

VODAFONE



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

13th September 2017

Newsletter #187



Vodafone Warriors Junior Awards



Junior Warriors coach Grant Pocklington presents the NYC Clubman of the year award to Kenese Kenese.



Junior Warriors coach Grant Pocklington presents the NYC Player of the Year award (Sonny Fai Medal) to Chanel Harris-Tavita.



Junior Warriors coach Grant Pocklington presents the NYC Rookie of the Year award to Tyler Slade.

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz



By Richard Becht

Harris-Tavita Vodafone NYC Player Of The Year

CHANEL HARRIS-TAVITA backed up his 2016 TNT NYC Rookie of the Year accolade by being named the Vodafone NYC Player of the Year at the Vodafone Junior Warriors' 2017 awards dinner at Mount Smart Stadium last night.

The 18-year-old Pakuranga College product headed off centre Melino Fineanganofu, prop Kenese Kenese and last year's winner Chris Sio for the award and the Sonny Fai Medal.

Standoff-halfback Harris-Tavita, who made his NYC debut on his 17th birthday last year, appeared in 21 games, scoring six tries and producing 10 try assists in a challenging season for the team.

A Mount Wellington Warriors and Howick Hornets junior, he also made the Junior Kiwis this year.

With a significant number of 17-year-old players again making their debuts this season, the field for the TNT NYC Rookie of the Year award was keenly contested with fullback-wing Israel Ogden, prop Tayhler Paora, back rower Tyler Slade and utility Paul Turner the finalists. Slade was the winner, making 13 appearances and averaging 60 metres and 26 tackles a game.

Co-captain Kenese Kenese was named the Canterbury of New Zealand NYC Clubman of the Year while utility Eiden Ackland was rewarded with the NYC Education Ambassador Award, recognising his efforts in doing a double degree in law and arts.

Five academy players were acknowledged for representing the club's values – Caleb Pese (grounded), Taniela Otukolo (courageous), Sione Moala (selfless), Quinnlan Tupou (passionate) and Temple Kalepo (uncompromising).

The dinner marked the 10th and last season of the NYC, the competition winding up with the Vodafone Junior Warriors standing out as the most successful having won the premiership three times (2010, 2011 and 2014), the minor premiership in 2011 and being the only club to make the finals in each of the first eight seasons. Penrith has the chance to equal the Vodafone Junior Warriors' three titles this season.

With NYC graduates Isaiah Papali'i, James Bell and Erin Clark making their NRL debuts this year it means almost 60 Vodafone Junior Warriors have gone on to play at first-grade level, the most of any club in the competition.

Next year the Vodafone Junior Warriors will be playing in the new New South Wales under-20 competition.

Vodafone NYC Player of the Year & Sonny Fai Medal winner: Chanel Harris-Tavita

TNT NYC Rookie of the Year: Tyler Slade

NYC Clubman of the Year: Kenese Kenese

At the Awards Night

From Sir Peter's Camera



Tony Iro (Recruitment and Development Manager) and Phil Roache (Wellington Scout).



Autex house boys Lee Turner, Paul Turner-Rau, Nathan Newton and Preston Riki with Spencer Turner.



CEO Cameron George speaking to the audiences the awards to night.



Chanel Harris-Tavita, Dylaan Tavita and Kane Telea all play for the NYC.



Warriors NYC Manager Doug Murray, NZRL Director Liz Richards and ISP Assistant Coach John Teina.



Kenese Kenese Clubman of the year with Parents Viliamu & Sina Kenese.



NYC Staff David C (Physio), Grant P (Coach), Junior M (Trainer), Sam R (Trainer)..



At the Junior Warriors awards dinner nice to catch up with Korey, Caleb and Joanne.. Calebs currently in the Warriors development.



Josh Dixon Venue Manager Epicure (runs the catering at Mt Smart)with Bianca Bush (Events & Game Day Manager).



Was great to catch up with Vodafone Warriors Head Coach Stephen Kearney at the Junior Awards..

Vodafone Warriors CEO becomes a Dad

FYI, Cameron and Emma had a baby girl Stella Rose George, Mum and Dad are all doing well !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CONGRATULATIONS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Where to now?

By David Kemeys

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



SOMEONE BEAT someone else, someone got eliminated, so did that other team.

All in all that means someone has a week off, so does that other team, someone plays someone, and the other lot play the winner of the game I didn't watch.

Don't care.

Actually that's a bit of fib, I still reckon no one will stop Melbourne. The only thing they have going against them is that eventually they have to play outside of Melbourne, where they get a free ride from the refs.

Meanwhile here in Auckland the game of put the boot into the Vodafone Warriors rolls on.

I'm over it.

Yes it was a shite year, but we have made a wonderful signing.

And I doubt you have ever heard of the bloke.

In comes strength and conditioning guru Alex Corvo from the Broncos.

Surely that has to silence the "we are never fit" brigade.

I have no problem with this, and think it is actually a smart and bold move.

We are thrashed all the time on the state of our fitness, so making a change makes perfect sense to me.

Corvo went to Melbourne in 2002, and not many people complained they were not up to it.

He is, apparently, one of the NRL's toughest trainers. About time. That should send shudders down a few Warriors spines – assuming they all have backbones, and the jury is out on one or two of them on that score.

Corvo was with the Storm 12 years, so I am going to assume he knows a thing or two about what he is doing, given Melbourne are pretty much the yardstick of the comp. And he has been head of strength and conditioning at the Broncos since 2013.

He did the same job for the Kangaroos for six years from 2009-2015 and for Queensland at Origin level.

Media reports say new CEO Cameron George and coach Stephen Kearney are looking to Corvo to instil a "hard edge" to the team.

"We need to bring in someone of his calibre to add to our resources in the football department and to bring a hard edge to the environment. I rate him highly after training under him as a player at the Storm and working with him as a coach," Kearney said.

Which leads me to the signing that prompted a chorus of moaning – Gerard Beale.

You need to take the disappointment of the season out of your thinking.

The Cronulla winger is only 27 for goodness sake, and anyone who tells me Kan Maumalo is better, well, I'm going to wonder what they've been smoking.

Beale, who has 10 Kiwis caps, is a really solid player- and he can play at centre, where I happen to think we are sadly lacking, and I hate David Fusitu'a playing there, which I see as a shameful waste.

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Signed on a three-year deal from next season, it was Cronulla coach Shane Flanagan who confirmed the deal, rather stealing the Warriors thunder, but which would also lead me to believe he was none too happy about it.

Beale has also lined up for Brisbane and St George, and has won a title with the Sharks.

Of course Brisbane forward Adam Blair is also expected to sign, but those two prompted an avalanche of moaning, which our old friends at the Herald seemed to relish in.

Fans reacted badly.

I confess to understanding the doubts in Blair's case, since he is 31 and all the talk is of a three-year deal. But tell me he is not going to offer more than our props did this year.

Exactly.

Welcome Home Hiku

Then there was news at the weekend that we have also secured the signature of Peta Hiku. Cue more moaning.

But there is another player with pedigree signed for our less than impressive centres.

Hiku, who hails from Gisborne originally, got a release from the Warrington Wolves, where the 24-year-old went after being let go by Penrith.

It's a homecoming for Hiku, who was part of our Juniors set-up back in the day, before moving to Manly.

You can argue all your like, as some did on radio, that we should never have let him go. But the problem with that argument is that it was often coming from people who don't think we should be bringing him back. You can't have it both ways.

In 2012, when we did let him go, he was our Under 20s player of the year.

If I have a niggle, it's who is right? Is it those who didn't think he could foot it at NRL level –cue all those, mostly Aussie former players, who reckon we have too many simply not up to standard; or is it those who are bringing him back believing he can do a job?

I can recall him being excellent for Manly, so good in fact that we tried then to get him back, but he elected

to stay.

At the end of 2015 he was let go and moved to the Panthers.

He is not unlike Beale, being able to play in a lot of spots, centre, wing and fullback, and he's even played stand-off for the Kiwis.

At the very least, he will increase the competition for spots, and that has to be a good thing.

Name A Line-up

There is a lot of water to go under the bridge, so who knows who else will arrive, and for that matter who might go. But it is quite fun to name a side.

Roger Tuivasa-Sheck is a shoo-in for fullback in my side, David Fusitu'a goes on the wing where he belongs, Beale grabs the other spot. Hiku comes into the centres with Solomone Kata - who I am assuming is going to recover the kind of form he showed two seasons ago but which was sadly lacking this year. Ata Hingano comes into the halves with Shaun Johnson.

Adam Blair, Issac Luke and James Gavet will do me for a front row, while Simon Mannering can partner the incoming Tohu Harris in the second row, and Isaiah Papalii can lock it all up.

So I already can't find a spot for another new boy, Leivaha Pulu, coming across from the Titans.

He's only 27 and at 115kg and already capped for Tonga, I am assuming we are not bringing him in to make up the numbers.

Manaia Cherrington moved from Canberra and we have not seen him, Ligi Sao was something of a disappointment but is worth persisting with, then we have the likes of Nathaniel Roache, Jazz Tevaga – who I thought never let us down, Blake Ayshford, Ken Maumalo, Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad...and probably a few others I can't think of off the top of my head.



Rattue At It Again

League-hater Chris Rattue never misses a chance to bag league, so our season must have been gold for him. When a tired old hack sits at his keyboard with writer's block all he has to do is say to himself: "I know, I'll slate the Warriors."

His latest claim, though to be fair to the poor bloke it is a claim not without merit, was that the fans have finally turned against the Warriors.

Not so actually.

Most of the fans I know accept certainly that we deserve most – not all, but most – of the criticism we have copped this year, but they will all be back.

We can't all be the All Blacks, though it's easy to forget given how bloody good they are now and have been for so long, that they have had times when they could not win either.

The other thing that always amazes me about comparing the All Blacks and the Warriors is that to my mind you could not find 16 competitive rugby teams in the world, whereas the NRL can find 15 league sides in Australia and throw us a bone.

Big Chris clearly knows more about league than Kearney, opining "Beale is a decent but average NRL utility back, and no game changer".

Now we get to the meat of it. "The All Blacks are playing a brand of rugby that thrills the masses, league often looking like a game played in shackles by comparison."

Ah, not sure about that one Chris. I know bugger-all about rugby I will admit, but I will take some convincing that I need to tune in to the All Blacks v Argentina.

"League has stolen the kick-and-clap moniker it used to beat rugby with."

Ah, not sure about that one either Chris.

Last time I watched rugby it was still full of kicking for touch, kicking for territory, kicking for goal, endless line-outs, even more scrums, reset scrums, and brain-numbing forward pick and goes.

Geyer Wants RTS To Get The Chop

League great Mark Geyer has called for Roger Tuivasa-Sheck to be axed as our skipper so he can focus on his own game.

"I'd relieve him of that and let him expand his play more," he said.

I don't think Geyer will be alone in that sentiment.

What was interesting to me was how close Geyer was to the general litany of complaints you hear, nor his shopping priorities, calling for a ball running back rower, and a centre.

Keep in mind Geyer was speaking before the Beale or Hiku signings were known.

"It's like groundhog day every time I watch the Warriors, they don't seem to have the mental capabilities that most other teams have."

Groundhog day for you Mark, bugger me, spare us poor fans a thought, we watch them a lot more than you do.

Papali'i Gets Good Press

There was a big piece on Isaiah Papali'i in the papers at the weekend.

He played a handful of games for us this year, admittedly the injury crisis maybe elevating him, but it is easy to forget the bloke is just 18.

Only a year ago he was in the Mt Albert Grammar First XV, and in fact he was so good he was named the best First XV player in the country.

League is in the family, mum Lorina having represented the Kiwi Ferns.

"There was talk about staying in rugby but I was adamant I wanted to come back to league."

Papali'i already has his targets set for 2018.

"More consistent NRL games and try to make it on a week-to-week basis."

[Read the Stuff article here](#)

Refs Cop It

You have to love that Bunker. Cronulla coach Shane Flanagan and his Manly opposite Trent Barrett are deep in the brown stuff after losing it and blaming the refs for their respective sides' defeats.

Both will be fined for their outbursts.

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I seem to recall Miles Davis earlier this year being strident in his view that the whole shooting match should be got rid of and the refs should make the calls and we all should all bloody well live with it.

I did enjoy Barrett chucking a wobbly, because I have no time for Manly. Good riddance.

I did enjoy watching Flanagan chuck a wobbly too, but not as much as I enjoyed watching that knob Andrew Fifita blow any chance the Sharks had, because I have no time for Cronulla, and even less for Fifita.

NRL boss Todd Greenberg was not a happy camper.

“In a fantastic round of finals it’s been marred by the response of some of the losing teams. Unfortunately we’ve developed a culture in our game of blaming match officials for a loss. It sets a terrible example and it’s got to stop.”

Can’t disagree, and we Warriors fans are among the worst.

“I’m not saying the referees are perfect — they never have been. The disputes we’re talking about are on some really tight calls, and there’ll be debate no matter which way that they go.”

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



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INTRUST SUPER PREMIERSHIP PRELIMINARY FINALS



Wyong Roos v
New Zealand Warriors



1.05PM, LEICHHARDT OVAL



Penrith Panthers v
Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs



3.15PM, LEICHHARDT OVAL



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[ISP finals] Same side to face Wyong

by *Richard Becht*

VODAFONE WARRIORS v WYONG ROOS Leichhardt Oval, Sydney 1.05pm Local, 3.05 NZT, Sunday, September 17

AN UNCHANGED Vodafone Warriors line-up has been named to face minor premiers the Wyong Roos in Sunday's Intrust Super Premiership preliminary final at Leichhardt Oval (1.05pm kick-off local time; 3.05pm NZT).

Coming off Sunday's impressive 30-6 semi-final success against Newcastle, the Vodafone Warriors meet a Wyong side which advanced directly to week three of the playoffs after beating fourth-placed Canterbury-Bankstown 34-26 in the qualifying finals.

Roosters star Lattrell Mitchell scored two tries in Wyong's 20-14 success over the Vodafone Warriors at Mount Smart Stadium in late April while the Vodafone Warriors scored a late converted try to draw 26-26 with the Roosters' feeder side in round 24 last month.

Wyong finished four points clear of the second-placed Vodafone Warriors in the regular season. Familiar faces for the Roos this year have included halves Mitchell Cornish and Jayden Nikorima, centre Joseph Manu and Eloni Vunakece, all of whom have appeared at NRL level for the Roosters while Cornish has also played for Canberra.

The Vodafone Warriors' expected starting 17 includes 14 players with NRL experience, the only three non-first graders being centre Junior Pauga, prop Daniel Palavi and second rower Ofahiki Ogden, all former NYC players for the club. The most experienced NRL players are front rowers Albert Vete (44 games) and Charlie Gubb (40 games).

The Vodafone Warriors overcame a shortage of possession, a corresponding heavy defensive workload, a lop-sided penalty count and a modest completion rate to account for the Knights convincingly last Sunday night.

Possession favoured Newcastle 56 per cent to 44

percent while the Vodafone Warriors completed only 25 of 37 sets (68 per cent) and also lost the penalty count 10-5. It resulted in them making 346 tackles to just 277 for Newcastle yet they worked their way to a 30-0 lead before conceding a try inside the final three minutes. While they defended courageously they also benefited from superb kicking games from Mason Lino and Ata Hingano.

The performance gives the Vodafone Warriors the chance to make the ISP grand final for just the second time. As a joint Vodafone Warriors-Auckland Rugby League venture, the Auckland Vulcans lost the then-New South Wales Cup grand final 28-30 to Canterbury-Bankstown in 2011.

Centre Matt Allwood will this week become the fifth player to make 50 ISP appearances for the club since it took over the running of the side in 2014. He follows John Palavi and Upu Poching plus James Bell (64 games) and Mason Lino (54 games) who also reached the mark this season.

Lino was one of the three finalists for the Intrust Super Premiership Player of the Year award announced last night. The other two were Cameron Cullen (Blacktown Workers Sea Eagles) and Mitch Rein (Penrith). Cullen won the title.

VODAFONE WARRIORS

1 Zac Santo	11 Ofahiki Ogden
2 Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad	12 Isaiah Papali'i
3 Matthew Allwood	13 James Bell
4 Junior Pauga	Interchange:
5 Bureta Faraimo	14 Jazz Tevaga
6 Mafoa'aeata Hingano	15 Ligi Sao
7 Mason Lino (C)	16 Albert Vete
8 Daniel Palavi	17 Toafofoa Siple
9 Manaia Cherrington	18 Chris Satae
10 Charlie Gubb	20 Sam Cook
	21 Semisi Fotu



RLWC2017 Almost Here!

By Sir Peter Leitch



THE RUGBY League World Cup is coming to New Zealand. Are you ready? Have you booked your seats yet?

If my maths are correct it's only 45 days to go before the Kiwis first game at Mt Smart on October 28 against Samoa.

That will be a fantastic battle and one I can't wait for. I'm hoping for a sold-out game.

Coach David Kidwell then takes his Kiwis to Christchurch to play Scotland on Saturday, November 4, in what will be another tough fight.

You will remember we drew with Scotland last year in Workington on a cold and miserable night, so the Kiwis have a point to prove.

The same day Samoa play Tonga in Hamilton, the same venue where the Kiwis play their next game, against Tonga on November 11.

I'm sure both games will attract big crowds.

New Zealand hosts two quarter-finals, both on November 18, one in Christchurch and the other in Wellington with the Kiwis very likely to play in the capital.

The final Rugby League World Cup game played here will be in Auckland on November 25, when two teams will square off in a semi-final to book a place in the big dance!

I'm heading to Brisbane for the 2017 Rugby League World Cup ðŸ† Grand Final at Suncorp, but who will be in it? Who knows. We will all just have to wait and see.

Grand Final day is a double-header with the Women's World Cup final being played before the men's decider. Unfortunately, all the Kiwi Ferns' games during the tournament are in Aussie but they are playing a warm-up game against New Zealand Maori Wahine before the Tonga-Samoa match so be sure to get along on that particular day and support the team before they head across the ditch.

Go the Kiwis and the Kiwi Ferns!

For tickets and all the info on the 2017 Rugby League World Cup go to: <http://www.rlwc2017.com/>

Tickets also available from local Ticketek outlets including Mangere East post shop.

Prices start from \$45 for a family pass (two adults, two children), \$20 for adults and only \$10 for children.



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HAMILTON
SAMOA V TONGA
4 NOVEMBER
NZ V TONGA
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*NZ pool matches only, subject to allocation selling out. Transaction & booking fees may apply.





Toa Samoa Coach Matt Parish Has His Team Preparing For War When They Face Tonga In Hamilton On November 4

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

TOA SAMOA coach Matt Parish will have his side prepared for “war” when they face pool B rivals Tonga in Hamilton during the Rugby League World Cup.

Parish labelled Samoa’s old Pacific rivals Tonga, who they’ll face on November 4, “the sleeping giant of the World Cup”.

“They (Tonga) are going to be very strong, there are going to be some world class players in there,” Parish said last week.

“Anytime the Samoans and Tongans get together there’s always war, there’s going to be plenty of big hits, plenty of blood spilt at Hamilton on that day. That’ll be a great contest.”

The number of Samoan NRL players gave Parish confidence that his team would be one of the three to advance from a tough pool that also includes New Zealand and Scotland.

“With the change in eligibility rules, we’ve got some pretty good players available, you’ve got some guys that will have played in the NRL semi-finals, Tautau Moga (Broncos), Ricky Leutele (Sharks), Fa’amanu Brown (Sharks),” Parish said.

“Junior Paulo had a terrific season for the Raiders even though they were disappointing, Johnny Asaita is up with the Cowboys along with Antonio Winterstein, Kirisome Auva’a is with the Eels, Tyrone May is playing for the Panthers.

“Herman Ese’ese is a young front rower for the Broncos playing very well. Leeson Ah Mau (Dragons), Suaia Matagi (Eels), Sam Lisone playing well for the Warriors.

“Bunty Afoa, the young backrower, has had a good season for the Warriors. I look forward to him being in the squad somewhere. We’ve got a really good sprinkling (of experience) and I’m really excited.”

Parish said the level of support Samoa will get throughout the tournament, but particularly in New Zealand, would to the excitement of the squad.

“There’s plenty of Samoans in Auckland so we need everyone to get out (to the games) because we need all the support we can get,” Parrish added.

“I know the boys are really keen to play there and looking forward to the support we’re going to get over there,” he said.

The occasion on November 4 at Waikato Stadium will also give New Zealand fans a final chance to watch the Kiwi Ferns before the Women’s Rugby League World Cup taking place in Australia.

The three-time winners of the Women’s Rugby league World Cup play the New Zealand Maori Wahine Toa in a final warm-up match before the tournament starts in Sydney on November 16.

Tickets and information from rlwc2017.com



What The Aussie Papers Have Been Saying

By Sir Peter Leitch



I LOVE READING the papers, so I thought I would share with you a few of the highlights I picked out while I was on the Gold Coast...

David Klemmer became the first Brad Fittler Medal Winner to start all three State of Origin games off the bench.

The True Blue Award & Daily Telegraph people's choice award went to Jake Trbojevic.

The Harvey Norman women's premiership player of the year was Caitlin Moran and the Harvey Norman NSW women's state player of the year was Simaima Taufu. Some of the headlines in the Aussie papers revolved around the coaching outbursts after their teams lost, by Shane Flanagan at the Sharks, and Trent Barrett at Manly, and much of it did not make good reading for either man.

There were headlines like: There's no winners in a blame game; and Aggrieved Sharks shot themselves in the foot; and even Sharks attack the referees as title bid goes belly up, and my personal favourite, Nup,Nup Cronulla, Frenziid Flanno mauls the referees.

So not a lot of support for those two whingers. The news was not a lot better for the Titans or Broncos, where the Queensland papers were into it with: Fans turn up heat on Titans, Titans in a sorry state, Broncos coach faces his arch rival Antony Griffin, Benny dropped game day bombshell, Kodi Nikorima assures Wayne he's the money ma, and Wayne faces Griffin hoodoo, or Wayne's wake-up call.

And we think our papers can be tough!

The Queensland papers were on the refs' side too, with Greenberg backs refs, tells coaches to grow up.

There was some love for the North Queensland Cowboys though, with Cowboys refuse to be killed off, and We can win it all insist Cowboys.

But my absolute favourite headline was this beauty, so it is obvious the Queensland papers would back anyone, as long as it is not a NSW side, after the Storm beat the Eels: Wham Bam Thank You Cam!



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Graeme Langlands

By Barry Ross



TWO OLD Rugby League team-mates of Graeme Langlands joined me in spending an hour and a half with him at his Sutherland nursing home of Monday 4 September. Charlie Kentwell and Lionel Simmons made the drive up from the Wollongong area to visit their good friend. A clever winger, Charlie, now 79, is a legend of Illawarra Rugby League and played 214 first grade games with Port Kembla, scoring 219 tries. He was also a member of four Illawarra Grand Final winning teams in 1958, 1962, 1963 and 1965. Altogether, Charlie played 37 representative games, including four for NSW Country Firsts from 1960 to 1963 and Country Seconds in 1959. He played for Southern Division against Great Britain in 1958, against New Zealand in 1959 and against France in 1957, 1960 and 1964. Over the years, he had numerous offers to play with a Sydney club but continued to play with Port Kembla. Charlie was a team-mate of Graeme's in the Country Firsts team which defeated City Firsts 18-8 at the Sydney Cricket Ground on 12 May 1962.

Lionel Simmons was a classy centre who played with Graeme at St. George in 1964 and represented Country Firsts in 1966 and 1970, as well as Country Seconds in 1965, 1967, 1968 and 1969. He toured New Zealand twice with NSW Country, captaining the team in 1970. In the 1966 City-Country Firsts match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on 4 June, Lionel and Graeme were opposing centres. With the Dapto club, Lionel played 160 first grade games and was captain/coach from 1967 to 1970. He also was a member of three Dapto Illawarra first grade Grand Final winning teams in 1966, 1968 and 1975.

He played two seasons with the Queanbeyan club in 1971/72 as captain/coach and in 1974 captain/coached the Jamberoo team to the South Coast Group 7 Premiership. Now 74, Lionel represented Southern Division against Great Britain twice and New Zealand once. During his career, Lionel captained two NSW Country Divisions, Illawarra from 1968 to 1970 and Monaro in 1971.



In the photo from left, Charlie Kentwell, Lionel Simmons, Barry Ross and Graeme Langlands in wheelchair.

Friends of the Turnbull Library Monthly History Talk:

'A Democratic Game': Rugby League, Community Identity and Cultural Pride in Inter-war New Zealand, Ryan Bodman.

IN NEW Zealand, as elsewhere, the game of rugby league survived in the face of sustained antagonism from rugby union administrators and their allies. Speaking to the English context, Phil Melling and Tony Collins have suggested that a key strength in league's resistance was the game's ability to draw in others who also felt a sense of alienation from the established order. This assessment is evident in New Zealand, where a number of marginalised communities developed close associations with rugby league throughout the 1920s and '30s. At this time, working-class communities, Kīngitanga Māori and Irish Catholics embraced rugby league as an expression of community identity, cultural pride and collective defiance against rugby union's ongoing hostility. As a result, some observers began to describe league as 'a democratic game' and this talk explores the realities and limitations of this description in the context of inter-war New Zealand.

Tuesday 10 October, 5.30 pm

**Ground floor of the National Library of New Zealand
(corner Aitken and Molesworth Streets, Wellington)**

All welcome.



By Shane Hurdell
Hawke's Bay Today
Sports Reporter

Bridge Pa Still The Team To Beat

TIGHT DEFENCE: Bridge Pa's Arama Bennett attracts some defensive attention from the Tamatea pair of Jimi Harris (left) and Ben Smith.

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS Bridge Pa maintained their unbeaten run in Hawke's Bay's premier club rugby league competition with a 60-20 victory against Tamatea at the weekend.

The previous week's close 30-22 win over the then winless Napier Panthers was obviously the wake-up call Bridge Pa player-coach Ihaka Waerea and his troops needed. While Bridge Pa ran in some entertaining tries it was their defensive work which impressed spectators and if these standards can be maintained they will be hard to dethrone on the October 7 grand final day.

Tamatea missed the services of New Zealand Open men's touch representative Ash Robinson who was on Hawke's Bay Saracens rugby team duty in the Hurricanes Development competition. In other games Napier Panthers, the 2014 and '15 champions, posted their first win of the season with a 34-24 victory over the enigmatic Omahu Huia outfit and Kahuranaki and Dannevirke Tigers produced an entertaining 32-all draw.

Tamatea took the lead in the women's competition with a 38-12 win against Bridge Pa who missed the input of Kiwi Ferns training squad member Chanel Huddleston who was attending a training camp for the national squad in Auckland. The other women's match saw Dannevirke Tigers beat Omahu Huia 40-16.

The Waka Leonard-coached Maraenui team maintained their unbeaten run in reserve grade with a 40-22 win over Flaxmere. Other reserve grade encounters saw Bridge Pa beat Omahu Huia 28-14 and Clive walloped MAC 65-26.

While there was plenty of excitement at the Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park during these fixtures it was nothing compared with the elation at the Hastings Boys' High School grounds on Sunday night when their first XV returned home after winning the National Top Four competition for the first time with a 25-17 win against Hamilton Boys' High School in Palmerston North.

The Tafai Ioasa-coached Hastings side beat Auckland's St Kentigern College 29-10 in their semifinal on Friday and were unbeaten in 21 games this season. Winger Kini Naholo, who finished the season with 41 tries, was named the New Zealand Secondary Schools player-of-the-year.

Four members of the side, outstanding No 8 Devan Flanders, Naholo, fullback Danny Toala and first five-eighth Lincoln McClutchie, must be considered certainties for the New Zealand Secondary Schools team. This quartet and at least three others should feature in the NZSS trial teams to be announced in the coming weeks.

The fortunes of the HBHS team are a sharp contrast to the Hawke's Bay Magpies rugby team which has recorded just one win in five Mitre 10 Cup matches and was thrashed 64-21 by Otago in Napier on Sunday.

The other major sporting event in the Bay at the weekend was the Taini Jamison Trophy international netball fixture which saw the England Roses beat the Silver Ferns 49-46. It attracted a capacity crowd which must keep the Bay in the hunt for more Silver Ferns matches in the future.

Memories

By Barry Ross



FIFTY TWO years ago I was one of five excited young men who set off from Wollongong to drive north to Sydney for the 1965 Rugby League Grand Final. It was Saturday 18 September 1965 and I was the driver of a yellow ford cortina which left our home town, 80 kilometres south of Sydney, around 9am bound for the Sydney Cricket Ground. I had just turned 24 a few days before while the youngest of our group was three months short of his 18th birthday. All five of us were keen players and supporters of our game and have remained this way for the past 52 years. The five of us are still close friends after all those years and regularly keep in contact with each other, despite our varied commitments and interests. We are all still healthy and happy, as well as proud fathers, grandfathers and husbands. Plenty has happened in our lives since those care-free times and as the 2017 Grand Final approaches, it is interesting for me to analyse what my four mates on that day are doing now.

The youngest is well known to most Australian sports fans and probably everyone in the Rugby League World. He is BOB FULTON AM, who is one of the eight Immortals and a member of the Australian Team of the Century. Bob turns 70 in December and played 35 Tests for Australia, seven as captain, as well as coaching his country in 40 Tests. Bob joined the Manly Sea Eagles as an 18 year old in 1966 and went on to play 219 first grade with the club, winning Grand Finals in 1972, 1973 and 1976. He also played 44 games with the Roosters from 1977 to 1979, while he spent the 1969/70 English season at his birth-place, Warrington, playing with the local club. He also coached Manly in 307 games, is a Life Member of Manly and currently is the club's director of football. In his 263 first grade matches, Bob scored 147 tries.

The three other members of our group that day were Peter Peters, Allan Maddalena and Phil Dennison.

Peter Peters was a clever ball playing forward who played 72 NRL first grade games, 61 with Manly and 11 for Parramatta. He had a strong game for Manly in their 10-7 win over Cronulla in the 1973 Grand Final. This Grand Final is described by many as the toughest and most violent in Grand Final history. Peter also played for the Monaro Division in NSW Country representative football before coming to Sydney. He is also a Life Member of the Manly club and currently works with the club as a media/sales consultant. This season, Peter, 73 and Bob have shared an office together.

Allan Maddalena was a gifted fullback/centre who played 89 first grade matches, 79 with Newtown and 10 for Manly. He also played two games for NSW in 1966. He had a season with Bob Fulton at Warrington in 1969/70 and starred for Southern Division in the 17-8 win over Great Britain at the Wollongong Showground on 19 June 1966. Now 72, Allan and his American wife Claudia live a peaceful and happy life in Hawaii.

Phil Dennison, 73, represented NSW schools as a halfback in 1960 and along with Bob, Peter and Allan, were teenage stars of the Illawarra Premiership winning 1964 Wests reserve grade team. Still an active man, Phil spends his time between Sydney and Wollongong.

The 1965 Grand Final win was St.George's 10th successive Premiership and the official crowd was given as 78,056. But there were thousands more than this in attendance and the huge crowd watched the game from any vantage point they could find. Our group was separated soon after we arrived, as we searched for a place to watch the game. Along with hundreds of others, Bob, Peter and Phil climbed through barbed wire and other obstacles to watch the drama from the rooftop of the Brewongle Stand, which was built in 1878 and rebuilt in 1980. Allan and I watched the game standing on the concrete behind the southern goalposts, in front of the old Sheridan Stand, which was built in 1909 and replaced by the Churchill Stand in 1986.

In 1965 there were no reserved seats and the public paid at the gate to be admitted into the venue. As many as possible were jammed in and around 1pm, the NSW Police directed the gates to be closed but fans keep coming in without paying, however they could, clambering over fences and often being assisted by friends already inside.

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The official crowd figure of 78,056 is still a record crowd for a Grand Final but thousands of people who watched the game went unrecorded because of the chaos. Between the two teams there were 19 Australian representatives. St. George were captain/coached by Norm Provan, while Bernie Purcell was the South Sydney coach and Jim Lisle, the captain. Three St. George players Graeme Langlands, Reg Gasnier and John Raper, were later named as Immortals, while these three, along with team-mate Norm Provan and Souths lock, Ron Coote, were named in the Australian Team of the Century. Souths winger, Michael Cleary was a Triple International, representing Australia in Rugby Union, Rugby League and Sprinting at the Commonwealth Games. St. George prop Kevin and Souths five eighth, Jim Lisle, played for Australia at both Rugby Union and Rugby League.

It is interesting to analyse the Test records of the players from both teams. These figures are from the finish of their careers.

St. George were represented by Graeme Langlands (45 Tests), Eddie Lumsden (15 Tests), Reg Gasnier (39 Tests), Billy Smith (26 Tests), John King (15 Tests), Brian Clay (8 Tests), George Evans, John Raper (39 Tests), Norm Provan (18 Tests), Elton Rasmussen (18 Tests), Kevin Ryan (2 Rugby League Tests, 5 Rugby Union Tests), Ian Walsh (25 Tests), Robin Gourley. That is a total of 250 Test matches, while the two who did not play a Test, had played at representative level. Prop Robin Gourley played three games for NSW, while half, George Evans, represent-

ed Australia at Rugby Union.

The South Sydney side was Kevin Longbottom, Eric Simms (8 Tests), Arthur Branighan, Bob Moses, Michael Cleary (Triple International, 8 Rugby League Tests, 6 Rugby Union Tests, Bronze Medal 100 metre sprint at 1962 Commonwealth Games), Jim Lisle (6 Rugby League Tests, 4 Rugby Union Tests), Ivan Jones, Ron Coote (23 Tests), Bob McCarthy (15 Tests), John Sattler (4 Tests), John O'Neill (10 Tests), Fred Anderson, Jim Morgan (2 Tests). Souths were a much younger side than their opponents and their total of Test caps was 76. Souths hooker, Fred Anderson, played two matches for NSW and one for City Firsts. St. George won the match 12-8. St. George 12 (Smith, King tries; Langlands 3 goals) beat Souths 8 (Longbottom 3, Simms goals)

The referee was Col Pearce who was 47 at the time. A highly respected whistle blower, Col passed away on 16 June 2004, aged 86. He controlled 12 Test matches, six Grand Finals and 343 first grade games from 1947 to 1968.

Sadly several players from both teams have also passed away. These are St. George players Elton Rasmussen on 28 December 1978, aged 41, Brian Clay on 2 September 1987 aged 52, Ian Walsh on 4 April 2013 aged 80, Reg Gasnier on 11 May 2014, one day short of his 75th birthday and George Evans on 25 December 2015 aged 74, along with Souths men, Kevin Longbottom on 13 January 1986 aged 45, Jim Lisle on 1 March 2003 aged 63 and Ivan Jones on 22 February 2015 aged 71.

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By John Deaker

Signing Kiwis Can Only Be Good – And Don't Write-Off Union Players Too

Adam Blair charges into Cameron Smith and Darius Boyd Photo www.photosport.nz

THE NEWS this week that Gerald Beale has signed with the Warriors and that there's a strong chance Pita Hiku and Adam Blair could join him has been music to my ears. We all hear the theory banded round that more Australians could provide the Warriors with a hardened edge. However, even if an Australian-stacked team became very successful it would defeat the purpose of the club for me as a fan and they should probably be ordered to remove the 'New Zealand' tag from the Warriors too!

The signing of strength and conditioning guru Alex Corvo to the club can only be good news too. There are always different ways to do things when preparing teams but his history working with Kearney should ensure that the successful systems he's used in the past are given the best possible chance of working their magic at the Warriors.

I watched Ryan Hoffman looking to offload late in the Warriors final match (in a great position for a pass to be thrown) and while mental and physical fitness is often blamed for our defensive lapses it also could be partly the reason for the much-talked-about lack of offloads that we've seen from the Warriors this year. If people aren't given the option of someone to pass to then of course they don't get a pass away. Better physical and mental fitness could (in theory!) see more players consistently making that effort to support the ball carrier.

On the topic of recruitment I believe in any open-minded approach the Warriors take to their 2017 review they should reassess their attitude to rugby union – particularly for the recruitment of outside backs. We have too much talent in that area to just ignore it. Maybe the most cost-efficient 'gamble' they should at least consider are players who just miss this year's Super rugby squads. Who is the current version of Jason Woodward 5 years ago?

Woodward was forced to play Super rugby in Melbourne 5 years ago because he missed the cut in New Zealand. His around well-balanced skill-set (including goal-kicking) even back then was obvious – far superior to a player like Ken Maumalo. Five years later Woodward has persevered and this year was included in England's rugby squad.

One thing for sure regarding recruitment is it's crucial over this summer to create an environment where someone like Roger Tuivasa-Sheck is happy. It's hard enough to bring players to the club but we simply **MUST** retain a man who can still be one of our greatest signings of all time. This will also make the appointment of the 2018 captain a very important one.

Congrats to the All Blacks for winning their game against Argentina last Saturday. And good luck for their test against South Africa this Saturday!





By John Coffey

The Accountant Who Pays Dividends

Jonathan Thurston, left, and Cameron Smith of QLD with the trophy after they won the State of Origin rugby league game 3 decider. 12 July 2017. Photo www.photosport.nz

CAMERON SMITH is not the most brilliant rugby league player I have seen. Nor is he the fastest, the biggest or the strongest. But I can't recall a more influential footballer, nor a more resilient one. Smith last weekend became the most capped NRL player, his 356th appearance for the Melbourne Storm nudging him ahead of Brisbane Broncos legend and good friend Darren Lockyer.

Fifteen years in first grade football have also brought Smith a bucketful of representative honours. His 50 Test matches have been exceeded only by Lockyer (59) and New Zealand's Ruben Wiki (55), and Smith will increase his tally during the World Cup later this year. To those impressive figures can be added a record 42 State of Origin matches for Queensland and four All Stars games. In all, Smith can count more than 450 first-class fixtures.

Much has been written about Smith during the last week or so in the lead up to his record NRL appearance at AAMI Stadium against Parramatta in the opening round of the premiership playoffs. But not even Smith himself can explain why he has been so successful or why, at 34 years of age, he seems destined to continue for at least another two seasons and exceed 400 NRL games in the Storm colours.

Smith arrived in Melbourne as a promising halfback from Brisbane in 2002 and even such an astute judge as coach Craig Bellamy was not initially over enthused about his new recruit. Everything about Smith was ordinary, including his name. But he took the switch to dummy half in his stride. When Matt Orford left Melbourne in 2006 Smith added the goalkicking duties to his repertoire. Captaincy of all his teams sits easily on his shoulders and he is also prominent in the players' association.

His 89kg physique earned him the nickname of The Accountant, and off the field he could easily be mistaken for one. Yet he operates in midfield surrounded by behemoths on both sides, handles the ball more than anyone else, features high in the tackle counts, plays the full 80 minutes and dictates the pace of most games. His distribution is uncannily accurate and effective. Oh, and he has a rapport with referees which is the envy of rival captains.

Smith is contracted to the Storm until the end of next season but has already expressed an interest in staying on for 2019. "I just love footy and have since I was six years old," he told one interviewer. "That love has never disappeared. I've seen guys where you can tell their head is not in the game anymore and they're just turning up to get the pay at the end of the month. That won't be me." Spoken with a sincerity that demands belief.

Should Smith achieve those goals he would be the last survivor of the Big Four who sparked Melbourne's rise to prominence. Greg Inglis left in the aftermath of the Storm's salary cap scandal. Cooper Cronk plans to move to Sydney in 2018. Billy Slater has said nothing while he evaluates how much energy remains in his tank after two injury-ruined seasons. But Smith is going nowhere. Remarkably, Smith and Slater share the same birthdate of June 18, 1983.

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Smith, however, revealed recently he seriously considered returning to Brisbane, and joining the Broncos, three years ago. But he is now so settled in Melbourne he intends to stay there after his retirement. His young son plays Aussie Rules, Smith admits to being a Hawthorn supporter and he considers the Storm an ongoing part of his family. He will likely follow Cronk into the media and it would surprise if the Storm does not retain him as a consultant and/or assistant coach.

The afore-mentioned salary cap rort caused the Storm, and Smith, to be stripped of two premierships. That action reduced Smith's list of club achievements to just one NRL title in 2012 and he is obviously keen to add to that in the coming weeks. At Origin level he has led Queensland to the most decisive domination in its history and clearly intends to extend that record for at least one more season.

Only when the Kiwis won three consecutive Tests in 2014-15 has Australia temporarily lost its number one world ranking on his captaincy watch. That has been rectified during the last two years. Smith, however, also has a mixed World Cup record. A member of the Kangaroos 2008 team beaten by the Kiwis at Suncorp Stadium when Lockyer was captain, Smith lifted the cup in triumph in England four years ago and will be looking to do it again in Brisbane in early December.



Good Luck to the Warriors ISP team playing in the finals this Sunday!



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Triumph Over Adversity

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)



OLD HABITS die hard. While watching the pulsating NRL playoffs last weekend I was making notes for possible comment in this newsletter. Only one problem: there were so many potential talking points any overall review would have turned into a sizeable book. But one note stood out from the Melbourne Storm's come-from-behind win over Parramatta at AAMI Stadium and deserved further research. It was about the guy in the number 17 jersey.

Slade Griffin came off the Melbourne interchange bench for a 15-minute cameo as the Storm fought strongly to retain their warm premierships favouritism by advancing directly to the Grand Final qualifiers the weekend after next. Griffin became the first West Coaster to play in a finals match since Canberra's 1994 premierships winning prop Quentin Pongia. The West Coast, it must be said, is no longer the great rugby league nursery it once was.

Although Griffin was actually born in Australia, he came up through the junior grades with the Cobden-Kohinoor club in Greymouth. His West Coast (and rugby league) roots are very deep. An uncle, John Griffin, was a hooker on the 1982 Kiwis tour of Australia and gave long service to the renowned Runanga club and, of course, the West Coast provincial team. As a youngster Slade would drive 250km to Christchurch for representative training and games.

The Storm is based in Aussie Rules heartland and with limited junior resources has largely enjoyed its remarkable NRL success through an outstanding recruitment and development programme. An emerging Griffin did not escape the attention of the club scouts. In 2009 he was Melbourne's S G Ball Cup Player of the Year and played for NSW under-19s. A hooker with the all-round skills to also play as a backrower, he was clearly on the way up.

But during Saturday's 18-16 win over the Eels the commentators tweaked my memory by saying Griffin had survived two knee reconstructions during a disrupted first-grade career. A bit of delving into the records revealed that was an under-statement. While being groomed as the great Cameron Smith's understudy Griffin actually suffered three serious ACL injuries in four years and at one stage spent 1056 days out of the top grade and mostly in rehabilitation.

Griffin made his NRL debut against St George Illawarra in the opening round of 2013 and recorded

11 appearances that season. But because of injury he did not return until round 15 in 2016, also against the Dragons. That day he did enough to not only earn the admiration of senior Storm players but also a contract extension. He returned to the Queensland Cup for the rest of 2016 but had been called up 11 times this season before his finals debut last Saturday.

With the seemingly ageless Cameron Smith ever-present except for the State of Origin period, and highly promising fellow New Zealander Brandon Smith also emerging this season, the 90kg Griffin has done a remarkable job reinventing himself as an interchange backrower in the best team in the competition. He spent a typically busy 15 minutes on the field against the Eels before making way for the big boppers to complete the task.

For most of those 1056 days that Griffin, now 26, was missing from the NRL he was working alone, or with the company of the club's physiotherapists, in the Storm gymnasium. Other injured players -- such as one-Test Kiwis wing Matt Duffie, who finally gave up and found refuge in rugby union with the Auckland Blues -- came and went but Griffin soldiered on with a determination which impressed his club-mates and particularly coach Craig Bellamy.

All that time Griffin was keenly studying the on-field dummy-half work of Cameron Smith and working on adding a utility aspect to his own game. He also started an exercise science course which he hopes to expand into a physiotherapy degree for life after football. While the physios were admiring the grit shown by Griffin in his three-year battle to overcome his cruel injuries, he was equally inspired by their healing skills in assisting him and other casualties.

Griffin's reward was to feature in a Melbourne forward group which included Kangaroos captain Smith, Kiwis internationals Jesse Bromwich, Tohu Harris and Kenny Bromwich, Kiwi-in-waiting Nelson Asofa-Solomona, Queensland Origin rep Tim Glasby, and the well-performed Jordan McLean, Felise Kaufusi and Dale Finucane. He was also preferred ahead of former international Nate Myles. Now Griffin is just one win away from a Grand Final.



By Miles Davis



Elizabeth Richards The New NZRL Director

RECENTLY APPOINTED NZRL director Elizabeth Richards was born and raised in beautiful Hokianga. When she moved to Auckland she fell in love with Bill Richards, who played rugby league for Ponsonby, and subsequently she fell in love with the game herself.

After managing her son's and other teams she decided she wanted to get further involved in the game and managed several Akarana Falcons teams. She was then contacted by Duane Mann and persuaded to become part of the Vodafone Warriors Academy and Development team. She has also managed the Kiwi U18's and now is currently manager of the Kiwi Ferns.

A chartered accountant by profession, Elizabeth is excited by the future prospects of New Zealand rugby league and eager to be an integral part of it.

One of Elizabeth's priorities is to work on increasing numbers playing and watching league whilst also retaining players in an era with so many other distractions available.

She is also keen to advance the women's game in New Zealand. One of her aims is to get greater awareness of the skill level of women's rugby league in New Zealand and attract more investment in the game. She said that many people she takes along to women's games are surprised at the high quality of rugby league being played.

As a long-term project Elizabeth would like to see the women's game evolve to a professional level so that the hard work put in by those who play the game at the highest level is properly recompensed.

One of her immediate priorities is the Women's Rugby League World Cup which kicks off on 16th November with the final on December 2nd immediately preceding the Men's final.

The Kiwi Ferns have been drawn in Group B along with Papua New Guinea and Canada but will also play a fixture against the Cook Islands.

New Zealand have a magnificent record in the competition winning the first 3 events in 2000, 2005 and 2008. Australia took the title in 2013 but Elizabeth is quietly confident that 2017 will see the trophy return to its rightful home here in NZ.

The Kiwi Ferns have 3 warm-up games for their tournament, 2 against the Auckland Vulcans and the final one against NZ Maori to be played in Hamilton prior to the Tonga v Samoa Men's World Cup game.

Patron of New Zealand Rugby League, Sir Peter Leitch, has been impressed with Elizabeth's drive and love for the game and is convinced she will be a major asset for the NZRL and the game of league in New Zealand.

(Here is an interview with Elizabeth conducted by Sir Peter recently <https://www.facebook.com/sirpeter-leitch/videos/1385140868206767/>)

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Southern Cross Campus Win Back To Back National Titles

*By Brooke Hurndell
NZRL*

SOUTHERN CROSS Campus win back to back premiership titles in an outstanding display of football at this year's National Secondary Schools Tournament.

It was a repeat of last year's final where Kelston Boys' High School were defeated at their final hurdle with a scoreline most predicted would be much closer than the 44-0 final score.

The 2017 premiership title winners sent a message to their opposition that they meant business from the beginning scoring their first try within a minute of the game commencing.

Their second try came when the Southern Cross Campus player, Dawson Mele, crossed the line making the score 12-0 after a successful conversion in the 16th minute. Kelston Boys' High School fought back with impressive energy levels but just couldn't control the ball to complete their sets.

Southern Cross Campus ended their stellar first half with a try scored by their number four off the back of a beautiful grubber kick going into halftime with a 16-0 lead.

A massive second half was needed from the boys in red if they were to close the three try gap. That was not to be as Kelston Boys' High School struggled to reduce their climbing penalty and unforced errors count.

The second half started much like the first – a try to Southern Cross Campus in the opening few minutes. Once their momentum was in full speed there was no stopping Southern Cross Campus who managed to get seven tries in, and kept their opponents scoreless to win their second successive national title.

In the development final, the battle of the debutants Marcellin College and Haeata Community Campus, saw Marcellin College victorious 30-8. Former Marcellin College students, Monty Betham and Joseph Parker would have been proud of their outstanding performance.

Emanuel Tuimavave-Gerrard was dominant in the number six jersey all week and finals day was no different. After catching his own chip kick five metres out from the try line to score, he kicked his own conversion and was dominant at stand-off.

A tight Marcellin defensive line was finally cracked by Haeata who capitalised on their numbers out wide to take the score to 12-4 at halftime. Despite some moments of brilliance from Sua Ailoilo, the Christchurch school couldn't catch up.

Not only did Marcellin College win the development grade title, but they also took home the 2017 More Than Just a Game team award for their remarkable performance and attitude on and off the field.

[For a full outline of finals day scores, click here](#)

Dave Watson

By Miles Davis



DAVE WATSON started his rugby league life in Northern Taranaki playing for the Waitara Bears.

A versatile back able to play fullback, centre and stand-off with equal comfort in 1985 he moved to Auckland and joined the Manukau Magpies.

In 1986 he won the Bert Humphries Trophy for Most Improved Back (Dean Lonergan won Most Improved Forward) in the Auckland Rugby League Premier competition.

In 1988 he moved to England and had short stints with Whitehaven and York before signing with Hull Kingston Rovers for the 1990/91 season. The 1991/92 season saw him playing for Halifax. Let go by the club at the end of that season he then signed for Bradford Northern to start a 3 year relationship with the Yorkshire outfit.

A successful first season saw Bradford make the final of the 1993 Regal Trophy where Watson played full-back in a battling 15-8 defeat to the mighty Wigan. In October 1993 Watson was to play against the Kiwis in Bradford Northern's famous 17-10 victory. A feisty encounter which saw Kiwi skipper Quentin Pongia sent off late on for a high tackle which sparked a brawl. Dave assures me he was sensibly at the other end of the field when it went off.

After 3 seasons with Bradford he returned down-under and spent the next 4 years playing in Australia with Cronulla, Sydney Tigers, the Gold Coast Chargers and the South Queensland Crushers.

In 1998 he was persuaded to return to England and sign for the unfancied Sheffield Eagles. Eagles coach John Kear said that he was so excited when Watson signed that he couldn't sleep. As Watson had been a bit of a naughty boy on occasion off the field there were those who wondered whether it was a good signing. Kear however had no doubt and that was backed up by one of Watson's former coaches, Peter Fox, who had recommended him to Kear.

When asked how Watson was fitting in Kear said "He's been as good as gold. He's punctual, reliable, hard-working and he's obviously enjoying himself. He's doing everything I'm asking of him in defence and he's adding that 'X-factor' in attack."

The signing turned out to be a master-stroke as Sheffield

made their way to an unlikely Challenge Cup Final at Wembley. Even more unlikely was their 17-8 victory over Wigan which is still regarded as one of the greatest upsets in Challenge Cup Finals history.

As well as his successful club career he also represented the Kiwis 15 times, was a New Zealand Maori, Auckland and Taranaki representative and in 2008 was named in the Taranaki team of the Century.

After hanging up his boots Dave headed back to Australia and back to his trade of scaffolding. After spells in various cities he settled in Adelaide where he has been for 13 years. He lives with Susan James and they are to be married in the next year or so.

Dave will be back in Waitara next year for his Mum's 90th birthday celebrations.

As a final note, he is Vodafone Warrior Isaac Luke's uncle.

Anyone wanting to contact Dave can get him on the following email address: watsondavid73@y7mail.com

1993 Regal Trophy Final Bradford Northern v Wigan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuvnRGIPDPs>

1998 Challenge Cup Final Sheffield v Wigan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFmx6hDi3Vc>



Vodafone Warriors Isp Team Commanding

By Richard Becht



A DEFENSIVE MASTERCLASS paved the way for the Vodafone Warriors to move within one win of the grand final after dominating Newcastle in a 30-6 win in tonight's sudden-death Intrust Super Premiership semi-final at UOW Jubilee Oval in Sydney.

Right across the park the Vodafone Warriors delivered a cocktail of intensity and aggression on defence, especially on their line, as they denied the Knights a try until the final moments of the match.

Missing a number of their key performers, the Vodafone Warriors dropped their week one finals clash 20-36 to Penrith but couldn't have rebounded any more impressively to keep their season alive.

In the opening 19 minutes they had shouldered a heavy defensive workload, forced to repel a number of sets on their goal-line.

They did it expertly, too, ultimately transitioning out of defence to work the first try of the contest as soon as they had a sniff.

It came in the 20th minute and predictably enough the influential Mason Lino was the architect. The play came out to the right, he slipped through a delightful grubber and centre Matt Allwood, making his 49th ISP appearance for the club, raced through to pounce for his 12th try of the season. Lino's conversion veered just inside the near upright for a 6-0 lead.

When two points were on offer twice soon after the Vodafone Warriors chose to go again and, in the 34th minute, had further reward from the pressure they were applying.

First Ata Hingano produced a fantastic 40/20 kick. From the repeat set the ball came left to Hingano; with a show and go he ghosted through and just managed to get the ball down on the line for Lino to make it 12-0.

The lead was the least the Vodafone Warriors deserved after a polished first 40 minutes.

They began the second spell just as effectively, setting the tone with their up-tempo, pulverising defence and solid possession football based around their big forwards dominating up the middle.

In the 49th minute more points came, Hingano

punching a teasing low kick towards the posts. Lino and fullback Zac Santo put pressure on, Santo stealing the ball and getting it down between the posts. Lino took a knock in the contest for the ball so Junior Pauga took the conversion instead to open up an 18-0 lead.

It was set to increase when a Hingano kick wasn't tidied up in-goal by the Knights but the ball curled away from wing Bureta Faraimo hunting the try-scoring opportunity.

The Vodafone Warriors' defensive work was nothing less than exceptional all night. They kept turning up time after time, monsterring the Knights with some massive contact, the quality of their work best illustrated by the way they held up veteran Knights forward Mickey Paea over the line four times and later denied him a fifth time.

There had to be points on the end of the defensive effort and in the 66th minute they came, prop Charlie Gubb - inspirational throughout - off loading to hooker Manaia Cherrington who pumped a long pass wide to the left for the prolific Faraimo to snare another try. Lino's conversion was superb for a 24-0 lead.

Six minutes later lovely hands close to the ruck uncorked the try of the night, Cherrington clearing to Albert Vete from dummy half and the big prop delightfully popping a sweet ball back inside for Santo to jet onto and scorch 60 metres for the touchdown. Lino was again clinical with the conversion to take the advantage out to 30-0.

The one blot on the night's work came in the final minutes when the Knights worked a try for right wing Curtis Naughton but the win was well and truly sealed, setting up a preliminary final next weekend against minor premier Wyong.





Otago Whalers v Tasman Titans

By Ricki Allan

THE OTAGO Whalers ran rampant over the Tasman Titans in the final round of the South Island Premier Competition on Saturday, notching up a 76-16 win to finish first in the South Island, and move into the National Championship Competition.

The Whalers established their dominance from the very outset of the game, scoring early in the encounter and continuing to pile on points seemingly at will. The impressive back line again proved too skillful for the opposition, with standout performances from Tama Apineru, Jordan Ruatoe, Willie Time, and Hyrum Martin.

Apineru was solid at fullback, making massive in-roads with his kick returns by fending off the opposition and using swift footwork to break the line on multiple occasions. Jordan Ruatoe and Willie Time finished the Whalers attacking plays with clinical precision, allowing both players to score two tries each. Hyrum Martin was the star performer though, his strong ball carries, elusive footwork, and attacking nous were crucial to the Whalers performance and also allowed him to score a hat trick of tries.

With dominant showings from multiple players, Otago were in the drivers seat for the entire first half, and the score line reflected that with a resting score of 40-4 as the first period of play came to a close.

The second half was a similar story, with Otago scoring in the opening minute of the half and continuing to showcase their attacking skills. It would be easy to overlook the efforts of the Whalers forwards, given the try scoring efforts of the brilliant backs, but the work they put in in the middle of the park allowed them to gain the ascendancy in the first place.

Hagan Free was yet again crucial to the Whalers' efforts, taking several strong carries into the opposition line and then locking down the middle of the field when it was his turn to defend. Camrin Brown put in a stunning performance; busting tackles with ease which was evident in his 80-metre breakaway try, in which he broke 6 tackles on his way to the line. The man of the match award went to prop Tyson Ball, who showed real aggression in both attack and defense and established authority over the opposition pack. Ball's impact from the bench was felt immediately, and the Titans players had their hands full trying to contain him when he tucked the ball under his arm.

To the Titans credit, they showed an endless determination to stay in the contest. They were able to score two second half tries, with their captain Sam Hedges getting one of them. Hedges led from the front and showed his side the importance of staying in the fight.

Continued on next page...

Continued from previous page...

After a strong 2017 campaign, the Whalers now look ahead to the National Championship round where they will play against Wellington and the Bay of Plenty with the aims of winning those games to book a spot in the promotion/relegation match played to determine the teams in next year's National Premiership Competition. The Whalers will host the Wellington Orcas on Saturday 23rd September.

Full-time: Otago 76 – Titans 16

Try scorers for Otago were: Tama Ezekiel Apineru x1, Jordan Ruatoe x2, Hyrum Martin x3, Willie Solomona Time x2, Camrin Brown x2, Hagan Free x2, Vila Apuula x1, Jayden Hollander x1.



GOLDEN HOMES BLACK SOX CHAMPIONSHIP CELEBRATION DINNER



You are cordially invited to celebrate the success of the Golden Homes Black Sox and their 7th World Championship Title.

Date: Saturday, 16th September, 2017

Time: 6pm to Midnight

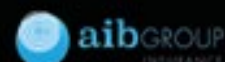
Venue: Top of the Park, Alexandra Park, Auckland

Dress: Formal/Business Casual MC: Mark Watson

Seat: \$65 Table of 10: \$600



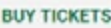


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**THIS
SATURDAY**



NRL Finals Week 2 Teams

SF: Fri 15 Sep 2017, 9:55pm, Suncorp Stadium #NRLBroncosPanthers ADD

Kodi Nikorima	1	Fullback	1	Dylan Edwards
Corey Oates	2	Winger	2	Josh Mansour
James Roberts	3	Centre	3	Tyrone Peachey
Tautau Moga	4	Centre	4	Dean Whare
Jordan Kahu	5	Winger	5	Dallin Watene Zelezniak
Anthony Milford	6	Five-Eighth	6	Tyrone May
Benji Marshall	7	Halfback	7	Nathan Cleary
Sam Thaiday	8	Prop	8	James Tamou
Ben Hunt	9	Hooker	9	Peter Wallace (c)
Adam Blair (c)	10	Prop	10	Reagan Campbell-Gillard
Alex Glenn	11	2nd Row	11	Corey Harawira-Naera
Matt Gillett	12	2nd Row	12	Isaiah Yeo
Josh McGuire	13	Lock	13	Trent Merrin

INTERCHANGE

David Mead	14	14	Slone Katoa
Jai Arrow	15	15	Bryce Cartwright
Joe Ofahengauae	16	16	Moses Leota
Herman Ese'ese	17	17	James Fisher-Harris

RESERVES

Darius Boyd	18	18	Jarome Luai
Jaydn Su'A	19	19	Viliame Kikau
Jamayne Isaako	20	20	Sitaleki Akauola
Tevita Pangai Junior	21	21	Jed Cartwright

SF: Sat 16 Sep 2017, 9:40pm, ANZ Stadium #NRLLeleCowboys ADD







Will Smith	1	Fullback	1	Lachlan Coote
Semi Radradra	2	Winger	2	Kyle Feldt
Michael Jennings	3	Centre	3	Javid Bowen
Brad Takairangi	4	Centre	4	Kane Linnett
Kirisome Auva'a	5	Winger	5	Antonio Winterstein
Corey Norman	6	Five-Eighth	6	Te Maire Martin
Mitchell Moses	7	Halfback	7	Michael Morgan
Daniel Alvaro	8	Prop	8	John Asiata
Cameron King	9	Hooker	9	Jake Granville
Tim Mannah (c)	10	Prop	10	Scott Bolton
Manu Ma'u	11	2nd Row	11	Gavin Cooper (c)
Tepai Moeroa	12	2nd Row	12	Ethan Lowe
Nathan Brown	13	Lock	13	Jason Taumalolo

INTERCHANGE

Beau Scott (c)	14	14	Ben Hampton
Kenny Edwards	15	15	Coen Hess
Siosaia Vave	16	16	Corey Jensen
Suaia Matagi	17	17	Shaun Fensom

RESERVES

Kaysa Pritchard	18	18	Ray Thompson
Peni Terepo	19	19	Justin O'Neill
David Gower	20	20	Braden Uele
Josh Hoffman	21	21	Patrick Mago

BLK

Congratulations to all the winners of the BLK Kiwis Kids Shirt competition. They've all been sent out by now, so hope you enjoy your prize! Thanks BLK!

BLK

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Rugby League Loses a Great Man

WE ACKNOWLEDGE the passing of "Rocky" (Roderick) Cavanagh a true visionary and stalwart of the Mt Albert Lions Rugby League Club!

Rocky will hold a special place in the hearts of Mt Albert supporters because he was an integral part of the bid made by the M.A.R.L. to enter a team in the then, Winfield Cup that developed into what we now know as the "Warriors"

Indeed, with input from other stakeholders one Thursday night he sat at a bar-leaner at the club (with a Lion Red in hand) and composed a letter to Ken Arthurson (Then Chairman of NSWRL) declaring an expression of interest for a place in their competition. He was the only one not surprised when we received a positive response and so began the machinations that gave birth to franchise!

Rocky will be missed for his wisdom, passion and "Just Do It" philosophy and his animated discussions over what was either right and/or wrong about our beloved game at any given time and was constantly demanding that we should do things in a more professional manner! (A narrative that continues to this day)

We enjoyed many trips together to the Winfield Cup and then NRL Grand Finals where we would invite mates to come along for the fun but Rocky would bring his grandson Josh (a good example of how much family meant to him)

Rocky had a unending supply of sayings and witticisms but one of his favourites was "Don't Die Wondering!" Well mate you didn't wonder did you!

Rocky is survived by his wife Janice, son Shaun and daughter Julie along with his son & daughter in law and his beloved grandchildren.

RIP mate

Funeral Details:
11.00am Friday 15th
St Josephs Catholic Church
470 Gt North Rd
Grey Lynn
followed by burial at
Waikumete Cemetery
Gt North Rd
Glen Eden

**Good Luck to the Silver Ferns playing against
England tonight in Hamilton**



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CELEBRITY QUIZ NIGHT

Special guest Miles Davis

Friday 22nd Sept, 6.30pm

Eden Rugby Club

225 Sandringham Rd, Kingsland, Auckland

Enjoy a fun evening with the legendary gossip columnist David Hartnell MNZM and talkback radio host Miles Davis, in support of Blue September raising awareness of prostate cancer. Featuring magic from the unforgettable Mick Peck, it's guaranteed to be a night of fun and laughter!

TICKETS SELL FAST SO GET IN QUICK!

Purchase your tickets now at

<https://blueseptember.org.nz/david-hartnell-trivia-quiz-night/>

or contact Carol Roche, Events Manager

events@prostate.org.nz

09 415 2204

blueseptember.org.nz

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Mick Peck



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Reader Mail

IAN & Marcia carpenter who are traveling through Australia in a van sent in these photos.

Marcia as we crossed the Nullabor, she drove. And my 70th at Cairns, friends from Orewa and Warkworth arrived. Nobody from Bucklands Beach though!!



RECEIVED A card saying we had missed the courier – not knowing what it was we finally went to collect and found it was a awesome gift for two little people in our house – so here is little brother Chaz modelling his big brothers top to say Thank you sir Peter Leitch I have no doubt they will love these gifts when they get home from school today.

Naku Noa and Jade Kimitaunga



I WAS DOWN at Burleigh Heads and went to get a haircut. I found these staunch Warrior fans at Godbarbers. Small world massive Warrior fans and also family... the barber is Don Mann Snr (ex Kiwi) granddaughter's husband.



Bonsoir Sir,

HERE FIND the photo of tonight after the CATALANS won over FEATHERSTONE, the Kiwis are : Krisnan INU, Justin HORO, Alex CHAN, Sam MOA, Louis ANDERSON.

Have a nice week-end. Sincerely Pascal

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THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S HUGE FINALS WEEK 2 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

- **Josh McGuire** always idolised **Corey Parker** – but he never thought he'd replace him. He moved into the lock position and is having the best year of his almost decade-long NRL career. "I didn't feel pressure because it was 'Coz's' jersey, there's just the pressure that comes with playing at the Broncos," he says. "This club demands success and if you don't give it then they start looking elsewhere."
- **Johnathan Thurston** says injuries to his Cowboys side, (including his own) has been the making of the playing group in Townsville – and backs **Michael Morgan** to take his vacant five-eighth spot for Australia in the World Cup.
- **Beau Scott** wasn't going to let his ruptured biceps rule him out for Parramatta's miraculous run to the finals – the hard-nosed forward talks to *Big League* about recovering from what was thought to be a season-ending injury in just 10 weeks.
- Of the 17 players in the **Panthers team** this week, 11 haven't played in front of a crowd of more than 35,000 people – so they're preparing themselves for a Suncorp Stadium shock.
- We comb through the recruitment drives of each club and work out how your team will likely line-up in **Round 1, 2018**.

PLUS... The **Top 8 finals comeback**, **The Analyst** compares the games of **Nathan Brown** and **Jason Taumalolo** and **2017 team posters**.



FINALS WEEK 2

On sale at newsagents, supermarkets and at the ground from

Thursday, September 14

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Editorial: maria.tsialis@news.com.au

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JUST CAUGHT up with former kiwi number 398 Graeme Farrar who captained the kiwis check out the interview on my Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/sirpeterleitch/videos/1388994284488092/>

CHECK OUT my interview with Konrad Hurrell. Konrad has played 71 games for the Vodafone Warriors, 26 games for the Gold Coast Titans and played for Tonga in the 2013 RLWC. Watch it here: <https://www.facebook.com/sirpeterleitch/videos/1388213554566165/>

CAUGHT UP with Kevin Campion former rugby league player and bloody good guy. Watch the interview here: <https://www.facebook.com/sirpeterleitch/videos/13873021713>

If you wish to **subscribe** to the newsletter go to:
www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz

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Here is the team that help me put together the newsletter each week. We have a number of fantastic contributors who send in content each week that along with my editorial gets wrapped up by our graphic designer and sent out by our distribution man to your inbox.

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