

VODAFONE



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter

20th September 2017

#188



Roger Tuivasa-Sheck Crowned 2017 NRL Player of the Year at Vodafone Warriors Awards

RTS receives his award from Russell Stanners Vodafone CEO

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz



Buntty Afoa receives his award from Russell Stanners CEO from Vodafone for the Vodafone NRL Rookie of the Year.



CEO Cameron Gordon addresses the crowd.



Club person of the year went to Georgia Hale who received her award from Susan Turner who has been at the club from day one.



Canterbury NZ Clubman of the Year Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad.



Departing players.



Head coach Stephen Kearney with the clubs major sponsor Russell Stanners From Vodafone.



Vodafone ISP NSW Player of the Year Mason Lino.



Joanne and Jim Doyle receive gifts from the club.



Vodafone People Choice Simon Mannering.



Sir Peter Leitch member of the year award went to Tekanawa Harris or Tk to his mates.



Warriors coach Stephen Kearney addressing the crowd.



Simon Mannering and partner Anna Bensemann.



Sir Peter Leitch and Jim Doyle.



Shaun Johnson and partner Kayla Cullen.





By Richard Becht

Tuivasa-Sheck Takes Player Of The Year Title

CAPTAIN ROGER Tuivasa-Sheck became just the fifth back in the club's history to be named the Vodafone NRL Player of the Year when he took out the title at the Vodafone Warriors' 23rd season-closing presentation at SKYCITY tonight.

He's the first backline player to receive the accolade since club great Manu Vatuvei in 2010 while the only other backs recognised have been Francis Meli (2003), Stacey Jones (1997) and Tea Ropati (1995).

The other 18 winners have been split between 12 forwards with Simon Mannering winning it five times and Steve Price and Ben Matulino twice each.

After another rock-solid campaign, veteran back rower Mannering was among the finalists once again this time as was halfback Shaun Johnson but 24-year-old fullback Tuivasa-Sheck headed them off after impressing throughout a challenging season.

Coming back from knee surgery, Tuivasa-Sheck appeared in all but one of the Vodafone Warriors' 24 games, scoring 10 tries (his second highest tally in his six seasons in the NRL behind the 12 he scored in 2015). Only wing David Fusitu'a (12) scored more tries for the team this year.

In the club's final match against Wests Tigers, Tuivasa-Sheck made 207 metres from 18 runs, the 13th time he gained 200 metres or more during the season. His total of 4172 metres – an average of 181.4 metres a game – was bettered by only North Queensland's Jason Taumalolo (4469) and Cronulla's Paul Gallen (4387) in the regular season.

Tuivasa-Sheck also stood out in a number of other categories (stats not including the finals):

- Second for most runs with 445 (an average of 19.5 a game) behind Gallen's 465 runs
- First for kicks defused (82)
- First for bomb kicks defused (30)
- First for kick returns (141)
- Second equal for try saves (4)
- Fourth for kick return metres (1255)
- Eighth for tackle breaks (106)
- And 13th for line breaks (16)

Last week Tuivasa-Sheck was the only Vodafone Warriors player among the 23 finalists for 'The Players' Champion at the Rugby League Players' Association Awards.

Continued on next page...

The 31-year-old Mannering won the Vodafone People's Choice Award tonight after a season in which he went past Jones' club record of 261 appearances. He finished on 280 games to leave him on track to become the first player to reach 300 NRL matches for the Vodafone Warriors.

Mannering clocked 986 tackles (the second most in the regular season) – an average of 44.8 a game – as well as averaging 14.8 runs and 128.3 metres a game while making just six errors. Last year he averaged 47.4 tackles, 11.3 runs and 90 metres a game.

Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad, who made his NRL debut this year, was named the Canterbury of New Zealand Clubman of the Year while Bunty Afoa was singled out as the Vodafone NRL Rookie of the Year ahead of Ata Hingano and Nicoll-Klokstad. In his first full first-grade campaign, Afoa made 17 appearances.

The Vodafone Warriors finished just one game short of reaching the ISP final after losing to Wyong 12-16 on Sunday.

Finalists for the Vodafone ISP Player of the Year were Matt Allwood, James Bell, Mason Lino and Ofahiki Ogden with captain and halfback Lino taking out the award. A finalist in the ISP's overall player of the year award, Lino scored 154 points and also made an NRL comeback with six appearances.

The Vodafone ISP Team Man of the Year went to utility Sam Cook, who was used in multiple positions while missing just one game all season. Other finalists were Daniel Palavi and Semisi Fotu.

Vodafone Warriors community ambassador Georgia Hale was named the Club Person of the Year and TeKanawa Harris was recognised as the Sir Peter Leitch Member of the Year.

Long-time sponsor Vodafone was the recipient of the SKYCITY Legacy Award in recognition of the 19 seasons it has been associated with the Vodafone Warriors.

VODAFONE WARRIORS AWARDS | 2017

Sir Peter Leitch Member of the Year - TeKanawa Harris

SKYCITY Legacy Award - Vodafone

Vodafone People's Choice Award - Simon Mannering

TNT NYC Rookie of the Year - Tyler Slade

Vodafone ISP Team Man of the Year - Sam Cook

Vodafone NRL Rookie of the Year - Bunty Afoa

Club Person of the Year - Georgia Hale

Canterbury of NZ Clubman - Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad

Canterbury of NZ NYC Clubman of the Year - Kenese Kenese

Vodafone NYC Player of the Year - Chanel Harris-Tavita

Vodafone ISP Player of the Year - Mason Lino

Vodafone NRL Player of the Year - Roger Tuivasa-Sheck

Tuimoala Lolohea (#192), Bodene Thompson (#194), Ryan Hoffman (#195), Jacob Lillyman (#146), Ben Matulino (#142), Manu Vatuvei (#115).

Vodafone Warriors debuts | Isaiah Papali'i (#215), Erin Clark (#216), Kieran Foran (#217), Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad (#218), Chris Satae (#219), James Bell (#220).

Achievements:

Club record appearances | Simon Mannering 280 (surpassed Stacey Jones' 261).

Club record points | Shaun Johnson 775 (surpassed Stacey Jones' 674).

300 NRL games | Ryan Hoffman.

250 NRL games | Jacob Lillyman.

200 NRL games (all for Vodafone Warriors) | Ben Matulino.

150 NRL games | Blake Ayshford.

100 NRL games | Roger Tuivasa-Sheck.

50 NRL games for Vodafone Warriors | Solomone Kata, Sam Lisone, Ryan Hoffman, Bodene Thompson, David Fusitu'a, Tuimoala Lolohea.

500 NRL points | Issac Luke.

VODAFONE WARRIORS | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Departing players | Ofahiki Ogden, Erin Clark (#216), Toafofoa Sipley (#212), Matt Allwood (#199), Kieran Foran (#217), Charlie Gubb (#183),

At the Vodafone Warriors Prize Giving



Albert Vete and partner Whitney Carson. Both looking lovely tonight, wonder who's looking after the baby.



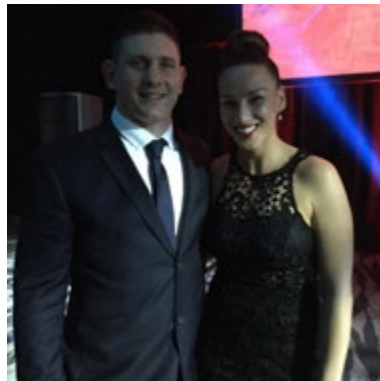
Dan (football operations manager) and Kelly Floyd.



L-R: Doug Murray NYC Manager, Gordon Gibbons Corporate Sales Manager, Grant Pocklington NYC Head Coach.



The team from the Stacey Jones lounge the home of the Sir Peter Leitch club at Mt Smart Stadium the home of the Vodafone Warriors.



Jacob Lillyman and partner Tui-kay Cole both looking great.



Lady Janice Leitch and Brodie Jean Kane from TV One.



Matt Allwood and Nikki Allwood. Nikki is looking fantastic.



Peter & Christine.



Team from SKY Sport (from the left) Kerry Russell (camera), Dean Pooley (director) and Dennis Katsanos (producer).



Nancy and Toafofoa Sipley



The team from the Stacey Jones lounge the home of the Sir Peter Leitch club at Mt Smart Stadium the home of the Vodafone Warriors.



More Photos from the Vodafone Warriors Awards



Club legend Stacey Jones who is now an assistant coach to the NRL team at the club and Mark Robinson from Autex, one of our family of sponsors.



Me and Janice had a lovely night last night.



This sums up why Simon Mannering he won Vodafone people's choice. He gave it to these lovely people Jayden & Sandra Penerata who are fantastic supporters of our Vodafone Warriors. They would be right up there as our no1 supporters and why we love Simon.
A very special kiwi guy!



Some of the boys last night

Vodafone Warriors Giveaway



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**Prize packs
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We are giving away 50 Vodafone Warriors replica jerseys and 50 Vodafone Warriors caps. This giveaway is open to all countries and we ship worldwide... so no excuses for not entering.

Please make sure your details are printed clearly on the envelope.

Also include your jersey size and we will do our best to accommodate you.

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Jersey Size:

**To enter: YOU MUST subscribe to
Sir Peter Leitch Club Newsletter.**

Then post a stamped addressed envelope with your name, address, phone number and email to the address on the left.

Winner will be drawn on

3rd October 2017

What Would I Know?

By David Kemeys

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



AND THEN there were four, Broncos, Storm, Cowboys, and Roosters.

So it is interesting to take a look back at what I – foolishly it would now seem – predicted would happen this year.

Back in February before a ball had been kicked I lined up my old mate Dave Long, who you see on Stuff a lot, and took a look at his predictions.

Dave had a top eight of:

- 1 Sharks
- 2 Broncos
- 3 Cowboys
- 4 Warriors
- 5 Raiders
- 6 Storm
- 7 Titans
- 8 Roosters

So five of the eight, and nowhere near the finish he predicted. Dave picked the Warriors to hit the eight and maybe go further, but liked the Sharks to go back to back.

Back then, and I love saying I told you so, I said I had just two words for him, won't happen.

On the other hand I did not fare much better, predicting a top eight of:

- 1 Cowboys
- 2 Storm
- 3 Broncos
- 4 Penrith
- 5 Sharks
- 6 Raiders
- 7 Warriors
- 8 Roosters

So six of the eight, and a bit closer – but not much – to the finishing order.

To be fair to me, once the Warriors did not make the eight, I pretty much could not care less who wins it. But you will have to take my word for it, the last four standing are absolutely how I tipped it going into the finals.

The Eels looked good against the Storm but still lost,

then dropped their bundle against a Cowboys side it is impossible not to admire for their competitiveness if nothing else.

The Panthers came up against a Broncos side that wins ugly.

So this weekend the Storm face the Broncos, and they will win that, and the Roosters will at last put an end to the gutsy showing of the Townsville mob.

Get set for a Grand Final of Roosters v Storm, and that should be a ripper given they were the two best sides all year.

We Sign Another One

Vodafone Warriors coach Stephen Kearney has added another player to his roster, securing the signature of Matiu Love-Henry from the Broncos.

Now I need to declare I know nothing about this bloke, but knowing nothing about what I am talking about has never stopped me before, so I will wade on in.

I am going to assume that Kearney must know a bit about the lad, who is just 21, because he will have worked with him at the Broncos when he was assistant coach there.

A second-rower, Matiu is a boomerang – one of those players we had, let go, then signed again.

He has had two years at the Broncos, and they do not sign too many duds – but on the other hand, they don't let many really good ones get away either.

What we do know is that he did not break into the NRL at the Queensland outfit, though when you consider he would have had to displace someone like Matt Gillett or Sam Thaiday, that's not hard to understand.

So that is Love-Henry, Adam Blair (see below), Tohu Harris, Leivaha Pulu, Peta Hiku, and Gerard Beale all on the way. Manaia Cherrington signed last year, as did Zac Santo.

You do have to wonder where that leaves Bodene Thompson though. I for one would be sorry to see him go, because while he is not the best we have, he is very far from the worst.

What Does It All Mean?

The Vodafone Warriors have pushed back their annual Members' Forum to November, which has plenty of people speculating what it means.

The hot gossip seems to be that something big is brewing.

The Forum usually takes place during the season or soon after it has ended.

Instead the club has sent an email to members saying the change was done to "ensure members will be given greater transparency around key decisions that are made in the coming weeks on the back of a very disappointing season in which we fell well short of expectations".

That's a doosie of a sentence and it could mean pretty much anything, so we will just have to wait and see.

Blair Switch Project

I'm still none the wiser about Adam Blair, except that the Aussie papers have reported a four-year deal worth \$2.6 million.

The Kiwis captain, the Courier Mail reported, will swap the Broncos for Mt Smart at the end of the season but he won't talk about it until his Broncos exit finals footy.

Keep in mind that a Blair deal is not certain, because there is a "cool-off" period of 10 days from the time any player actually signs a contract.

Blair is under contract at the Broncos next season, but he has been allowed him to talk to other clubs, and it is no secret we have been chasing hard.

Blair told the Courier Mail, he had to consider his future. "It's hard for me because whatever I do, it's my last contract."

It's not like I have the inside track, but four years does seem like a long contract for a 31-year-old front-rower.

Battle For Kearney That Actually Matters!

If you need a reminder that league is just a game and that in the greater scheme of things it does not matter much, consider news out of Australia at the weekend that coach Stephen Kearney has confirmed his wife Piri has been undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

Kearney has been living in Auckland since joining the Warriors, but his family stayed in Brisbane with the girls both in education.

He did not want to talk about a personal matter, other than saying Piri was in remission.

Good luck to Joseph Parker fighting Hughie Fury this Sunday morning NZ time!

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



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From My Wonderful World Of Coincidences

By Sir Peter Leitch



IT'S A bloody small world you know, more specifically Auckland, and if you are a hearty Auckland rugby league fan, player, or family member, it's even smaller. It took a small visit to beautiful Burleigh Heads on the GoldCoast to remind me of the fact.

Having lunch at Swell Resort what should I spy but a barber shop across the road named "Godbarber", so off I went.

Well tie me bloody kangaroo down, I walked in and there painted on the interior of the shop was the Auckland city skyline, and in the corner a wall-sized NZ Warrior pukana face logo.

There were two barbers, a unit of a Tongan fella named Joe Tongi, and his little brother Nasi.

Joe owned and operated West Coast Barbers in Glen Eden and cut many of our past and present Auckland players' hair. He told me how, after moving to the Gold Coast, a fellow ex-Auckland barber and owner of Godbarber, Carlos Bishop, got wind of him being in town and set him up, and at the rest is history. .

Carlos is one of the staunchest Warriors supporters and is responsible for the interior design.

Carlos watched a lot of Fox Memorial at the spiritual home of NZ rugby league, Carlaw Park, looking up to players like Tawera Nikau, Richie Blackmore, Shane Hansen, Gary Freeman, the Panapa, Ropati and Mann families, and wagging school with his baby brother to watch them come together as the Kiwis and beat Australia and Great Britain.,

There's actually a newspaper picture of the game, and you can see him and his brother in the background.

"To me you don't choose your team, your team is where you're from and I'm an Auckland bro through-and-through, so no matter where in the world I am, the Warriors will always be my team."

Well the next thing you know Joe's wife walks in, walks up and says: 'Kia Ora Mr Leitch, and gives me a hug and wouldn't you know it, its ex-Glenora, Ponsonby and Kiwi great Don Mann Snr's granddaughter, Ebony.

Don is the father of Heta, Richard, Don, Duane and Bart, and also little brother to the late and great "Godfather of Tongan Rugby League", and Mangere East RLFC – George Mann Snr, who is father to Warren, Ada, George, Esau and Adelaide.

She then goes and kisses one of the customers who is waiting and introduces him to me,. "Do you remember the Mangakino Hawks league team who you spoke with last week in support of thier clubrooms and gear that were damaged in a fire? Well the captain who spoke, Johnson Peri, this is his father, and actually did you know that Mangakino can lay claim to a few of our league greats and up-and-coming players."

It turns out George Mann and his brother Don worked and lived in Mangakino, Frano Botica was born there, and Te Maire Martin was raised there..

"Well I couldn't help but think its a bloody small world. You can find them at 1823 Gold Coast Highway in Burleigh Heads, so pop in and tell them the Butcher sent you.





By John Coffey

Bring Back Bromwich

Australia's Josh Duggan offloads as he's tackled by New Zealand's Tohu Harris & Jesse Bromwich. 20/11/2016 . Photo www.photosport.nz

THE MORE I think about it the more I believe the New Zealand Rugby League needs to commute the World Cup suspensions it imposed on Jesse Bromwich and Kevin Proctor because of their involvement with dodgy substances after the Anzac Test in Canberra. Their respective clubs, Melbourne Storm and Gold Coast Titans, also imposed penalties which have long expired and Bromwich is currently spearheading the Storm forwards in their premiership challenge. The only current losers are the Kiwis.

My motives are totally parochial. Rugby league internationally needs a competitive World Cup, and the game in this country desperately needs a competitive Kiwis team. It is unfair on the Warriors that they are the barometer of the code, but their six consecutive failed seasons have dumped rugby league's reputation to the depths. The Kiwis themselves have not helped since the heady days of 2014-15 when they beat the Kangaroos three times in a row. We can't afford another draw with Scotland, or to be out-muscled by Samoa or Tonga.

I don't personally know Bromwich or Proctor. But I understand both are decent blokes. They came through the stringent Melbourne system under Craig Bellamy and had no histories of bringing rugby league, their clubs or their families into disrepute. Not like Josh Dugan, Blake Ferguson or Andrew Fifita, who all played for Australia in that Anzac Test and are available for the World Cup. Dugan and Ferguson have been mutually involved in booze-fuelled incidents since they were sacked by the Canberra Raiders in 2013.

A reinstated Bromwich would still have one ongoing penalty, the loss of the Kiwis captaincy. Both he and Proctor have also been permanently stained on the internet by what happened in Canberra. The chances of a similar occurrence are extremely slim. Their NZRL suspensions expire after the World Cup and they can return to the team in 2018. In an ideal world they would be trying to get back into a squad still buoyant from winning the World Cup. But on current form the Kiwis will struggle to make the final, let alone win it.

Proctor has probably been relaxing on the Gold Coast beaches since the Titans' season ended. What would be the bigger punishment for him now – another day at the beach or a call from Kiwis coach David Kidwell telling him to get back to work? Bromwich will almost certainly finish the season rated the best prop in the game and wearing another premiership ring. Then he, too, can put his feet up. The Titans and Storm must be delighted these senior forwards will be fresh for next season.

Contrast the attitude of the NZRL, in suspending Bromwich and Proctor, with that of the NZRU in enlisting an army of lawyers to get Sonny Bill Williams back in black after his shoulder charge suspension earlier this year. Rugby union "suspensions" are notoriously farcical. For example, a "five-month" stand-down might include no more than a couple of inconsequential wind-down or warm-up matches and much of the off-season.

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In SBW's case they claimed his four-match stand-down should include a tier-three pre-season fixture and, incredibly, a "game of three halves" involving the All Blacks and two other sides. From memory, the NZRU partially succeeded and had one of those counted so he could come back a week earlier. Yet we hear repeatedly how much depth the NZRU has in midfield backs, any number of whom could have filled in against the wobbly Wallabies while SBW did his time.

As I was pondering all this, it was revealed utility back Jordan Kahu "might not" be available for the World Cup because of a groin injury which "might" need surgery. Apparently Kahu and his Broncos club believed he could "manage" the problem through the NRL playoffs before action needs to be taken. Kahu was quoted as saying it does not affect his running, that it really hurts only when he kicks for goal. Treating it after the World Cup would presumably risk him missing some early club football in 2018.

This has been going on for years. I recall the Bulldogs patched Jarrod McCracken up through the 1993 semi-finals before telling him he could not go on the Kiwis tour to Britain and France because he had a fractured leg! Blockbusting wing Lesley Vainikolo was invariably undergoing minor surgery whenever the Kiwis arrived in Britain. It just happened that Vainikolo's Bradford Bulls coach Brian Noble was also the Great Britain coach. The Warriors ruled three players out of the 2016 Anzac Test because of a disciplinary matter.

We are constantly told the clubs have first dibs on the players because they pay their wages. But do they? Isn't it television money which finances the game as a whole, allowing the NRL to prop up the clubs? Those clubs are just intermediaries, passing some of the loot given them by television, via the NRL, onto the players. Selfish club attitudes won't change. So why should the NZRL deliberately weaken its own World Cup squad when there is no shortage of clubs quite happy to do that for them?

Bill Whitehead Update

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)



CANTERBURY RUGBY league identity Bill Whitehead continues to welcome old mates who visit him at the Elmswood Rest Home in Christchurch. I hadn't seen Bill for about two months because of my overseas travels but found him in good spirits and giving plenty of cheek. At 86, Bill seems to be responding positively to his surroundings and even looks younger after shaving off his beard. Among Bill's recent visitors was former world champion harness racing driver and top trainer Bob Cameron. Elmswood Rest Home is on Wairakei Road but entrance to the hospital section is on Colwyn Place, which runs off Aorangi Road.

CAUGHT UP with Andrew Voss Rugby League commentator at the Vodafone Warriors event on Tuesday night and talked about the upcoming Rugby League World Cup 2017.



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it on my facebook
page:**





THERE ARE plenty of exciting times just ahead of us. We are down to the last four teams and in a few days we will know the two sides that will do battle in the Grand Final at Sydney's ANZ Stadium on 1 October. The Storm and the Roosters are favoured to win this weekend and while I agree with this, the Cowboys have already shown us that things do not always turn out as expected. The Sharks under 20 Toyota Cup team finished as minor premiers and many predicted that they would go on and win the Premiership, but they have already been eliminated after two bad losses. The Premiership winning records of the four remaining teams are as follows. The Roosters have won 13 Premierships with their first coming in 1911 and their last in 2013. The Broncos have six Premierships and these were in 1992, 1993, 1997 (Super League), 1998, 2000 and 2006.

Melbourne won the title in 1999 and 2012 and also won the Grand Finals in 2007 and 2009, but these last two were taken from them for salary cap reasons. The Cowboys who came into the competition in 1995, won their only Premiership in 2015.

Penrith were knocked out of the competition when they were beaten 13-6 by the Broncos in Brisbane on Friday night. While they had some injury problems with key man Darius Boyd missing the game because of hamstring worries, they also received plenty of latitude in the play-the-ball region from the referees, especially in the second half, when they Panthers were pressing the tryline. To me at least one Bronco and probably another, should have been sin-binned but this wasn't done. Referees boss, Tony Archer would probably justify the non-action, but this is one area of our game that needs to be cleaned up. All teams try to slow down the play-the-ball but some are much better at doing this than others. I am not saying that this was the only reason why Penrith lost, as they were nowhere near their best on Friday night. The Panthers also had a case about playing on with a certain try in front of them after Broncos winger Corey Oates lost the ball in his collision with a team-mate. I am all for player safety so I have no problem with the referees stopping play immediately after the incident, but the play-on situation has already been mentioned elsewhere. Still nothing came out publicly from the Penrith camp about the play-the-balls and the possible play-on, so we move on. Statistics from the game show Penrith won the penalty count 8-5 and had an 80 percent completion rate compared to Brisbane's 69. The Broncos also made 15 errors compared to the Panthers 10. On the surface, these figures would say that the Panthers should have been able to take advantage of this but they didn't and Brisbane must be given some kudos for their defensive efforts.

In the other game, the Cowboys were again impressive. Everyone of their players worked non-stop and kept on turning up when needed. They had a completion rate of 85 compared to Parramatta's 74 and made 9 errors while the Eels made 13. The Eels missed 39 tackles and the Cowboys missed 28. No doubt the Eels are disappointed but the whole team and coach Brad Arthur, should be applauded for their efforts this year after what has happened at their club in recent seasons. What a great try by Semi Radradra in the seventh minute! As well as this try, he ran for 211 metres during the game and he left us a lot of great memories as he jets off to French Rugby Union. Let's hope he returns to our game and soon.

Jason Taumalolo ran for a game high 242 metres and also made 35 tackles. The Cowboys will hope he does even better than this on Saturday night against the Roosters. Fullback Lachlan Coote also played a key role in the Cowboys victory. His safe work under the high ball was vital, while his general play was also first class.

With their efforts against the All Blacks in Dunedin a couple of weeks ago, plus their 45-20 win against Argentina in Canberra on Saturday night, the Wallabies are back on track, especially after the All Blacks 57-0 thumping of South Africa at North Harbour on Saturday night. Former Melbourne Storm winger, Marika Koroibete, 25, became Wallaby number 913 in this match, while five eighth, Bernard Foley, 28, moved to fourth on the All-time scoring list for Australia. He landed all seven shots at goal against Argentina, six conversions and a penalty and now has 499 points from his 49 Tests. Jordan Uelese, 20, Australia's back-up hooker, scored his first Test try in only his second Test and a lot more will be heard about him in the future.

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The Australian Rugby Union were probably a little bit embarrassed by the crowd of 14,229 in Canberra, when they saw 15,089 turn up at Penrith Park a few hours earlier to see the Australian Womens Soccer team defeat Brazil 2-1 in a very entertaining and high quality match. Lisa De Vanna scored the Matilda's first goal and she now is Australia's leading all-time womens goal scorer with 43.

Sam Kerr collected Australia's other goal with a brilliant header. Only 24, Sam plays club football in the USA and is currently one of Australia's most talked about athletes after being named as one of 10 players on the list for FIFA's womens world player of the year.

Brazil fielded their strongest side, with 31 year old Marta Viera Da Silva captaining the team. Known as Marta, she has played 102 internationals for Brazil and has scored 105 goals in these games. She has played in four World Cups and three Olympic Games and is currently playing club football in the USA at Orlando. Cristiane Rozeira de Souza Silva, 32, also played in the Brazilian team. Known as Cristiane, she has played 117 games for Brazil and scored 83 goals. She has played in four World Cups and four Olympic Games and is now playing club football in China.

Before 8,456 fans in Toronto on Saturday, the Toronto Wolfpack completed their season with a 26-14 win over Doncaster. The previous Saturday, 9 September, they beat Barrow 26-2, also in Toronto. The Wolfpack has won promotion to the Kingstone Press League One Competition next English season. The man who set the scene for the Wolfpack in Toronto, Eric Perez, believes a second Canadian team, in Montreal, could be playing in 2019.



**The September issue of
Grassroots, ARL's monthly
eNewsletter is out now.
[Click here to read online.](#)**

This is a promotional banner for official merchandise. It features a dark background with several black sports jerseys displayed. The jerseys have various logos, including 'macron', 'PIRTEK aid transfer solutions', and the 'KIWI' logo. On the right side, there is a large, stylized orange and yellow trophy icon with the text 'RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2017' below it. The words 'OFFICIAL MERCHANDISE' are written in large, bold, white capital letters across the bottom right. At the very bottom, a black bar contains the text 'NOW AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://KIWIS.SHOPDESQ.COM/](https://kiwis.shopdesq.com/)' in white capital letters.

**OFFICIAL
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NOW AVAILABLE AT: [HTTPS://KIWIS.SHOPDESQ.COM/](https://kiwis.shopdesq.com/)

Hit Them With Both Barrels

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 AN exciting and varied weekend of televised rugby league. Two all-or-nothing NRL semi-finals and their associated Holden Cup curtain-raisers, the Warriors reserves making a bid for their Grand Final, vital matches in the British Super League playoffs and qualifiers, plus the start of the (sadly very brief) national provincial championship.

Penrith might have bowed out of contention for the NRL premiership but the Panthers surely took a record with them. I seriously doubt any other rugby league team anywhere in the world fielded as many as four players with hyphenated surnames in such a vital encounter. New Zealanders Dallin Watene-Zelezniak, Corey Harawira-Naera and James Fisher-Harris lined up alongside Reagan Campbell-Gillard.

When I was a youngster we associated double-barrelled names with British rugby union players such as Phil Horrocks-Taylor and Mike Campbell-Lamerton. Their names and backgrounds reeked of upper class snobbery. Campbell-Lamerton captained the awful 1966 Lions but, as an officer in the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, he had the credentials to do so. A Cambridge University chap, Horrocks-Taylor also fitted the stereotype in 1959.

But there had already been two Kiwis with hyphenated names before them. Jack Russell-Green was scrum-half in both Tests of the drawn 1949 home series against the Kangaroos and toured Australia as understudy to Jimmy Haig in 1952, while second-row forward and fellow Aucklander Doug Richards-Jolley played in two Tests on the 1951-52 tour to Britain and France. They were, respectively, Kiwis number 321 and 327.

More than half a century was to pass before Shaun Kenny Dowall made his international debut in 2007 as Kiwi number 746. In the decade since then he has been followed by Jared Waerea-Hargreaves (755), Roger Tuivasa-Sheck (779), Watene-Zelezniak (794) and Fisher-Harris (801). Don't be surprised if they are joined by Harawira-Naera for next month's World Cup, while Campbell-Gillard is a chance of being in the Kangaroos squad.

Players are listed on the Kiwis Roll of Honour under the name they were known as during their careers – for various legitimate reasons a few are not quite the

same as on their birth certificates. So Robbie Paul (Kiwi number 671) will remain on the list as just that, despite after retiring from an illustrious career in Britain he got married and changed his surname to Hunter-Paul. No, he didn't marry Rachael Hunter!

A former Panther with a much shorter surname might also be zooming back into contention for the Kiwis. Peta Hiku has been prominent in Warrington's battle to retain its Super League status since being released by Penrith earlier this year. Hiku can be slotted in at fullback, wing, centre or stand-off half and would be especially useful in the Cup tournament. He has recently been confirmed as a Warriors signing for 2018.

The Kiwis seem destined to be without another man with a four-letter surname. Jordan Kahu has been scheduled for groin surgery over the off-season. There is no doubt he will line up for Brisbane against Melbourne this weekend but once the Broncos are out of the playoffs Kahu will be out of David Kidwell's World Cup plans. All the more reason Hiku should be back in the reckoning, along with Wigan halfback-hooker Thomas Leuluai.

Kahu is not the only Bronco who will be missing from the World Cup. Anthony Milford has been told he needs shoulder surgery. Not that there appeared to be too much wrong with his shoulders when his much bigger team-mate Corey Oates knocked himself out when colliding with Milford during last Friday night's win over the Panthers. Milford would have been a Samoan selection certainty if not wanted by Kangaroos coach Mal Meninga.

Meanwhile, recent Warriors assistant coach Steve McNamara was breathing huge sighs of relief after his Catalans Dragons edged out Hull Kingston Rovers 20-19 in their Super League qualifier at Hull. Catalans came from behind to take the lead before the Hull KR goalkicker missed a close-range penalty attempt in the 79th minute. The Dragons are not yet certain of automatic qualification for 2018 but a loss would have had them on the brink of relegation.



By Miles Davis



Kieran Read during the Rugby Championship test match.
Photo www.photosport.nz

Springboks

MOST KIWIS love it when the All Blacks give their foes the Springboks a damned good thrashing. But after the euphoria has died down after Saturday night's hiding there will come a time of reflection and perhaps a fair amount of concern. Whilst it is always good when your team wins there will come a time when repetitive victories can diminish the value of the contest. The last three meetings have resulted in wins for the All Blacks by almost embarrassing margins 41-13, 57-15 and 57-0.

The All Blacks need capable rivals to give their victories more meaning. Just as importantly World rugby needs the All Blacks to have some form of competition in order to market the game. In the professional era money is essential and without a marketable product income streams tend to diminish.

It is not the responsibility of the All Blacks to drop their level of performance to make games competitive it is down to the opposition to raise theirs. Therein lies the problem as far as South Africa is concerned as there are several issues that need to be addressed. Firstly there is the question of racial quotas. Whilst one can understand that after years of apartheid and awful discrimination there is a need to try and balance the ledger there is no doubt that in a sporting environment such a policy is likely to weaken the side. Opportunity to partake in sport should of course be provided to all but to impose a selection quota inevitably means that not all the best players are going to be selected.

There is also the player drain to Europe where money is king. There are nearly 350 South African players plying their trade overseas and that has left their local competition a much weaker one. That in turn means that less people are supporting the game. Turned off by an inferior product and upset at the quota system crowd numbers are dwindling for several Super Rugby franchises. Whilst the Lions enjoyed reasonable crowds due to their recent improved performances, the former giants Blue Bulls averaged just under 9000 for home games last season. This sort of decline could prove terminal for professional outfits in South Africa.

The lure of European money is also affecting succession planning with many youngsters being snapped up by overseas academies and being lost to the South African system. Those who remain are also encumbered with the traditional style of the South African game which does not equip them to compete with that of New Zealand. At all levels in New Zealand now the game is played at a high pace where handling and decision making skills are finely honed. From schoolboys to ITM Cup to Super Rugby the New Zealand sides have all adopted the same philosophy and the results are plain to see. New Zealand has stolen a march and with the gap ever-widening it is hard to see how South Africa are going to close it.

Giddy times for the All Blacks in recent years but ones which may end if there is no-one good enough to give them a decent game.



By Shane Hurndell
Hawke's Bay Today
Sports Reporter

Hawkeyes Dealt Double Blow

RETIREMENT CAPTAIN: Steve Jude has retired from teams racing but will continue to chase individual titles. PHOTO/HAWKE'S BAY TODAY

THOSE SUMMER months are almost here and for many Hawke's Bay rugby league fans it signals a switch to speedway mode.

Part of the speedway buzz in the Bay is supporting the Hawke's Bay Hawkeyes Superstock team. This is the team which has won the most prestigious event on the Speedway New Zealand calendar for the past two years, the ENZED Teams Champs in Palmerston North.

The team has been dealt as double blow in recent months with manager James Buckrell stepping down and captain Steve Jude announcing his retirement from teams racing after 14 years with the Hawkeyes. However Jude doesn't believe the Hawkeyes will be vulnerable in their quest for a third consecutive title in the pair's absence.

"No way. I wouldn't have retired if I didn't think the talent was there. There is so much depth within the squad and there are numerous talented drivers who want to trial for the Hawkeyes ... I'm confident they can win a third title in Palmy," Jude, 46, said.

"I'm going out while at the top. To captain the team to two consecutive titles in Palmy is the pinnacle, and we won the team of the year award at the Hawke's Bay Sports Awards function ... you can't get much better than that."

Although Jude, one of the best runners in the business, has retired from teams racing he will continue to chase individual titles in Hawke's Bay and around the country when the season begins at Meeanee on October 22.

There was no hesitation from the three-time East Coast and Autumn Nationals champion, two-time Hawke's Bay champion and former King Country champion when asked who should replace him as Hawkeyes captain.

"Mike McLachlan. He's the best blocker in the country and he has teams raced for years with the Meeanee Maulers and the Hawkeyes. He's not called Mr Speedway for nothing.

"Obviously when he's finished the likes of Jason Long and Thomas Stanaway will be ready for the captain's job ... the succession plans are there for every role."

Defending champions Bridge Pa maintained their unbeaten run in Hawke's Bay's premier club rugby league competition on Saturday with a 50-30 win against Omaha Huia. Other matches saw Kahuranaki beat Tama-tea 20-0 and Napier Panthers beat Dannevirke Tigers 40-32.

Reserve grade fixtures saw unbeaten leaders Maraenui beat Bridge Pa 40-22, Omaha Huia beat MAC 54-36 and Flaxmere pip Clive 48-42.

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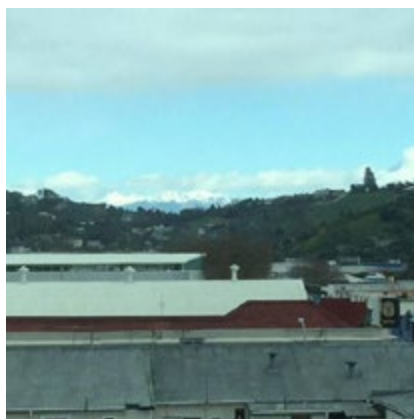
Women's grade matches saw big improvers Dannevirke Tigers upset Bridge Pa 28-26 and Tamatea pip Hastings Rugby and Sports 30-26.

On behalf of the Hawke's Bay league fraternity it is appropriate I convey our sympathy and aroha to former Rugby League Hawke's Bay secretary Doug Laing and whanau following the death of Doug's son Leslie who died in a work accident in Auckland last week at the age of 28.

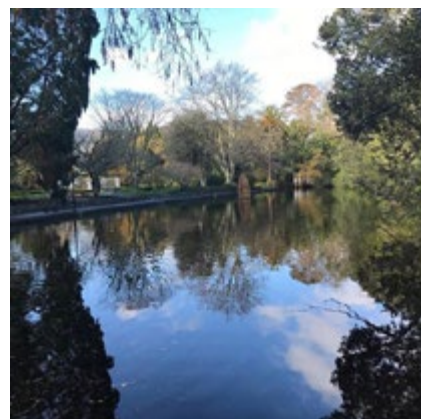
A former national age group sprint champion, Leslie, was also a member of the 2003 and 2004 Napier Boys' High School under-15 rugby teams which won their respective national tournaments. He also played for Napier at the 2001 Ross Shield tournament in Dannevirke and one of his teammates from that side, Gemma Woods, dedicated the two tries she scored for the Hawke's Bay Tuis rugby team in their 39-17 loss to Otago in Napier on Saturday to Leslie.



A big day for my mate Dexter today a powhiri to welcome him to Nelson as Maori responsiveness manager for Tasman Police



Great view of Mt Arthur. (Wharepapa). From central Nelson.



A beautiful day in Nelson.

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



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ISAT DOWN to talk to 2008 rugby league World Cup winning KI-WI'S coach Stephen Kearney about the journey (this interview is about the kiwi's winning the World Cup NOT ABOUT THE WARRIORS)



Click here to watch it on my facebook page:





By Miles Davis

Henry Paul

Henry Paul. Men's Rugby Sevens, England v Cook Islands.
2.03.2002 - Photo www.photosport.nz

HENRY RANGI Paul was born in the heart of the North Island in Tokoroa. He started playing rugby union as a nipper with Ponsonby before taking up league with Te Atatu. He shifted for a short while to the Pt Chevalier Pirates before returning to Te Atatu and making his senior debut at the age of 18.

His form as a stand-off and goal-kicker saw him selected for the Junior Kiwis tour to Great Britain in 1993 and he was made captain of the side. The Kiwis were also touring Great Britain at the time and an injury crisis saw Paul called into the senior squad. He made his debut from the bench against France.

The tour exposed him to the wider rugby league audience and he was signed by Wakefield Trinity for the 1993/94 season. One of the highlights was inflicting the first home defeat on Wigan for 13 months. A side that included Andy Farrell, Martin Offiah and Kiwi Sam Panapa amongst others.

After 24 games for Wakefield and over 100 points he was signed by the Vodafone Warriors but was released in a deal that brought Andy Platt to Auckland and sent Paul to Wigan. He was to spend 4 years there amassing 550 points in 147 appearances. Whilst at Central Park he won back to back Regal Trophy finals in 1995 and 1996 and won the Super League Grand Final in his final season, 1998. In the off-season in 1996 he tried his hand at Rugby Union with a short spell at Bath.

When his contract with Wigan expired he joined the Bradford Bulls and in his first season was to once again make the Super League Grand Final. This time however his side lost to St Helens although Paul did score all his side's points with a try and conversion. In 2000 he led his Bradford side to the Challenge Cup Final at Wembley where they defeated Leeds Rhinos 24-18. As well as kicking 4 goals Paul was awarded the Lance Todd Trophy as player of the final.

In 2001 Bradford made the Super League Grand Final where they thrashed Wigan 37-6. It was a family affair as he was partnered in the halves by his brother Robbie.

During that 2001 season he set a new record for consecutive goal-kicks slotting 35 on the trot beating the previous total of 30 held by fellow Kiwi Darryl Halligan.

The end of that season saw him return to Rugby Union this time with Gloucester. His move came as a bit of a surprise to league fans as he had helped make Bradford a major force. Asked whether he had become bored with league he said "I'm not saying I'm bored with rugby league, but you know when you've won all there is to offer in the game, you look for fresh challenges. And that's what this is about. Whatever people say, it's not about the money."

He made an immediate impact for Gloucester scoring 28 points on his debut and was soon called up for England A (he qualified for England both for his English grandfather and his 9 years residency). In 2002 he made his England debut against France and went on to collect 6 England caps.

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His passing and elusive running made him a natural 7's player and he was in the England squad at both the 2002 and 2006 Commonwealth Games winning a silver medal at the latter tournament.

In 2006 he moved back to league joining Harlequins Rugby League playing 63 games and scoring 240 points before leaving in 2008 to return to Union, joining recently relegated Leeds Carnegie for two seasons and helping them get promoted back to the Premiership.

2010 saw him join Rotherham but also become assistant coach of Russia. His commitments to Russia saw him play just 5 games for Rotherham.

In 2014 he was appointed Director of Football for Bradford and Bingley Bees. In 2017 he was a front-runner for the coaching job at Bradford Bulls before taking up the head coaching position of the Jebel Ali Dragons based in Dubai.

As well as all of the above he also managed to fit in 24 games and 121 points for the Kiwis.

After a stellar career in both oval ball codes, Paul is now looking forward to raising the skills of players in the Middle East. If his charges can achieve half the success of their coach they will have successful careers.

1998 Super League Grand Final Wigan v Leeds <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHrim1inmng>

2017 NZRL CHAMPIONSHIP

CENTRAL ZONE CHAMPIONS



ORCAS

SOUTHERN ZONE CHAMPIONS



WHALERS

23 SEPT - KETTLE PARK- FIELD 1 - 2:30PM - KICK-OFF



A black and white photograph of a man running on a beach, carrying a rugby ball in his right arm. He is wearing a Canterbury t-shirt. The background is a dark, textured beach with some footprints.

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GET A QUOTE



Golden Homes Black Sox Celebration Dinner



Jason Dawson, with Duncan & Michelle Enoka (parents of BSX players Ben, Thomas, & Campbell Enoka)



Mark Watson radio sport host who was the MC at the golden homes Black Sox dinner on Saturday with Allen Vaughan who brought the signed Auckland nines warriors shirt in the auction on the night.



Mark Sorenson the Black Sox Coach who's team just won the World Cup (he is also a former player) and Allan Russell former player and boss of Asics Australia who flew in from Sydney for the Golden homes Black Sox celebration dinner on Saturday.

ON BEHALF of Softball NZ a huge thank you to all in the softball community that attended the "Golden Homes Black Sox Celebration Dinner" Saturday evening at Alexandra Park.

Your support of the event was outstanding and it was truly wonderful to see the softball family unite as one in acknowledging the incredible achievements of the 7 times World Champion Black Sox.

I was my great pleasure to announce the Golden Homes Softball Foundation, a foundation that will strive to support the needs of young male athletes who aspire to be the next generation of Black Sox champions. A wonderful initiative supported by our community for our community. Details will be communicated to our members in due course.

An auction was held on the night in support of the Black Sox and Golden Homes Softball Foundation in which over \$10,500 was raised. Thank you to all those successful bidders and a special thank you to Sir Peter Leitch who not only provided some very special memorabilia on the night but also great banter with MC Mark Watson.

Yours in Softball, Tony Giles CEO.



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Huge Numbers Of Tongan Fans To Support Mate Ma'a Tonga At Rugby League World Cup, According To Coach Kristian Woolf

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

THE MATE Ma'a Tonga team for Rugby League World Cup 2017 will consist entirely of experienced NRL players when they line up against the Kiwis and Samoa, coach Kristian Woolf says.

"I'm very confident that every one of those guys is going to have played a lot of NRL this year," Woolf told Radio Sport.

"It's the first time we've been in a position to do that."

Woolf said new eligibility rules that allow players to switch more easily between tier 1 and 2 countries would help ensure his Tongan team was the strongest it had ever been. The rules mean the likes of New Zealand Warriors centre Solomon Kata can play for Tonga in the tournament despite having played four tests for New Zealand in 2016.

Woolf said a number of big name NRL stars had expressed a desire to play for Tonga ahead of Australia and New Zealand.

"We are not just sitting here waiting for New Zealand and Australia to pick and then just picking from the rest. There are a lot of guys who have made themselves available for Tonga only. That is a massive step forward for us in terms of where we are going."

The influx of Tongan talent into the NRL and under 20s competition meant the pool of players the coach had to pick from had grown hugely in recent years.

"In most teams in the NRL there is at least one or two players of Tongan heritage there. Some of those guys are up there with the best players in the game – guys like Jason Taumalolo, Andrew Fifita and Tyson Frizell."

Experienced NRL players such as Tuimoala Lolohea, Kata, Konrad Hurrell and Manu Vatuvei could all end up playing for Tonga at the world cup.

"That experience of high level football that every squad member is going to have is going to allow us to be a lot more competitive, give us a chance of winning some games and causing some surprises."

Woolf said he expected huge numbers of New Zealand-based Tongans would get in behind the team for its matches against Samoa and New Zealand in Hamilton on November 4 and November 11.

"One thing Tongans do really well is support their own and we are going to put together a team they can be proud of."

Tickets and information from rlwc2017.com





The SKYCITY Breakers are back and ready to kick start the 2017-18 season!

WHO WOULDN'T want to support a winning team?! The SKYCITY Breakers are back and ready to kick start the 2017-18 season!

The boys have been warming up all winter and they hit the courts in pre-season looking strong, beating Melbourne United 88-86 on Sunday 17/09 at Pettigrew Stadium in Napier and they are ready to take on the rest of the Ozzie's in this year's NBL Championship. Their first home game is just around the corner (8th October vs Cairns Taipans) and tickets are on sale now.

In so many ways, this is a season to get excited over. The SKYCITY Breakers are entering this season with four NBL Championships under their belt and as a treat to the team and to local fans, three of the first four games in the season will be on Breaker's turf. Home games will be split between Spark Arena (10) and North Shore Event Centre (4) so fans have their pick of venues, both still offering the same fun, thrilling atmosphere that is a SKYCITY Breakers game.

The Breakers have a stellar roster this year with two exceptional imports who are sure to add a powerful dynamic to the court. American DJ Newbill coming to the club from the Belgian league and Dominican Republic international Edgar Sosa both help the team shape up for a promising season. Joining the squad as an Australian with Kiwi roots, James Hunter is the other new addition who is full of energy and a passion for the game.

Of course, the roster is still filled with the familiar faces that everyone knows and loves, with players like Mika Vukona, Kirk Penney, and Tom Abercrombie ready to defend the court. The development squad adds an additional level of strength to this season. Mitch Newton, Derone Raukawa, Daniel Fotu, and Quinn Clinton comprise the impressive SKYCITY Breaker's D-Unit.

It's time to rally up your friends & family as we support the boys all the way to another championship!

[Click here to buy your tickets now.](#)



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RLWC2017 Trophy Tour Draws Huge Crowds in PNG

PAPUA NEW Guinea's pride and passion for Rugby League has been on show ahead of the upcoming 2017 World Cup, with large crowds turning out to see the Paul Barrière Trophy as it makes its way around the country.

In a sign of what the game means to the Rugby League-mad nation, more than 30,000 people attended the Goroka Show on the weekend to view the iconic World Cup silverware as the Oil Search Trophy Tour arrived in the PNG Highlands region.

The Oil Search Trophy Tour, which continues until 13 October, began in Port Moresby last Monday and has so far visited Lae, Wau, Bulolo, Goroka, and places in between, with helicopters being used to access remote villages.

Rugby League World Cup 2017 (RLWC2017) Chief Executive Andrew Hill has been in Papua New Guinea for the trophy tour and said the scenes he had witnessed indicated how excited and proud the country was about hosting Kumuls' matches in the tournament.

"Rugby League truly unites Papua New Guinea and the Oil Search Trophy Tour reminds those involved in the game of the positive impact sport can have on the community," Hill said.

"The passion and pride that the country has for Rugby League is second to none and it has been fantastic to see people in all parts of Papua New Guinea able to share in the excitement of hosting the World Cup.

"Through the support of Oil Search and the vision of the Prime Minister Peter O'Neill we have been able to take the Rugby League World Cup trophy all around the country and I particularly want to thank Oil Search Managing Director Peter Botten, who has joined me on the tour."

With the Kumuls to play the Prime Minister's XIII in a double-header with the Jillaroos and PNG Orchids women's Rugby League teams at Oil Search National Football Stadium next Saturday and the Hunters playing in the Queensland Cup grand final on Sunday, the excitement will continue to build.

PNG will host three matches in the World Cup, against Wales on 28 October, Ireland on 5 November and USA on 12 November.

Tickets for all three matches went on sale recently and can be purchased via the tournament's official website RLWC2017.com or from the following eight Tiket Mastas outlets in Port Moresby:

Brian Bell – Plaza, Turumu Street, Boroko, NCD (Mon-Sun, 8.00am – 5.00pm)
Brian Bell – Home Centre Gordons, Kennedy Road, Gordons (Mon-Sun, 8.00am – 5.00pm)
Brian Bell – Vision City, Waigani Drive, NCD (Mon-Sun, 9.00am – 9.00pm)
Stop n Shop – Rainbow, Goro - Kaega Road, Rainbow (Mon-Sun, 7.30am – 7.30pm)
Stop n Shop – Waigani, North Waigani, Pipit Street (Mon-Sun, 8.00am – 8.00pm)
Big Rooster – Erima, Along Hubert Murray Highway, Erima (Mon-Sun, 8.00am – 8.00pm)
Big Rooster – Koki (Mon-Sun, 10.00am – 8.00pm)
Cool Stuff – Waterfront Harbour City (Mon-Sun, 9.00am – 8.00pm)

The RLWC2017 will be contested from 27 October to 2 December and features 14 nations playing 28 matches in 13 cities across Australia, New Zealand and in PNG.

For tournament information and ticket details, RLWC2017.com





Counties And Akarana Pocket Wins For NZRL National Premiership Round One

*By Brooke Hurdell
NZRL*

IF IT weren't for a missed conversion from in front of the goalpost, the Canterbury Bulls could have staged the comeback of a lifetime in the first game of the 2017 NZRL National Premiership.

The Counties Manukau co-captain, Uila Aiolupo got the ball rolling at AMI Stadium with a try in the first seven minutes converted by William Stowers.

By the time eight minutes had passed, Canterbury had conceded four penalties aiding the momentum of a strong Counties attack.

Stowers then took his own try over the line off the back of a quick play the ball putting Canterbury's defense under significant pressure once again taking the score to 10-0.

It looked as though Canterbury had gained the momentum they needed to put points on the board after earning their first penalty in the 17th minute but their attempted try was held up.

Counties then managed to sneak in another great try with the efforts of John Vuetibau extending their lead to 16-0 after another successful conversion to Stowers.

Then came the time for the South Islanders to strike back right before halftime. Although they'd had limited possession in their opposition's half, Canterbury's Chase Williams scored to take his team into the halftime break trailing 16-6 thanks to a successful conversion from Izic Placid.

The visitors then opened the second half with an easy try to John Vuetibau but Canterbury hit back with their second try of the game. Josh Aileone tip-toed down the left wing planting the ball in the corner which was converted once again by Izic Placid, 20-12.

A high knock-on count plagued the Cantabrians who were caught off guard minutes later when Roydon Gillet crossed their try-line to push the score out to 24-12.

Fast-forward to the 72nd minute where intensity levels went up a notch after Reuben Te Amo forced his way through not one, not two, but five players to score for Canterbury. With the score at 24-22, all Izic Placid needed to do was continue his 100% success rate at goal to convert from in front of the post to level the score. However, much to the surprise of spectators, the ball bounced off the cross-bar – conversion unsuccessful.

Counties added insult to injury by taking one last try across the line for a final score of 28-22 in what was a thrilling encounter for the first hit-out of the NZRL National Premiership.

Captain of Counties Manukau, William Stowers was singing full praises for his side.

"We've got alot of good combinations that come from the boys in their clubs and that helped us bring home the win today," he said.

Continued on next page...

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Alex Todd, captain of Canterbury offered some key points for his side to work on for round two.

"Discipline cost us - they really took the wind out of our sails and we just couldn't get up from our errors in the first half.

"For next week, we'll have to work on our tackle technique and discipline to make sure we give ourselves a better opportunity to get the win," he said.

Premiership:

Canterbury Bulls 22 (Tau Tauvale, Joshua Aileone, Reuben Te Amo, Chase Williams tries; Izic Placid 3 goals) Counties Manukau Stingrays 28 (Roydon Gillett, George Edwards, William Stowers, Uila Aiolupo, John Vuetibau 2 tries; William Stowers 2 goals)

In the second premiership game of round one held at FMG Stadium, Waikato returned to the top grade with a valiant effort that just fell short of an upset against the defending premiership champions, Akarana.

It was a game of two halves which had spectators on the edge of their seat when Waikato went into half-time leading 22-10.

However, Akarana came out of halftime proving exactly why they were the 2016 title winners. Scoring in the 11th minute of the second half and again minutes later, the class of Akarana's Zac Tippins brought his side back into the game.

Despite some football flair from captain Aaron Jolley with two tries and four conversions to his name, the tired Waikato side couldn't hold out the firing Aucklanders going down 28-36.

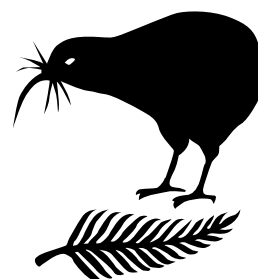
Waikato will take on Canterbury at FMG Stadium on September 24, 2pm and Counties Manukau will face Akarana at Mt Smart Stadium, 4pm.

Premiership:

Waikato 28 (Aaron Jolley 2, Hayden Karena, Taimainu Huirama 2 tries; Aaron Jolley 4 goals) Akarana Falcons 36 (Polima Siaki, Francis Leger 3, Jordan Tuarae, Fatani Manukia, Zac Tippins 2, Salafuauli Falelua-Malio tries; Zion Ioka 2 goals)

Championship:

Wellington 18 (John PUNA, Kahura CAMERON, Ulai OTI tries; Bronson MARINO 3 goals) Bay of Plenty 22 (William Cook, Pesini Tavake, Kihiroa Wihapi 2 tries; William Cook 2 goals; William Cook penalty goal)



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FEATURES, NEWS AND STATS + PRELIMINARY
FINALS TEAM LISTS FOR NRL AND HOLDEN CUP
AND GRAND FINAL TEAM LISTS FOR RESERVE
GRADES AROUND THE COUNTRY!

INSIDE

- Cowboys lock **Jason Taumalolo** has a clear message for his rivals – 'challenge me at your peril'. The reigning Dally M winner has been goaded in the media by **Paul Gallen** and **Nathan Brown**, and is ready to destroy his Roosters opponent next-up.
- Broncos flyer **James Roberts** is desperate to make amends for the Broncos – first for letting **Latrell Mitchell** run over him in Week One of the finals, and secondly for missing last year's semi-final due to suspension. "I took it [missed tackle on Mitchell] a bit personally, so I have to make up for it," Roberts says. "It did hurt, not just for myself but for all my team-mates."
- All eyes are usually on Suliasi Vunivalu on the wing at the Storm, but on the opposite side of the field **Josh Addo-Carr** is no slouch either. The 22-year-old admits moving to Melbourne was one of the most difficult decisions of his career, but has changed him in ways he couldn't have imagined.
- The Roosters haven't changed much personnel-wise this season – but prop **Jared Waarea-Hargreaves** says the bounce-back factor is what's driving them in 2017. "For us boys who have been here through that time, to bounce back the following year has definitely been a major factor for us. We have unfinished business."

PLUS... The **Top 8 finals selection gambles**, **The Analyst** tracks **Mitch Pearce's** season and the final **2017 team posters**.



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Had the pleasure doing a BBQ WITH ANOTHER FORMER BUTCHER SIR JOHN KIRWIN LAST WEEK In support of the Westpac rescue helicopter I must admit we done more talking than actually barbecuing.



Rewi rocking the blue.



Blue tea cups for BLUE September.



Invercargill friends doing their bit for BLUE September. From left Marnie Kennedy, Annette Paris, Sharon Thomson & Paula Bull.

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The Newsletter Team

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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Hayden Woodhead - Graphic Designer

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