelle Bishop, Josh Massoud, Liam Cox, Shane Webcke, Pat Welsh and Chris Garry all called into action.

It's the 15th Rugby League World Cup and it will be played in 13 venues across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, the 14 teams playing 28 games over five weeks.

The women's tournament will for the first time be a standalone event, with pool matches in Cronulla as triple-headers on November 16, 19 and 22, with the semi-finals a double-header on November 26. Australia, Canada, Cook Islands, England, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea are the six teams.

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VODAFONE WARRIORS v NEWCASTLE KNIGHTS
McDonald Jones Stadium, Newcastle
3.00pm, Saturday, August 5

Papali'i replaces Thompson

by Richard Becht

ROOKIE ISALIAH Papali'i has been named to replace the injured Bodene Thompson in the second row for the Vodafone Warriors' 22nd-round NRL encounter with the Newcastle Knights at McDonald Jones Stadium on Saturday (3.00pm kick-off local time; 5.00pm NZT).

It will be just the 18-year-old's second NRL appearance exactly five months since his debut as Vodafone Warrior #215, ironically against the same opponent on the opening day of the season.

On that day Papali'i played 21 minutes in the side's 26-22 win over the Knights. Since then he has been a regular for the club's Intrust Super Premiership side and has also made some appearances for the Vodafone Junior Warriors in the NYC.

Thompson suffered a suspected left pectoral injury in last Friday night's loss to the Cronulla Sharks at Mount Smart Stadium. He will have further assessment this week and is expected to be ruled out for the rest of the season.

The second rower, who turned 29 today, had scored his sixth try of the year to have the Vodafone Warriors just 12-14 behind but less than 10 minutes later he was forced off the field.

The Vodafone Warriors are

now without their two most experienced second rowers, the 143-game Thompson joining 301-game veteran Ryan Hoffman (foot) on the casualty list.

Also sidelined with them are halfback Shaun Johnson (knee) and props Albert Vete and James Gavet who both have broken arms. It's hoped Johnson and Vete will be back for the last round of the regular season, Hoffman's return is still to be confirmed and Gavet is out for the season.

Hooker Nathaniel Roache has been included on the NRL side's extended bench this week after recovering from a hamstring injury he picked up against Manly in Perth on July 1.

Prop Charlie Gubb made his comeback from a hernia operation last Saturday, playing 34 minutes in the club's 32-22 Intrust Super Premiership win over the Mounties. He carried the ball five times for 48 metres and made 20 tackles without a miss.

Thompson's unavailability means wing David Fusitu'a is now the only player in line to play every game this season with Sam Lisone, Issac Luke, Simon Mannering, Ken Maumalo and Roger Tuivasa-Sheck having missed one game each.

Luke brought up 500 career points

with the first of his two conversions against Cronulla last week and long-serving prop Jacob Lillyman this week moves within two games of his 250th NRL outing.

The Vodafone Warriors travel to Newcastle on Thursday to face a Knights side buoyed by its 21-14 victory over eighth-placed St George Illawarra last week. It was only the third win of the season for the last-placed Knights, snapping a run of eight straight losses.

The Vodafone Warriors have a 19-17 edge in the 37 encounters between the sides since 1995 with one match drawn. In 16 matches in Newcastle, the Knights are 9-7 ahead.

The Vodafone Warriors have won the last four clashes but the Knights have won two of the last three matches in Newcastle (2014 and 2015).

Vodafone Warriors

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

In the Stacey Jones Lounge



A blast from the past former Kiwi Rugby League players who were our guests in the Stacey Jones lounge a few years ago.



Ashley Veale from Christchurch explains to Sir Peter why the Sharks would win, before the game, then rubbed it in after.



Bruce Richards and Marty Dawes who flew up from Masterton for the game and had a blast in the lounge.



Charlotte Maumea from Redboubt North School with Butch.



Ex Warrior Tony Tuimavave Foundation Warrior, Kiwi and Samoan rep talks about the game.



Fans get their photo with Nathaniel Roache and Albert Vete.



Fans with Nathaniel Roache and Albert Vete.



Jacob Lillyman and Ken Maumalo with Butch after the game.



Nathaniel Roache and Albert Vete with Sir Peter Leitch in the lounge at half time.



Mike Brown, long time lounge member and Brendan Popplewell compare horse tips.



Malachi Maumea who plays for the Howick Hornets played in a semi-final the next day and won, so his team is the final!

Albert Vete Warrior no 197 made his debut for the club in round 1 2015, has played 44 NRL games, currently on the injured list. Nathaniel Roache Warrior no 207 made his debut round 1 in 2016 and has played 18 NRL games.



In the Stacey Jones Lounge



Ruthie with Brendan Popplewell who won the TAB bet which was \$50 on Ken Mumalo to score the 1st Try Scorer.



Ryder Marshall from the Waiheke Rams Rugby League club gets some presents for being a star.



Ryder Marshall in his Waiheke Rams jersey was a star in the lounge



Scott Niwa joint coach of the Waiheke Rams under 6s & under 7s with Peter Reikich from BLK who donated tops for both teams to the club and Mana Tahapeihi the other joint coach.



Morgan Baker, whos dad Paul is a lounge member, getting his photo taken with the boys.



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60 Years Ago: Gamekeeper And Poacher

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)



WHAT ARE the chances of a footballer, in any code, representing his country with his brother as referee? The odds would be astronomical. Yet that was the situation when the Kiwis played the Kangaroos in their 1957 World Cup match at the Brisbane Cricket Ground. Sel Belsham, aged 26, was wearing the number seven jersey for New Zealand. Vic Belsham, five years older, was the man with the whistle. It's fair to say that opposing Australian scrum-half Keith Holman, though nicknamed Yappy, was rendered speechless on this occasion.

The Belshams were a real sporting family. Father Alf Belsham was an Auckland rugby union representative. Vic and Sel were to make their marks in rugby league. Vic toured Australia with the 1948 Kiwis and was a Test reserve at home against the 1949 Kangaroos. As a referee he controlled eight Tests from 1957 to 1960. Sel, meanwhile, toured Britain and France with the Kiwis in 1955-56 and Australia in 1956 before extending his number of Test appearances to ten at the 1957 World Cup. Both were also very good cricketers.

Holman might have felt he was up against it with two Belsham brothers watching his every move around the Kangaroos scrum-base but it was not their fault his day ended unhappily. He suffered a twisted knee during the game and did not play again at that World Cup. But maybe the Belshams influenced his path once he called time on a celebrated eight-year international career, for Holman also turned to refereeing and earned Test and Grand Final appointments.

How then did Vic Belsham get to referee his brother on such a prestigious occasion? This was only the second World Cup and tournament rules stipulated one referee from each of the two southern hemisphere countries share the duties. But the Australians initially named three of their own, Darcy Lawler (NSW), Jack Casey and Frank Ballard (Queensland) alongside NZRL nominee Belsham. New Zealand protested and the Australians dropped the two Queenslanders, leaving Lawler and Belsham. Clearly there could not be a neutral referee for the Kiwis-Kangaroos clash and the Aussies graciously stood their man aside.

It was nothing new for Vic Belsham to referee a representative team including his brother. That had been the case earlier in the season when Sel played for North Island against South Island and for New Zealand against The Rest. They were also to complete the World Cup in unison, with Vic given the plum job of officiating in the champion Kangaroos' match against a Rest of the World team which included Sel at scrum-half.

The Brisbane media – annoyed that two Queensland referees had been dropped as a result of the NZRL protest -- was not slow to point out that the Kiwis scrum-half would be feeding the scrums under a possibly benevolent eye of his elder brother when they opened the tournament against the Kangaroos. Journalist Harry Jefferies expressed some doubts: "Sel is a great player and his brother an efficient referee, but things do happen in Tests and it could prove embarrassing for a New Zealand referee."

The potential was there for an uproar had the Kiwis triumphed in Brisbane. But that was doused by the decisiveness of Australia's 25-5 victory. Vic Belsham awarded the Kiwis 14 penalties to eight, being especially tough at the scrums, and awarded the Kiwis a penalty try. These days deferential penalties apply to scrums. Back in the 1950s there were unlimited tackles and the scrum was literally a fight for possession, with half-backs and hookers expected to do everything in their powers to win the ball. Many a match was decided by a hotly disputed penalty goal from a referee's decision at a scrum.

"Belsham was barracked at times but he always had a firm hand on the game and a fair one, too," wrote the New Zealand Press Association correspondent. "He gave a splendid exhibition of control which most of the crowd appreciated. He brooked no argument, and when some Australians attempted to dispute a penalty try ruling he pointed firmly to the dressing room. That stopped the dispute abruptly."

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Kiwis forward Cliff Johnson and Kangaroos wing Brian Carlson had pursued the ball after it was kicked into the Australian in-goal area. When Carlson pushed Johnson away from the ball the penalty try was awarded. Another NZPA report credited Belsham – who also controlled Australia's matches against Great Britain and France – with “lifting the standard of big-match refereeing in Australia” and said English officials had been most impressed with him and the manner in which he stayed out of the limelight yet kept the game moving at pace.

Years later Vic Belsham looked back on his unique relationship with brother Sel: “I cannot remember ever discussing it with Sel before or after a match. I think we had mutual respect for each other. Sel, being a half-back, usually had a fair bit to say to referees but I cannot remember him ever chipping me. A good halfback in those days needed to cheat where possible when putting the ball into a scrum. He did his job and I tried to do mine.” Vic later settled in Queensland and became president of the Australian Squash Rackets Association.

Keep up with Sir Peter Leitch! Click the icons to follow him on:



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Good luck to the Crusaders playing against the Lions in the Super Rugby final in South Africa.

Catch the game on the 6th of August at 2am NZ Time.

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By Miles Davis

Hurricanes Loss

Beauden Barrett of the Hurricanes is tackled by Courtnall Skosan of the Emirates Lions during the Super Rugby Semifinal match. Photo www.photosport.nz

IT WAS a bitterly disappointing finish to the season for my beloved Hurricanes but now that I have stopped crying there are a couple of issues arising from the game that I would like to address.

The Match Officials – There are many complaining that decisions made by the officials cost the Hurricanes the game but that isn't a reality. Firstly no side with a 19 point lead has anyone but themselves to blame if they fail to press on and win. The Hurricanes lost momentum after half time and were unable to turn things around. Their set piece started to fall apart and they were unable to get any sustained possession. There were some dubious decisions made (Beauden Barrett was very unlucky to get sinbinned and a couple of tries looked suspect) but even had they gone in the Hurricanes favour it is not a guarantee that they would have won. All sides have to deal with questionable decisions and the successful ones are able to overcome them and still prevail.

There is a legitimate question that neutral referees should be used and that would certainly take any doubt about bias out of the equation. Let us not however make the nationality of match officials or their competency be an excuse for defeat. The Hurricanes had a big lead and blew it. They lost to a better side on the day.

Dane Coles Support for the Lions in the Final – There has been a lot of social media outrage at Dane Coles' post-match comment that he and his team would be cheering on the Lions in next week's final. Most assert that all New Zealanders should support the Kiwi side in the contest. I say Bollocks to that. The Crusaders and Canterbury are bitter rivals to Hurricanes/Wellington fans and the mere thought of them winning gives most of us a rash. I know about 2 Lions fans so a victory for them will have little effect on my life. On the other hand hundreds of my mates and colleagues are Cantabs and the vast majority of them will be a pain in my backside with their gloating should they win the final. This time will likely be more painful than usual seeing as it has been 9 years since their last triumph and they are liable to go over the top in their celebrations.

I don't know about you but no-one I know wants their mate's team to win things. Males tend to enjoy their friend's teams getting beaten. Especially if their team has just lost. It is after all just a game.

If anyone thinks that this is an unfair attitude I would just like to point out that none of my Cantab mates have come forward with any sympathy for the Hurricanes loss. All I have received is mocking abuse and frankly that is all I expect and want from them.

So just in case I haven't made myself clear – COME ON YOU LIONS!!!!

NO ADVERTS ARE PAID FOR IN THIS NEWSLETTER



By Miles Davis

Sean Hoppe

Kiwis wing Sean Hoppe runs in a try during the 2nd international rugby league test between New Zealand and Great Britain at Ericsson Stadium, Auckland, 1992. Great Britain won the match 19-16. Photo www.photosport.nz

MOST KIWI'S journey to rugby league stardom have a humble starting point and Sean Hoppe is no different. As a youngster he played for the Glen Innes Falcons before making the trip across the Auckland Harbour bridge to play for the Northcote Tigers.

He had a successful stint with the Tigers winning the Fox Memorial Shield in 1989 and the National Club competition in 1991 beating Randwick 30-12 in the final, helping himself to 2 tries.

In 1992 he was part of the Auckland representative side that played against the Canberra Raiders. He must have impressed as the Raiders were soon to sign him. Hoppe also made his Kiwi debut that year and was in the side that drew the test series with Great Britain 1-1 (scoring a try in the 2nd test). He also faced Great Britain with his Canberra side that year.

At the end of the 1992 season Hoppe was named the Raiders Rookie of the Year and by the end of the 1993 season had played 39 games, scoring 22 tries for the Green Machine.

In 1994 Hoppe signed an agreement to play for the soon to be formed Warriors (who were to join the NRL in 1995). Whilst he was keen to continue playing for the Raiders for the '94 season the club did not want to give him a 1 year deal so he signed for the North Sydney Bears. That move meant he missed Canberra's 1994 Grand Final win.

Hoppe continued his try-scoring feats at the Bears notching 15 in 25 games.

His form didn't waver once he joined the Warriors and he scored 19 tries in the 1995 season on his way to being voted the competition's best winger. He stayed with the Warriors till 1999 playing 88 games and scoring 44 tries (which puts him 4th on the club's all-time try-scoring list).

In 1999 he made the journey north to England, signing for St Helens. As seems to be the case when a Kiwi joins an English club there was immediate success with St Helens winning the Super League Grand Final 8-6 against the Bradford Bulls.

The following year the Saints contested the World Club Challenge against NRL Grand Final winners the Melbourne Storm. Unfortunately they went down 44-6 but Hoppe managed to score the Saints' only try.

The rest of that season was more fruitful with St Helens again making the Super League Grand Final. They were once again successful with a 29-16 win over arch-rivals Wigan. Hoppe unsurprisingly was on the scorecard. That victory meant another crack at the World Club Challenge in 2001. This time they tasted success with a 20-18 win over the Brisbane Broncos.

Continued on next page...

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2002 was his final season with St Helens and he went out on a high. Yet another Super League Grand Final appearance and another winner's medal. This time it took a last-gasp Sean Long field goal to defeat Bradford Bulls 19-18. The winning kick couldn't come soon enough for the Saints with Hoppe later saying "I couldn't have lasted another 10 each way, my calves were blown. I think the game had almost died, we were all at a standstill,"

The week after that game he played for St Helens against the touring Kiwis. Due to injuries he was called up by the Kiwis and played the final 2 of his 35 tests (against Great Britain and France). His 17 test tries were a record but has since been overtaken by Manu Vatuvei (22) and Nigel Vagana (19).

Upon his retirement he stayed in England working in construction and property investment before moving with wife Tania and his children.

Hoppe now lives in Queensland and is involved in construction but has also tried his hand at coaching and refereeing.

Still a staunch Vodafone Warriors fan Hoppe never gives up hope of them making the play-offs until the prospect is mathematically impossible.

My favourite memory of him is at Mt Smart in 1993 when he scored 2 tries (one of them an intercept and an 80 yard sprint to the line, outpacing the defence) for the Kiwis against Australia on the way to a 14-14 draw.

One of New Zealand's finest it surely won't be long before he is inducted into the NZRL's Legends of League.

1993 highlights of NZ v Australia test series <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6H3DNN1pYGY>

1999 Super League Grand Final St Helens v Bradford <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6igEojVgf4>

2000 Super League Grand Final St Helens v Wigan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP9Q-JVfrY>

World Club Challenge 2001 St Helens v Brisbane <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FODmso8q84E>

2002 Super League Grand Final St Helens v Bradford <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgvgpJ91G5M>

Watch Sir Peter Leitch interview Duane Mann on his Facebook page. Click here: <http://bit.ly/2wjdfjO>

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Oldies But Goodies

By Barry Ross



THREE PLAYERS with a combined age of more than 100 years played a major role in the Sharks 26-12 win over the Warriors at Mt. Smart Stadium on Friday night. These three men are Paul Gallen 35, Luke Lewis 33 and Chris Heighington 34. Together they ran for 313 metres, which was more than 21 percent of metres by the Sharks, as well as making 70 tackles between them which was close to a quarter of the team's total of 296. Barring injury, the three of them will play a major role as the Sharks chase a top two position when the regular season finishes on 3 September. In their final five matches, Cronulla meet the Raiders at home, the Broncos (away), the Cowboys (away), the Roosters (home) and the Knights (away). This is a tough schedule and the Sharks will need to win all five to have a chance of finishing in the top two. With 298 matches to his credit, Gallen is set to reach the 300 game mark against the Broncos at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane on Friday night, 11 August. With 608 tackles so far this season, Gallen is 17th on the most tackles list and second on the most run metres with 3,451 behind the Cowboys Jason Taumalolo, who has run for 3,488 metres. Lewis played his 301st first grade match against the Warriors, while Heighington now has 304 NRL games on his CV. Gallen turns 36 in 12 days time (14 August), while Lewis celebrates his 34th birthday in nine days (11 August). Heighington turned 34 on 14 January.

Two oldies also did plenty of work for the Warriors on Friday night. The consistent Simon Mannering topped the tackle count with 39 and also ran for 155 metres. With 758, he is third on the most tackle list so far this season, behind the Dragons Cameron McInnes and Andrew McCullough from the Broncos. Jacob Lillyman, 33, ran for 160 metres, which, along with Solomone Kata, was the game's highest. Jacob also made 31 tackles. Like Gallen and Lewis, Mannering also has a birthday in August, turning 31 on 28 August.

Congratulations to Melbourne captain, Cameron Smith, age 34, for reaching the 350 first grade game mark on Sunday against Manly in Melbourne. Darren Lockyer holds the record of most first grade matches with 355 and Smith could pass that mark before this season finishes. What an amazing career the Storm captain has had and there is still more to come. In his 350 games, he has scored 2,097 points from 41 tries, 965 goals and three field goals. He has also played 50 Tests for Australia and 42 Origins for Queensland. He has also won numerous Dally M awards, as well as the Wally Lewis Medal and the Golden Boot Award. To top all this, he is the current President of the Rugby League Players' Association. In Sunday's 40-6 win over Manly, he kicked five goals from seven attempts, had four try assists and was the Man -of-the-Match. Two of his three children, Jada 9 and Jasper 7, were ball kids for Sunday's game, while his wife Barbara, third child Matilda 4 and parents, Sonia and Wayne, were also in attendance.

Another evergreen who deserves to be recognised is Wests Tigers 28 year old second rower, Chris Lawrence. With his try on Sunday in the Tigers 26-4 win over the Titans, he equalled Benji Marshall's club record of 76 tries. Lawrence has played 207 first grade matches, all with the Tigers, since making his debut in late 2006. He has played six Tests for Australia as a centre, but moved into the second row a couple of seasons ago. Benji, now 32, played 201 matches for the Tigers before joining the Dragons where he played 54 games. The former New Zealand captain signed with the Broncos for this season and has played nine first grade games for Brisbane. He now has 264 first grade games on his CV and has scored 85 tries, 402 goals and 13 field goals for a total of 1,157 points.

After three losses, in their last four matches, to the Storm, the Dragons and the Panthers, Manly sit in seventh place on the ladder. Their home clash at Lottoland this Sunday with the second placed Roosters will have a major bearing on where they finish this season. They should still make the final eight teams, as in their last four games, they meet three teams below them on the table. These sides are the Wests Tigers, the Bulldogs and the Warriors, but their last game before the play-offs is against the Panthers, who could need to win this game to reach the play-offs.

Continued on next page...

The NSW Country Rugby League has plans to start women's Nines competitions in the Hunter Valley Group 21, Northern NSW and the Central Coast. Group 21 is located around the towns of Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone, Northern NSW is near Lismore, Ballina, Casino and Tweed Heads, while the major city on the Central Coast is Gosford. In 2016, women's Nines competitions began in Newcastle, Dubbo and on the Illawarra region around Wollongong. If things go well with the Nines, the League will look to begin 13-a-side competitions.

Rugby League fans were stunned when the Toronto Wolfpack were beaten 26-16 by the York City Knights at Bootham Crescent Stadium in York on Sunday. This was a first round match in the Super 8s Round Robin tournament to determine which two teams will be promoted next season. The Wolfpack, who were unbeaten leaders during the regular season, can still earn promotion but they cannot afford another loss. This Sunday they play eighth placed Workington Town at Zebra Claims Stadium in Workington.

Big Raiders forward, Dave Taylor, is the latest NRL man to be linked with the Toronto Wolfpack. Now 29, Taylor weighs 121 kgs and stands 187 cms in height. He made his first grade debut as an 18 year old in June 2006 with the Broncos and then joined South Sydney, the Titans, the Catalan Dragons and the Raiders this year. He has a total of 176 NRL games to his credit with 49 for the Broncos, 63 for Souths, 58 with the Titans and six with the Raiders. He played 22 games for the Catalans last year.

Men of league dinner, Hyatt regency Sydney Wednesday 26 July 2017. Barry with Johnathan Thurston and three members of the Cowboys office staff. Barry scored a seat at the Cowboys table.



Tigers To Face Warriors In Rugby League Northland Premiership Final

By Ben Francis



THE MOEREWA Tigers will face the Takahiwai Warriors in the Rugby League Northland Premiership final after dismantling the Otangarei Knights in the grand-final qualifier.

The Tigers pulled off a hard fought 38-24 win in a fierce battle.

However it wasn't always the case as the Knights struggled in the first half making numerous errors and Moerewa made last year's finalists pay.

The Tigers scored first half tries to lead 22-0 at the break.

Moerewa were reduced to 12-men early in the second half and the Knights took advantage, scoring three quick tries to trail 22-14.

The Tigers hit back to extend the lead by scoring two more tries to put the result beyond doubt.

Both sides scored one more try apiece to finish off the match.

It was sweet revenge for the Tigers who lost to the Knights in the grand final qualifier last year, going down 22-20 in a nail biter.

Moerewa will be backing themselves to knock over last year's champions in the final, the Takahiwai Warriors after both sides played out two entertaining clashes during the year.

In round five the Warriors edged the Tigers 24-18 while in round 12 both sides played out a 18-all draw.

The Warriors advanced straight to the final, knocking over the Knights 22-12 in the major semi-final.

The final will be played at Toll Stadium on August 5.



By Shane Hurndell
Hawke's Bay Today
Sports Reporter

Eight Teams In HB Premier Comp

MARKED MEN: The Bridge Pa team which will aim for a second consecutive Hawke's Bay premier rugby league title.

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS Bridge Pa will be one of eight teams in Hawke's Bay's Spring Competitions' premier division when the comps begin on August 12.

Player-coach Ihaka Waerea and his troops will have a slight advantage having been the only Hawke's Bay side to have played in the Mid Central Coast to Coast comp which finished in June. However Waerea will be a fool to expect his team to have an easy ride to the semifinals like they had in last year's six-team competition.

The Pirate Panthers, who didn't play last year after winning the 2014 and '15 titles, have returned. This Wallace Sullivan-coached team will include several players from the Napier Pirate Rugby and Sports premier union team who will be eager to erase the disappointment of their failure to make the Madison Trophy semifinals.

The Dannevirke Tigers have returned to the Bay after several years playing in the Manawatu competition and will be aiming for a semifinal finish. Other teams entered are last year's runners-up Omahu Huia, Tamatea, Te Awhina Knights, Kahuranaki and Waipawa All Sports.

The competitions will also include a six-team reserve grade and six-team women's grade. Last year's women's champions, MAC, will be playing under the Bridge Pa banner this season.

Despite the name change they will be hard to beat again. Although they may not always have the services of the Bay's sole Kiwi Ferns training squad member, utility Chanel Huddleston, as she will be attending training camps in the countdown to the naming of the national team for the World Cup.

Last year's runners-up Tamatea should again each the final. Omahu Huia, Dannevirke Tigers and Hastings Rugby and Sports will also be represented in the grade.

All games will be played at the Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park and finals weekend is scheduled for October 7.

On the rugby front defending champions Napier Old Boys Marist will take on Clive in Hawke's Bay's Maddison Trophy final at Napier's McLean Park on Saturday. Clive will be playing in their first final since 2008 and will be aiming to replicate the feat of the club's women's team which won their Hawke's Bay Championship last month.

The country's No 1 ranked secondary schools 1st XV rugby team, Hastings Boys' High School, maintained their unbeaten run for the season with a 64-0 thrashing of Tauranga Boys College in Hastings last weekend. This was the side's 15th consecutive win for the season and they have scored 924 points while conceding 50.

This was their 31st win from their last 32 matches.

The Bay's biggest sporting feat at the weekend came from kayaker Aimee Fisher who won gold medals in her K1 200m and 500m finals at the under-23 world championships in Romania. Back in May she won four golds and a silver at two consecutive World Cup regattas.

There's no doubt Fisher is on track to be New Zealand's next Lisa Carrington. The day after the Romania regatta finished Fisher travelled to France to link up with multiple world and Olympic champion Carrington, Kayla Imrie and Caitlin Ryan to prepare for a crack at the senior world championship K4 title in the Czech Republic later this month.

Rugby League's Bunker Use Isn't Perfect But It's (Again) Putting Rugby Union To Shame

By John Deaker



WHEN IT comes to the use of technology rugby league has been much more proactive than rugby union over the years. Rugby union has caught up (and copied) many of league's innovations but they've failed to invest as heavily in their technology and the planning of how their process should ideally operate has been poor - particularly the communications that take place between the on-field ref and the TMO.

Last year rugby league's bunker failed to impress as much as many people expected in its first year operating. However, in 2017 it has started to achieve the more consistent and quicker decision-making that fans and players want. There is still the odd controversial decision but that is mainly because of the perception and interpretation of the men in the bunker (ie. Human-error) and not because of flawed processes.

Rugby Union is a different story. Huge games are being decided every week at the moment because of flawed and unclear processes. The controversial conclusion to the All Blacks' series against the Lions was just one of many crucial decisions we've seen that have been handled in an amateur fashion by the officials of a game that often trumpets to all and sundry how professional it has become.

The fact that the process hasn't changed despite so many obvious mistakes is as amazing as it is disappointing. You can only imagine if such serious errors continued to crop up in any other profession costing individual's their contracts and teams' trophies that something would be done about it.

Players and fans often don't seem to have any idea who gets the final say sometimes in the 15 man game whereas we know where we stand with the bunker. There is very little chance that any TMO in rugby league would have over-ruled Tim Nanai-Williams try (where the ref had given a try based on what the three officials on the field saw) in the Chiefs v Crusaders semi-final at the weekend – a decision that was crucial in the momentum of the match.

Even with some yellow cards (that in rugby union are often worth about ten points to the side that plays against 14 men) we've seen the referee upstairs over-riding the on-field referee's ruling on how he's seen things one week in union : eg. Sam Cane in the Chiefs v Stormers match – a decision that nearly cost the Chiefs the game.

Then the following week Beauden Barrett was put in the bin by the referee without any consultation with the TMO (which might have given Barrett the benefit of the doubt by seeing his contact with the ball was probably accidental) in a decision that DID cost the Hurricanes any chance of winning their semi-final against the Lions.

Following the sickening knock-out blow to Billy Slater at the hands of Sia Soliola recently the debate has re-ignited regarding league's minimal use of the send-off and even the sin-bin.

League could again get an edge over union by leaving these decisions to the men in the bunker. They are massive calls to make reducing a team to 12 men for any time period of time and they warrant a detailed review at least as much as most try decisions do.

That would leave forward passes as one of the only other areas that the bunker isn't used at the moment where it probably should have some power. Currently, rugby union is meant to rule on passes leading up to tries but particularly in the last year the on-field referees have been phenomenally inconsistent with the times they've bothered to use the technology.

It's yet another area where the bunker could do a better job than rugby union but using some common-sense and not over-analysing the physics and momentum involved with the passing motion. The briefing to the men in the bunker should be something like: "Each time a try's scored if a pass in the set of tackles leading to that try looks significantly forward once you've seen 3 different camera angles then simply disallow the try."



Rugby League World Cup Gets A Little Help From The Prime Minister

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

Prime Minister Bill English with students from Redoubt North Primary School.

WHAT A week it was for the Rugby League World Cup 2017 in New Zealand last week

On Thursday, we had the pleasure of hosting Prime Minister Bill English at Redoubt North Primary School in Manukau alongside to announce the 14 schools around the country that had won the chance to walk out with players during a Rugby League World Cup match.

It was fantastic to see the Prime Minister up on stage with the other guests, our very own Chief Ambassador Sir Peter Leitch, Kiwis coach David Kidwell, Kiwi and Vodafone Warriors star Simon Mannering and Kiwi Ferns Georgia Hale and Laura Mariu.

The children and staff did a number of songs and performances for us at a school assembly.

The Prime Minister then had the chance to tell the excited students that 17 lucky students would walk out with one of the teams during the first match of the Rugby League World Cup in New Zealand between the Kiwis and Samoa on October 28.

Redoubt's winning was all down to a special teacher, Charlotte Maumea, who entered the school for the education resource which put them in the competition with Mrs Maumea getting a special presentation from Sir Peter.

Georgia Hale also spoke brilliantly about the Women's Rugby League World Cup which is also taking part at the end of the year in Sydney.

The women's final is being played as a double header with the men's final on December 2 in Brisbane so let's hope the Kiwis and Kiwi Ferns can both bring home the cups!

The Prime Minister then showed plenty of enthusiasm as we ran some passing drills along with David, Simon, Georgia and Laura and a class of children.

All in all, it was a fantastic day and the students of Redoubt North did their school and the whole of South Auckland proud.

PACIFIC COMMUNITY RALLIES TOGETHER FOR RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP

Our week didn't end there though, with a Pacific information night taking place on Friday night before the Warriors-Sharks match.

Some famous names came along for the evening including former internationals Duane Mann, Lesley Vainakalo, Emosi Koloto and Una Taufu.

Continued on next page...

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Mangere MP Aupito Su'a William Sio, Manukau East PM Jenny Salesa and Labour candidate for the seat of Maungakiekie Priyanca Radhakrishnan as well as councillors Alf Filipaina, Fa'anānā Efeso Collins and Tauanu'u Nick Bakulich.

Chief ambassador Sir Peter Leitch also popped in and gave a very well received speech as did former Tongan international Duane Mann, who spoke so passionately about being able to represent his heritage.

It was great to have so many leaders from the Pacific community together as we'll need their help to rally the community for the Kiwis-Samoa match at Mt Smart on October 28, Samoa-Tonga at Hamilton on November 4 and Kiwis-Tonga at Hamilton on November 11.

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



Kiwi Ferns Georgia Hale and Laura Mariu spoke brilliantly about representing New Zealand and the upcoming Women's Rugby League World Cup



Local Kiwi Fern Laura Mariu, Redoubt North teacher Charlotte Maumea and some students pose with the Rugby League World Cup trophy.



Sir Peter Leitch presents Charlotte Maumea with a signed Kiwis jersey.



The children of Redoubt North put on an energetic and colourful performance.

RLWC Community Night



Sir Peter Leitch brings a smile to former Kiwi Lesley Vainakalo's face with a story from the old days



Sir Peter Leitch says hello to former Kiwi Emosi Koloto



The former Warrior, Kiwi and Tongan international Duane Mann spoke so passionately about Pacific Island rugby league



Ex-warrior and Kiwi Duane Mann talking to a group of Pacific Island leaders on Friday night at NZRL about the RLWC. You can check out the interview I did with him on my Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/sirpeterleitch/>



Community leaders including Labour candidate Sam McDonald (l-r), councillor Tauanu'u Nick Bakulich, Labour candidate Priyanca Radhakrishnan, Apulu Reece Autagavaia, Mangere MP Aupito Su'a William Sio, Manukau East PM Jenny Salesa, councillor Alf Filipaina and councillor Fa'anāna Efeso Collins.



Leaders from the Pacific Island community including former Kiwis Lesley Vainakalo, Emosi Koloto, ex-Tongan international Una Taufu, Manukau East PM Jenny Salesa, Racheal Afeaki, councillor Alf Filipaina and Essendon Tuitupou.



Glenora Secure The Roope Rooster For The 2017 Season

By Talei Anderson

THE GLENORA Bears have secured the Konica Minolta Roope Rooster Challenge Trophy for the 2017 season after holding a 20 all draw against Pt Chevalier in Round 16 of the SAS Fox Memorial Premiership on Saturday.

A try on the hooter safeguarded the Bears from losing the silverware, holding the trophy for the fourth time since its inception in 1915 (1960, 1978, 1999, and 2017).

Glenora have also secured a spot in the competitions top four, seeing them advance to the 2017 semi-finals alongside Pt Chevalier (1st), Mt Albert (3rd) and Howick (4th). Although the top four have been confirmed, the order in which they finish will depend on the results from the final two rounds.

Te Atatu have moved out of the firing line of being relegated to the Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup division after taking down Mangere East 28-6 last weekend.

Victory over the Hawks moves them just one-point ahead, however they will need to be focused with two games remaining against high-flyers Mt Albert and Glenora. Despite the loss, Mangere East's hopes to stay in the Fox are still alive with games against Northcote and Marist in the remaining rounds.

Papakura's hopes to qualify in this year's finals have come to an end after going down 24-18 to the Northcote Tigers.

The Tigers dominated the first 20 minutes of both halves.

The Sea Eagles gained momentum on the back-end of both, but it was too little too late for the defending champions.

Papakura captain Willie Stowers said it was a tough loss to take.

"At the end of the day it came down to execution," said Stowers.

"We managed to get down to our try line but we made mistakes... losing co-captain Roman Hifo in the first half hurt us a little, but that's no excuse."

"We are all footy players, we all know how to play good footy. We just need to get it together when we get on the field".

"Top four is probably out of reach now... regardless of where we are on the ladder, we want to finish our season on a high."

Continued on next page...

It was a successful weekend for the Marist Saints with an upset against Howick 28-26 at Paparoa Park last Saturday. The loss moved the Hornets from third to fourth on the competition ladder, while the Saints remain seventh.

In the final game, Mt Albert took down the Richmond Rovers 38-10.

It's a tight contest in the Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Premiership division.

Otara (1st) and Otahuhu (2nd) currently lead the competition ladder on 18 points while Bay Roskill trail two points behind on 16.

The Bay Roskill Vikings (3rd) have a chance to move further up the ladder when they play the Otara Scorpions at home this weekend, but it's a race between Ponsonby (4th) and Manurewa (5th) - separated by three points - to see who will qualify for play-offs.

East Coast Bays, Waitemata and Manukau have secured their spot to play for the Sharman Cup Plate this year.

The race to make top four is on the line when Hibiscus Coast play Manukau in the final round of the competition this weekend.

Hibiscus Coast currently sit fourth on the ladder on nine points, while Pakuranga trail on eight. However, Pakuranga will receive an automatic two-points for their bye this weekend, leaving the Raiders to chase for a win and a chance to play in the semi-finals.

[Watch the live stream replay from Round 16 of the SAS Fox Memorial Papakura v Northcote here.](#)

[Click here to view the results, ladder and this week's fixtures](#)

ARL results for Saturday July 29

SAS Fox Memorial: Round 16

Mt Albert 38 Richmond 10

Glenora 20 Pt Chevalier 20

Te Atatu 28 Mangere East 6

Howick 26 Marist 28

Papakura 18 Northcote 24

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Premiership:
Round 12

Ellerslie 16 Ponsonby 62

New Lynn 12 Manurewa 32

Otahuhu 32 Bay Roskill 34

Papatoetoe 4 Otara 60

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Plate: Round 12

Hibiscus Coast 10 Waitemata 50

Pakuranga 20 Manukau 32

East Coast Bays bye

ARL fixtures for Saturday August 5

SAS Fox Memorial: Round 17

Mt Albert v Te Atatu @ Fowlds Park 2.30pm

Richmond v Glenora @ Grey Lynn Park 2.30pm

Marist v Papakura @ Murray Halberg Park 2.30pm

Howick v Pt Chevalier @ Paparoa Park 2.30pm (click here to live stream from 2pm)

Mangere East v Northcote @ Walter Massey Park 2.30pm

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Premiership:
Round 13

Otahuhu v Ellerslie @ Bert Henham Park 2.30pm

Bay Roskill v Otara @ Blockhouse Bay 2.30pm

Manurewa v Papatoetoe @ Mountfort Park 2.30pm

Ponsonby v New Lynn @ Victoria Park 2.30pm

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Plate: Round 13
(Final round before semi-final playoffs)

East Coast Bays v Waitemata @ Freyberg Park 2.30pm

Manukau v Hibiscus Coast @ Moyle Park 2.30pm
Pakuranga bye

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SAS College Rugby League Semi-Finalists Confirmed

By Talei Anderson

Spots in the grand finals up for grabs today
Wednesday August 2 (4.00pm kick-off).

THE SEMI-FINALISTS for the 2017 SAS College Rugby League competitions have been confirmed, with spots in the **grand finals up for grabs today - Wednesday August 2 (4.00pm kick-off).**

In the premier section, Kelston Boys' High School will play defending champions St Paul's College (Game A) to decide who goes straight through to the grand finale.

Kelston head into the game as favourites edging past St Paul's by percentage points. However, both sides have shown consistency throughout the year, winning all but one game in the championship rounds which resulted in a 12 all draw against each other in round two.

It's do or die in the second semi-final (Game B) when Southern Cross host Mt Albert, fighting for a life and a chance to make the championships top three.

Southern Cross go into the game as favourites winning three of their five games played, but Mt Albert prove they have what it takes after taking down perennial heavyweights St Paul's in the competitions pool play. The last time these two met, Southern Cross came out on top with a six point lead winning 24-18 in round two.

The winner of Game B will play the losing team from Game A to see who will advance to the 2017 grand final.

Aorere and Papatoetoe will play for fifth position.

In the second-tier premiership plate division top qualifiers Manurewa High School take on the 2016 championship runners up Wesley College in the first semi, while Western Springs take on Westlake Boys' in the other.

The SAS College Rugby League Game of the Round St Paul's v Kelston Boys' will be streamed live online at www.aucklandleague.co.nz from 4pm (click here).

SAS College Rugby League results for Wednesday July 26

Premier Championship

Kelston Boys 26 Aorere 12
Mt Albert 34 Papatoetoe 10
Southern Cross 16 St Paul's 22

Senior A

Westlake Boys' 6 Southern Cross 52
Selwyn 12 James Cook 14
Pakuranga 42 Aorere B 16
Sir Edmund Hillary 26 Lynfield 34
Papakura bye

U/15 9-aside

Southern Cross 28 Sir Edmund Hillary 18
St Paul's 16 Avondale 12

Premier Plate

Manurewa 22 Wesley 16
Westlake Boys' 16 Western Spr 10
Avondale bye



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THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S HUGE ROUND 22 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

- It's Retro Round and we've compared the preparation, nutrition and recovery of two of the best props of their playing eras – **Steve Roach** and **Aaron Woods** – to see how much the game has changed since the 1980s.
- **Jason Taumalolo** is a Dally M medallist and goliath of the game, but the 24-year-old isn't immune from criticism from his team-mates. "There's been a few times where **Scott Bolton** got up me when I've been lazy in a game. He chips me about it."
- Knights winger **Nathan Ross** has declared the Knights' darkest days are behind them following an emotional win over the Dragons last weekend, their fourth in two years. "I'm super excited, that's why I re-signed. When you add experience to good young players, that's a concoction that is going to be very difficult for opponents to deal with."
- Veteran referee **Gavin Badger** will officiate his 300th game this weekend and has plenty of great stories from his time in the top grade – most memorably being bowled over by Carl Webb in his debut match as head ref.

PLUS... The **Top 8 South Sydney v Dragons** clashes, **The Analyst** tries to figure out what has gone wrong at Manly and a **Jamie Buhrer** poster.



ROUND 22

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V



#NRLKnightsWarriors

17	10	0	40	Nathan ROSS	1	Roger TUIVASA-SHECK (C)	18	6	0	24
16	3	0	12	Ken SIO	2	David FUSITU'A	19	8	0	32
18	2	0	8	Dane GAGAI	3	Blake AYSHFORD	16	4	0	16
19	7	0	28	Peter MATA'UTIA	4	Solomone KATA	14	4	0	16
11	4	0	16	†Shaun KENNY-DOWALL	5	Ken MAUMALO	18	6	0	24
18	3	23	58	Brock LAMB	6	Kieran FORAN	14	2	0	8
12	1	28	61	Trent HODKINSON	7	Mason LINO	2	0	0	0
19	1	0	4	Daniel SAIFITI	8	Jacob LILLYMAN	18	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	Jamie BUHRER (C)	9	Issac LUKE	18	1	8	20
10	0	0	0	Josh KING	10	Ben MATULINO	12	1	0	4
19	3	0	12	Sione MATA'UTIA (C)	11	Isaiah PAPALI'I	1	0	0	0
13	3	0	12	Joe WARDLE	12	Bunty AFOA	12	1	0	4
17	0	0	0	Mitch BARNETT	13	Simon MANNERING	17	4	0	16

INTERCHANGE

19	2	0	8	Daniel LEVI	14	Mafoa'aeata HINGANO	9	1	0	4
16	0	0	0	Luke YATES	15	Sam LISONE	18	0	0	0
9	3	0	12	Lachlan FITZGIBBON	16	Ligi SAO	11	0	0	0
16	1	0	4	Jacob SAIFITI	17	James BELL	1	0	0	0

RESERVES

0	0	0	0	Jack COGGER	18	Jazz TEVAGA	0	0	0	0
11	2	0	8	Sam STONE	19	Chris SATAE	0	0	0	0
12	4	0	16	Brendan ELLIOT	20	Nathaniel ROACHE	7	0	0	0
3	2	0	8	Chanel MATA'UTIA	21	Charnze NICOLL-KLOKSTAD	6	6	0	24

†Played 9 games for Sydney Roosters

COACHES

Nathan BROWN Stephen KEARNEY

PENALTIES				SCRUMS			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	13	14	15	16

PENALTIES				SCRUMS			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	13	14	15	16

44 BIG LEAGUE 2017 Round 22

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 5
VENUE: McDONALD JONES STADIUM
KICK-OFF: 3PM
REFEREE: CHRIS SUTTON
ASSISTANT REFEREE: CHRIS JAMES
TOUCH JUDGES: RUSSELL TURNER & NICK MOREL
SENIOR REVIEW OFFICIAL: BERNARD SUTTON
REVIEW OFFICIAL: BRYAN NORRIE
FOX LEAGUE: 2.30PM
LIVE RADIO: TRIPLE M, ABC

	KNIGHTS	WARRIORS
Position (Points)	16th (10)	11th (18)
Points For	315	363
Points Against	512	427

ATTACK		
Tries	53	63
Completions	75%	79%
Tries 0-20m	29	38
Tries 21-50m	8	12
Tries 51-100m	7	5

DEFENCE		
Tries	90	74
Tries 0-20m	56	28
Tries 21-50m	19	23
Tries 51-100m	7	11

MATCH AVERAGES		
Tries Scored	3	3
Tries Conceded	5	4
Points Scored	17	19
Points Conceded	27	22
Hit Ups/Runs	152	175
Tackles	330	324
Metres Gained	1317	1569
Handling Errors	4	4
Offloads	7	7
Line-breaks	3	4
Goalkicking	80%	80%

HEAD-TO-HEAD
 Played 37, Warriors 19, Newcastle 17, drawn 1

AT McDONALD JONES STADIUM
 Played 16, Newcastle 9, Warriors 7

WINNING FORM 2017
NEWCASTLE: LWLLLLLLLWLBLLBLLLLW Streak – 1 win
WARRIORS: WLLLWLLWLLWLBWLBLLL Streak – 4 losses

PAST 8 CLASHES
2017 – WARRIORS D. NEWCASTLE 26-22 at Mt Smart Stadium
2016 – WARRIORS D. NEWCASTLE 50-14 at Hunter Stadium;
WARRIORS D. NEWCASTLE 40-18 at Mt Smart Stadium
2015 – WARRIORS D. NEWCASTLE 24-20 at Mt Smart Stadium;
NEWCASTLE D. WARRIORS 24-14 at Hunter Stadium
2014 – NEWCASTLE D. WARRIORS 28-22 at Hunter Stadium;
WARRIORS D. NEWCASTLE 38-18 at Mt Smart Stadium
2013 – WARRIORS D. NEWCASTLE 28-12 at Mt Smart Stadium

BIGGEST HEAD-TO-HEAD WINS
NEWCASTLE D. AUCKLAND 48-6 at Marathon Stadium, 1995
AUCKLAND D. NEWCASTLE 42-0 at Ericsson Stadium, 1999;
WARRIORS D. NEWCASTLE 52-10 at Mt Smart Stadium, 2007

NEXT CLASH
NEWCASTLE: v Parramatta at ANZ, 6pm Friday August 11
WARRIORS: v Canberra at Mt Smart, 4pm (NZ) Sunday August 13

CASUALTY WARD
NEWCASTLE: Pauli Pauli (leg) – Rd 25; Jack Stockwell (shoulder), Anthony Tupou (hip) – indefinite; Josh Starling (back), David Bhana (knee), Dylan Phythian (knee) – season
WARRIORS: Ryan Hoffman (foot) – Rd 23; Albert Vete (arm), Shaun Johnson (knee), Nathaniel Roache (hamstring) – indefinite; James Gavet (arm), Bodene Thompson (pectoral) – season

Courtesy of our friends at Big League Magazine

NRL Preview

Knights eye rare back-to-back wins

by DAVID MIDDLETON
@Middleton_David



JACOB LILLYMAN

160
metres in
Round 21

McDonald Jones Stadium Saturday, 3pm

Form: The Knights were rewarded for weeks of honest toil last Saturday when they downed finals contenders St George Illawarra 21-14. It was their first win from their past nine starts and will provide welcome encouragement ahead of their final five games of the season. The Warriors slumped to their fourth-straight loss when they went down to Cronulla in Auckland last Friday. Once again, the absence of halfback Shaun Johnson proved an insurmountable obstacle.

History: A dominant record over the past 12 seasons has resulted in the Warriors overtaking the Knights in the head-to-head record since 1995. Newcastle were rarely beaten in the early years however the tide has turned since 2006, with the Kiwi outfit winning 17 of the past 21 encounters. They last met in the opening round of 2017 at Mt Smart when the Warriors claimed a 26-22 victory.

Danger sign: The Knights will be confident after last weekend's success and determined to make it two wins on the trot – something they haven't achieved in more than two years. The Warriors have not travelled well this season, winning only once in eight games in Australia in 2017.

Best Bet? Look to the Knights to double down on last week's victory and claim a win by 1-12 points.

Money-spinner: Consider Nathan Ross, Peter Mata'utia or Shaun Kenny-Dowall for First Tryscorer.

HEAD-TO-HEAD LEADERS

STATS

AVERAGE METRES

Roger Tuivasa-Sheck	172
Ken Maumalo	154
Nathan Ross	152
Dane Gagai	129
Simon Mannering	129

AVERAGE TACKLES

Simon Mannering	45
Jamie Buhrer	36
Mitch Barnett	36
Bodene Thompson	35
Danny Levi	33

LINE-BREAKS

Nathan Ross	10
Roger Tuivasa-Sheck	9
Shaun Johnson	9
Dane Gagai	8
David Fusitu'a	7

NRL FANTASY

FANTASY POINTS

Simon Mannering	59.7
Shaun Johnson	58.1
Jamie Buhrer	47.9
Mitch Barnett	44.2
Bodene Thompson	43.9



HOLDEN CUP

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 5 **VENUE:** McDONALD JONES STADIUM **KICK-OFF:** 12.45PM
REFEREE: ADAM CASSIDY **ASSISTANT REFEREE:** DREW OULTRAM
TOUCH JUDGES: JAMES VELLA & CAMERON MITCHELL **FOX:** 12.40PM

KNIGHTS V WARRIORS

Matt COOPER	1	Lee TURNER
Mitch ANDREWS	2	Paul TURNER
Cory DENNISS	3	Melino FINEANGANOFU
Heath GIBBS	4	Dean KOUKA-SMITH
Ofa MANUOFETO	5	Gibson POPOALII
Jack JOHNS	6	Kane TELEA
Hayden LOUGHREY	7	Chanel HARRIS-TAVITA
Cameron KING	8	Troy PULUPAKI
Nash BIRCH	9	Lewis SIO
Pasami SAULO	10	Tayhler PAORA
Brodie JONES	11	Tyler SLADE
Sam McINTYRE	12	Joe VUNA
Zac HOSKING (C)	13	Chris SIO (C)
14 Luke HUTH, 15 Henry PENN 16 Viko PULIUEVA, 17 Matt CROKER, 18 Eddy TUILOTOLAVA 19 Kyle SMITH 20 Jayden BUTTERFIELD 21 Kainoa GUDGEON 22 Kurtis DARK, 23 Dylan CLARK		14 Dylan TAVITA, 15 Kelepi LUI 16 Soane HUFANGA, 17 Jerome MAMEA, 18 Havi TUPOUNIUA 20 Isaiah PAPALI'I, 21 Elijah SUFIA, 22 Sheldon ROGERS 23 Edward MULITALO-VAEAO 24 Mafoa'aeata HINGANO
Todd LOWRIE		Grant POCKLINGTON

HAND IT TO GIBBS... The Knights defeated the Dragons to re-enter the top eight in Round 21. Their first try was a show-stopper as Mitch Andrews ran 90 metres to set up Matt Cooper. The home team were trailing in the second before Heath Gibbs tied the game up. With eight minutes left Gibbs added a try on the right edge. Jack Johns was a standout as he contributed 130 metres and made 30 tackles to go with six tackle-breaks.

CAN'T CATCH A BREAK... The Warriors went down to Cronulla. They just couldn't keep up as the Sharks got on the board within the first two minutes. Three tries into the onslaught, Dean Kouka-Smith answered back. Unfortunately these were the only points the Warriors could muster, despite their 79 per cent completion rate.

– SAM PASFIELD

PHOTO: David Rowland/AAP Image



SEMIFINAL
KELSTON V ST PAULS
WED 2ND 4PM KICK OFF AT KELSTON

Haydn+Rollett

STREAMING LIVE

Reader Mail

MY GRANDSON Matua Elbourne with the Vodaphone Warriors at Skycity to watch the LPL3 NBA2K Grand Final, he had a wonderful time and was very happy to meet his stars.

Regards

Gerry



Hi Peter

LAST YEAR NZ-born resident in Cornwall England Matthew Smith broke the 9 hour world record of 731 ewes @ Trefranck farm.

Overnight whilst preparing another review I live streamed from the same venue Rowland Smith of Hawkes Bay, younger brother of Matthew attempt to break the previous record of 605 held by Leon Samuels of Invercargill.

He shored 644 Romney and crossbred ewes in 8 hours ie four consecutive two-hour runs of 161 each.

This is a phenomenal achievement of sub 45 seconds with actual shearing time of under 35 seconds.

Consider the great amount of training, concentration, fitness required to sustain that for eight hours.

The achievement has been added to the annual diary 2018.

Best, Paul Mulvaney

Good afternoon Sir Peter,

IWANTED TO send this email to give a brief rundown on my experience at the recent game against the Panthers at Mount Smart Stadium.

This is the first time my partner and I had been to a live game of rugby league, and after our experience I can guarantee that we both cannot wait to come back!

Everyone that we talked to at the game was incredibly positive and helpful – the big thing we both noticed was the huge sense of community you can feel when being at the stadium with the fans and everyone that helps bring the game/event together.

I also want to make a special mention of your help and assistance. I approached you regarding your opinion on where would be good seats in the stadium to watch the game from, and the response and assistance you gave me left me honestly overwhelmed. With your help and everyone else's on the day we were treated to a night we will never forget, so much so that I felt I needed to send an email to acknowledge everyone's efforts. Sarah and I were treated to something we will never forget and all I can say is thank you very much for going above and beyond in helping us the way that you have.

So again, thank you very much to all involved, we will definitely be back and we will be making sure that people we talk to will hear of our amazing experience.

Kind regards,

Scott Baylis.

Dear Sir Peter,

THE TEACHERS of Redoubt North Primary School would like to extend our thanks to Sir Peter Leitch and the Vodafone Warriors for hosting us at the Warriors v Sharks game on Friday night. Everyone had a fabulous time and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The atmosphere in the Mad Butcher Lounge was amazing and a unique opportunity that none of us had previously. It was a privilege to meet some of the Vodafone Warriors players.

A massive, massive thank you to Sir Peter Leitch for hosting us in your lounge. We loved everything about the night, starting with your warm welcome, to the hilarious tour with Dexter Traill and being introduced to many league greats, running in the tunnel, and enjoying your company whilst having dinner. It was honour to be so close to the players whilst you were interviewing them in your unique style.

Thank you again for going beyond for our children at school, by providing them with kiwi training shirts and books for our library. It means so much to our school and community how actively involved you have been and are a credit to the sport. You are an inspiration to not only the students but to us teachers and community.

We look forward to what the future will bring.

Thank you from Charlotte & The Redoubt Staff



Charlotte & Amy in the tunnel.



Sir Peter & Charlotte.



Girls at the game.



Charlotte Olivia Chloe.



Evan, Char, Nathan and Albert.

Charlie Gubb is back with the next instalment of 'At home with Ray White New Zealand'. Check it out here: <https://www.facebook.com/vodafonewarriors/videos/1599602996750754/>

Cant wait!
- Joyce Putohe

Thought you might like this Salford V W/
Warriors W/W 27 V Salford 14 he had a good
game.
- Joyce Putohe



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