

VODAFONE



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter

27th September 2017

#189

I Only Saw Half Of That Coming

By David Kemeys

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



THE STORM were always going to get past the Broncos, but I was convinced the Cowboys had exhausted their luck, and tenacity, and would fall to the Roosters.

Boy was I wrong – a new experience for me.

There is no way the Cowboys should have made it to the big dance, it defies all logic.

They were not even in the eight on the final day of the season, needing the Bulldogs, who were crap all year, to beat the Dragons on the last day – a result few predicted.

But they have hung on like leeches in their run to the final, as we all predicted their demise.

No side from eight, wins it, the experts say, especially not a Cowboys outfit without Johnathan Thurston.

No one told them about Michael Morgan then.

He was outstanding against the Roosters, the second best side all year – and the second best on Saturday night too.

The other Cowboy who earned every penny of his salary was Jason Taumalolo – and fair play, I have often questioned whether anyone is worth that kind of money.

I confess I was hoping the Roosters would make it, because they were 15th last year, which at least gives me some hope we could engineer that kind of turnaround, and we also beat them this year at Mt Smart, so if they were NRL champions, at least we could say we beat them.

Melbourne of course marched relentlessly on, and in the end they flogged the Broncos, though the game was much more competitive than the blowout scoreline might indicate.

Cooper Cronk was outstanding, Cameron Smith did what he always does, the Warriors-bound Tohu Harris was pretty bloody smart too.

Much as it pains to me to admit it, the Storm have dominated all year. I love winding up the Storm faithful. It must be easier for them than any other club, because there is one set of rules for the Storm, and one for everyone else, and they have the advantage that all their games are reffed by Cameron Smith.

But it is back to back finals and their eighth trip to the Grand Final, and what we would give for a record like that.

Expect Cronk, who quits the Storm to move to Sydney, to put in a final showing that dazzles.

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They just are a side that even when things don't click, like the first half of their semi, find a way to win.

It should be a fantastic final. A side that has looked best by some distance all year and that knows how to win, against a classic underdog that refuses to lie down.

Blair Cops It

Our new boy Adam Blair, though as far as I know a deal has still not been done, copped a hiding as part of the Broncos team spanked by the Storm in the elimination final.

But that was nothing compared to the flogging he got from NRL greats over his performance.

Andrew Johns called out Blair for "the cheapest shot there is", after he crunched Cooper Cronk late, although that was not the only time he fired off.

He labelled Blair a coward for hitting Cronk in the back after he had passed the ball.

"You've got little halfbacks going to the line and passing and big front-rowers smashing them in the back when they're not looking. You can see the whiplash as he goes to the line. It's as cheap as they come."

Bollocks. You see worse every game.

Cronk did what every Storm player does when there is any suggestion of a penalty in the offing. He made the most of it, staying down and writhing about as if he had been hit by a fully-laden tanker instead of being pushed over.

In fairness, it was dumb, and Blair has a reputation for giving away penalties. Like we need that.

Our new boss Cameron George has defended Blair, saying his aggression will be welcome at Mt Smart.

"Everyone is going to have a view ... but if it falls within the rules that is fine, and at least we have a player committed to doing the right thing for his team. I'd rather have Adam in my team than someone else's."

I am absolutely with George on this, when he points out you can't have it both ways, flogging us for a lack of aggression, yet still flogging us when we sign players with that kind of style of play.

"We want players trying in every play of the game. The referees are there to determine if they are in or

outside the rules. We want every player pushing, and putting pressure on every opposition player."

Homeless Hasler

Where to now for Kieran Foran, our one-season-less-than-wonder now that Canterbury have given coach Des Hasler the boot?

Foran signed a two-year deal in May with the Dogs, choosing to leave the Warriors to be nearer his kids in Aussie, which is fine by me, but also saying how highly he regarded Hasler.

It seems there is no get-out clause so nothing has changed.

Bulldogs chairman Ray Dib went on the record during the week saying he was in regular touch with Foran, and Aaron Wood from the Tigers, and was confident both would arrive.

Meanwhile the Aussie papers have reported Foran will make himself unavailable this week for the Rugby League World Cup because he is not fit enough.

"I played under strength for much of the year at the Warriors and I just wasn't strong enough for NRL football. I've got to get my body right. I really need a big off-season."

Despite the way he was going for us, which was not stellar, that will be a big loss for the Kiwis.

No One Likes Us, We Don't Care

Research out at the weekend and reported in the Sydney Morning Herald reveals the Vodafone Warriors have the least fans - just 162,000 - though how they figure this out is beyond me.

The Broncos were top with more than a million, the Storm on 828,000 and the Cowboys on 608,000.

If you care, because I don't, the numbers were: Eels 457,000, Dragons 441,000, Tigers 403,000, Rabbitohs 391,000, Bulldogs 355,000, Manly (327,000), Roosters (224,000), Raiders (218,000), Knights (203,000), Titans 188,000 and Panthers 186,000.



I've Heard It All Now

I read the paper on Saturday and there was a front page story saying two pupils at Blockhouse Bay Intermediate had sent apology letters to the Vodafone Warriors for asking disrespectful questions, one about why the team lost so often, and the other about where they were on the table.

I'm a bleeding heart liberal, so I am going to tell you 10 out of 10 to the school, because it only talked about showing visitors respect.

Warriors chief executive Cameron George was quoted, and 10 out of 10 to him, because he played it down and talked about how much the club enjoys its community role.

On the other hand, 0 out of 10 to The Herald for making a mountain out of a molehill. Beyond pathetic.



Prize Night Reveals All

I must have missed something because I had not read that Jacob Lillyman and Bodene Thompson were surplus to requirements, but there it was on the big screen at prize-giving, both listed among the departing players.

Lillyman will swap Mt Smart for the Newcastle Knights, who have a few impressive players heading their way.

Nine years "Bull" has been with us, and while he has not always caused the fans to rave about him, he has been one of our most solid and consistent and I for

one am sad to see him go.

I still have no idea where Bodene Thompson is going, but I always thought we looked a better side with him on the pitch.

Gerard Beale, Peta Hiku, Adam Blair, Tohu Harris... it's certainly going to be a different line-up in 2018.

I make it another prop still desperately needed, while a decent stand-off to take the load of Ata Hingano would not go amiss either, nor would a cracking centre for that matter.

RTS Gets Top Gong

Plenty of people had plenty to say when Roger Tuivasa-Sheck was named our NRL Player of the Year last week, some going so far as calling it a sop ahead of the final year of his contract.

I have already said many times David Fusitu'a was my tip, though he did not even make the final three.

RTS appeared in all but one of our 24 games, scoring 10 tries. He made 4172 metres - averaging a tick over 180 a game. He made 445 runs (20-odd a game), defused the most bombs, had the most kick returns, and was second equal for try saves.

Hard to argue that's not an impressive return, but I'd still have gone for Fusitu'a, who played every game and scored even more tries, a round dozen.

What was interesting was that RTS was the first back since Manu Vatuvei in 2010 to win. Clearly we need a few better performers in the backline!

Most of those complaining were either in my court, or thought Simon Mannering should have got it.

He has won it five times before, so probably has no room on the mantelpiece. He did win the People's Choice Award - a trophy which he promptly gave to a fan who has followed his career since day one. Nice touch.

FYI. We draw our competition winners by numbering every envelope. We then enter in the number entries at www.random.org and click generate to get a truly random number. We then dive back into our pile of envelopes to find the envelope with the corresponding number.

You Can Take The Boy Out Of Rotorua

You could be forgiven for admitting you have never heard of our latest signing, Hayze Perham.

I certainly hadn't, but he must be good, because he comes out of Rotorua Boys' High School, my old school. If it's good enough for Mark Watson on Radio Sport to bang on endlessly about Mt Albert Grammar, it's good enough for me to cheer on my old school.

The 18-year-old is captain of the RBHS first XV, a side, an achievement I can claim for myself – though it is an outrageous lie.

He is one of those talented kids that you can't help but admire, playing rugby and league through school, and joins us at the end of the year.

It might be a while before we see him at NRL level because he prefers the halves and fullback, and I can't see him, Rotorua-boy or not, displacing Shaun Johnson or Roger Tuivasa-Sheck anytime soon.

What caught my eye in the Daily Post story online was this: "Looking at other big rugby schools, they haven't supported league players as well. The coaches and principal are supportive of rugby players trying to make a career out of league - they don't cut down our options."

If only that were true of a lot more schools.

WITH 29 years law enforcement service my mate Senior Sergeant Dexter Traill has been seconded to Tasman Police district and will be based in Nelson until mid December. Dex will be acting Inspector, Maori Responsiveness Manager working to bring closer Police and Maori communities forging trust and confidence. To be fair when Dex told me he was heading off I wasn't happy cause we do a lot together but I couldn't be more pleased for him because he's a fantastic human being who deserves this opportunity. I know he will be very good at the role because Dex has that natural genuine ability to engage with all people no matter where they come from or how far up or down the chain they are. I was privileged to be with Dex and his good wife Denise when he was welcomed to Nelson with a mihi whakatau and bestowed the honour of wearing the Tasman Police korowai cloak symbolising the occasion and important work to be achieved. If you're in the Nelson, Marlborough and West Coast area keep an eye out for Dex and remind him he's missing the Warriors early preseason training but I'll let him off just this once. - **Sir Peter Leitch**



Crossing the floor, Dex takes up the challenge while his wife Denise watches on.



Dex bestowed with the cloak assisted by Rosemary Linde, Nelson police.



Sergeant Wayne Panapa introduces Dexter and I'm listening intently, all in Maori.



Shane Graham Te Puni Kokiri, Denise, Dexter, some cheeky guy, Superintendent Mike Johnson, Tasman District Commander.

Rugby League World Cup 2017

Rugby League Greats Luncheon

Presented By League Fans

Date: 27th October 2017 **Location:** Ellerslie Event Centre
Newmarket Room **Doors Open:** 11.30am **Buffet Lunch:** 12.15pm
Includes Beverage Package Until 3.00pm

JOIN former Warrior and Kiwi great Jerry Seuseu as your MC and a host of former Kiwi legends as we kick off the 2017 Rugby League World Cup in style and join us the next day at Mt Smart as we support the Kiwis when they take on Samoa in the opening game. There will be interviews with former Kiwi legends and a number of fantastic items up for auction as we raise funds for "League for Life"

Special guests include: Tawera Nikau, Stacey Jones, Nathan Cayless, Stephen Kearney, Graeme West, Olsen Filipaina and Nigel Vagana, just to name a few.

Tickets:

\$100 pp - Includes ticket to
Kiwis v Samoa the next day

\$1000 per table - Gets a former
Kiwi player on availability



Jerry Seuseu - MC

To purchase tickets, which include a ticket to the game the next day, visit:

www.ellerslie.co.nz/ticketstore

For other enquiries contact:

Charlotte - 09 522 3824



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Last Chance To Enter!

Get your entries in by Wednesday next week!



50x

**Prize packs
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Then post a stamped addressed envelope with your name, address, phone number and email to the address on the left. **DO NOT PUT YOUR ENVELOPE INSIDE ANOTHER ONE! WE DON'T OPEN ENVELOPES!!**

The back of your envelope must look like this: ↑

Winner will be drawn on 3rd October 2017



By John Coffey

Blair Bringing Baggage

Adam Blair is announced as the new captain to lead the New Zealand Kiwis at the Rugby League World Cup 2017.
Photo www.photosport.nz

LIKE IT or not, Adam Blair will be bringing some unwanted baggage with him as captain of the Kiwis in next month's World Cup and when he transfers from the Brisbane Broncos to the Warriors from 2018. Blair was branded by the media as the villain after the Broncos were beaten 30-0 by the Melbourne Storm in last weekend's first NRL Grand Final qualifier.

With little else to excite them because of the eventually lop-sided scoreline from an encounter between clubs based in two different states, the predominantly NSW-based media turned the spotlight on two incidents involving Blair. Andrew Johns went so far as to describe one of Blair's deeds as "a coward act", thus igniting media outlets on both sides of the Tasman.

In the 66th minute, with Melbourne leading by 14 points, Blair was penalised for a swinging arm in a tackle. From the resulting set Storm replacement prop Nelson Asofa-Solomona charged over for a try which, with Cameron Smith's conversion, erased all doubts as to which team would advance to this Sunday's Grand Final against the North Queensland Cowboys.

But the incident which raised Johns' hackles came in the 70th minute when Blair ran into Melbourne half Cooper Cronk after Cronk had passed the ball. Smith goaled the resulting penalty to increase the margin to 22 points. By then most Kiwis fans had their fingers crossed that Blair was not heading for a judiciary hearing on the eve of the World Cup.

The security of playmakers is a sore point for Johns, arguably the greatest No.7 of them all. "It's a coward (act)," he told his Channel 9 television audience. "It's absolutely dirty play. It's not needed. He sees the ball go and he's giving away 30kg to the smaller man and hits him in the back." Within 12 hours that comment was even on Blair's Wikipedia biography!

Of course, it was picked up by Radio Sport in this country, to the extent that Channel Nine commentator Ray Warren was contacted and asked to comment. I watched the Fox Sports live coverage of the match and its team of players-turned-commentators also branded Blair as the Broncos forward most likely to beat up on a smaller and defenceless rival.

What they did not appear to notice in their after-match summary was that Blair was not the only "hit-man" zeroing in on Cronk in his last home match for the Storm. Replays also showed him being knocked over without the ball by Sam Thaiday and Josh McGuire. Cronk got up every time, dusted himself off, and gained scoreboard revenge through his great skills.

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The Aussie media portrays Thaiday as a happy-go-lucky and successful indigenous bloke who apparently becomes involved in countless third-man hits and other grubby acts by accident. It took a public outcry to have him charged and fined earlier this season for tugging on the bandaged thumb Jesse Bromwich had seriously dislocated a couple of weeks earlier.

McGuire has not had such a smooth ride, though there is no doubt his “hard man” methods have been more widely accepted by his media mates since he became a Queensland Origin regular and switched his international allegiance from Samoa to Australia. Nevertheless, Cronk had McGuire’s DNA all over his back, along with that of Thaiday and Blair.

But the mud sticks with Blair. Only last year Gorden Tallis labelled him “one of the dirtiest players on the field, and he means to do it” after Blair was suspended for one match for making a chicken wing tackle on Thaiday during the Anzac Test. “I don’t know why Wayne Bennett keeps letting it go. I am disappointed he wears the Broncos jersey,” said Tallis.

Blair has been a marked man since he was at Melbourne in 2011, when he was involved in an infamous fight with Manly forward Glenn Stewart at Brookvale Oval. Both had been sent to the sin-bin for joining a melee. An exchange of words as they walked off escalated into a sideline brawl. Blair was suspended for five matches and never played for the Storm again.

He carried the baggage of that incident with him to his second club, Wests Tigers, where he spent three uninspiring seasons before revitalising his career under Bennett at the Broncos. Now Blair will leave Brisbane with the stinging criticisms of Johns and company echoing behind him and with another black mark pencilled in the notebooks of NRL referees.

Footnote: Cooper Cronk modestly declined the attempts of team-mates to chair him from the field after he had bidden farewell to Storm fans, signalling the end of 14 memorable seasons in Melbourne. Instead, he insisted that departing forwards Tohu Harris (Warriors bound) and Jordan McLean (heading for the Cowboys) join him in walking from the pitch. That’s class.

2017 NZRL CHAMPIONSHIP

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THIS SATURDAY !





By Shane Hurndell
Hawke's Bay Today
Sports Reporter

Tamatea Book Two Semifinal Berths And Toast Harris

CLOSE ENCOUNTER: Tamatea's Tipene Harmer takes on two Napier Panthers defenders during his team's 30-26 win on Saturday. PHOTO/HAWKE'S BAY TODAY

TAMATEA RUGBY League club members were in celebration mode at the weekend.

The Waipatu Marae-based club's premier men's and women's teams secured semifinal berths in their respective Hawke's Bay competitions and the club's most famous export, Kiwis utility Tohu Harris, helped his Melbourne Storm team book a second consecutive NRL grand final appearance with their preliminary final 30-0 win against the Brisbane Broncos. Long-time Tamatea club member Adrian Rowlands, who had a playing stint with Souths in 1985, and the bloke who told Tohu's father Paul Harris in 2007 his son would be an NRL player had tears of joy running down his face.

"I told everybody years ago Tohu would be a player to keep an eye on. In a week's time he will be playing in his second consecutive grand final. He is proof to our youngsters here in the Bay they can crack the big time if they are prepared to put in the hard yards," Rowlands said.

Rowlands had to repeat his now-famous quote he used to describe Harris when the now 25-year-old Hastings Boys' High School product departed for Melbourne in 2010.

"Tohu was one of those one in a million blokes when he was coming through the grades with us. He didn't drink, didn't smoke and didn't have a girlfriend."

The Storm will take on the North Queensland Cowboys in what has the potential to be a cracker of a final. The Cowboys beat the Sydney Roosters 29-16 in their preliminary final.

For Warriors-bound Harris an NRL grand final winner's ring would be the ideal send off from the Storm club particularly in the wake of last year's 14-12 loss to the Sharks.

With a possible World Cup final appearance for Harris and the Kiwis in December in Brisbane Rowlands and his clubmates could be in for a busy time of celebration parties. However they know not to look too far ahead and on the Hawke's Bay club scene they will be fully focused on this weekend's semifinals at the Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park in Hastings and those matches alone.

The Tamatea premiers pipped Napier Panthers 30-26 in their last round robin match at the weekend to book a semifinal against big improvers Kahuranaki who boast the services of former Magpies Mitre 10 Cup rugby speedster Shannan Chase. Tamatea will welcome back New Zealand Open men's touch representative Ash Robinson from Hawke's Bay Saracens rugby team duty and his clash with Chase has the potential to be a highlight of this semifinal.

The other premier semifinal will see unbeaten defending champions Bridge Pa take on Dannevirke Tigers. Bridge Pa drew 34-all with Kahuranaki at the weekend while the Tigers booked the fourth semifinal spot courtesy of a 46-30 victory of Omahu Huia.

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Tamatea women will meet Dannevirke Tigers in their semifinal while Bridge Pa will take on Hastings Rugby and Sports in the other. Both women's fixtures were defaulted at the weekend with Omahu Huia defaulting to Tamatea and Hastings Rugby and Sports defaulting to Bridge Pa.

Unbeaten Maraenui qualified top for the reserve grade semifinals with a 70-26 drubbing of MAC. Other reserve grade matches saw Clive beat Omahu Huia 20-0 and Flaxmere beat Bridge Pa 44-22.

Maraenui will take on Clive in their semifinal and Bridge Pa and Flaxmere will battle for the second consecutive week.

While the Hawke's Bay Magpies have only had one win from seven matches in the Mitre 10 Cup to date, they were beaten 48-17 by Taranaki at Napier's McLean Park on Saturday night, the Hawke's Bay Saracens and Hawke's Bay Samoans retained their respective Hurricanes Development and High Commission Cup titles at the weekend. The unbeaten Saracens pipped Manawatu Development 21-19 in their final while the Hawke's Bay Samoans thrashed Manawatu Samoans 50-3 in theirs.

Prospect of Howick Blue September Event

Hi Sir Peter

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL Blue September Prostate Cancer Luncheon at the Good Home Howick. A big shout out to all of our Prospect customers who attended and enjoyed the hospitality and also, contributed to the amount of \$7,090.00 which was raised on the day.

This event would not have been possible without our generous sponsors.

Special thanks go out to our MC Carl Lunt, aka Cracker, and especially our thanks to Sir Peter Leitch who helped people to get their hand of their wallets.

Barry O'Shaughnessy

Check out Sir Peter's video here:

<http://bit.ly/2xsXFXd>



This was the fantastic meal
I had on the day - SPL



Me and the Butcher on Saturday.

The Grandest Day Of All

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)



SUNDAY REPRESENTS another of life's little milestones. It is 50 years since I watched my first Grand Final in Sydney. In 1967 I was at the Cricket Ground along with 56,357 other footy fans when second-rower Bob McCarthy intercepted a Canterbury-Bankstown pass on his own 25-yard line and raced off to propel South Sydney towards a 12-10 victory. It was the first time since 1955 that the mighty Dragons of St George had been missing on the biggest day of the season, having been edged out by the Berries (no Bulldogs then) in the preliminary final.

Two years later I was back to see Balmain out-smart Souths 11-2 in one of the biggest Grand Final upsets of all time. My Christchurch Marist club-mates were with me, also captivated by the pageantry and drama of the day -- despite the vast oval-shaped SCG providing a far from perfect viewing platform. A move to the rectangular Sydney Football (now Allianz) Stadium in 1988 was welcomed, though it was too small for the big games, but the Olympic (now ANZ) Stadium at Homebush has solved that problem since 1999.

Although the first Sydney competition was played in 1908, it was not until 1954 that grand finals became mandatory. There were one-off finals in the early days. Between 1912 and 1925 the championship was decided on the first past the post basis. From 1926 until 1953 a grand final was played only when the minor premier was beaten in a semi-final or final and had the right to challenge in a "grand" final. So the name was born and it has survived and thrived through the Winfield Cup to the NRL as the competition has expanded.

An increasing number of New Zealanders travelled across the Tasman on supporters' tours or independently as air travel became easier from the 1970s. Travel agents were inundated with requests for Grand Final tickets. With the SFS not being able to meet local demand, let alone overseas enquiries, in the 1990s agents needed to use their initiative. One Auckland agent bought scores of memberships from the struggling Gold Coast club in the knowledge each membership would entitle him to preferential booking rights for a seat on Grand Final day.

Many more New Zealanders were introduced to Grand Final drama in 1989 when Canberra and Balmain went into extra time and the live free-to-air TVNZ telecast encroached on the 6 o'clock news. To the credit of whoever's finger was hovering over the panic button that day, they held their nerve until the Raiders completed their maiden triumph. That has been rated as the greatest showdown of them all – challenged recently by North Queensland's golden point victory over Brisbane in 2015 – and was played out before a captive audience in this country.

History was made in 1989, and has become an annual feature of recent results. In 2014 the Rabbitohs capped their return to the big league with an emotional victory over the Bulldogs. A year later the Cowboys claimed their first title against the Broncos in an all-Queensland showdown. Last October it was Cronulla-Sutherland's turn to do a first lap of honour, at Melbourne's expense. While Cowboys fans had to wait 20 years to celebrate, the Sharks were in their fiftieth season. Can the eighth-ranked Cowboys create more history on Sunday?

The first New Zealander to win a Sydney premiership was centre Bill Kelly, who captained Balmain to victory in 1915 under the first past the post format. The distinction of being the first Grand Final Kiwi was earned by Bill Noonan, who had transferred from Canterbury (NZ) to Canterbury (Sydney). His side lost to Eastern Suburbs in 1974, just as fellow Kiwis prop Henry Tatana's St George team lost to Easts in 1975. The first New Zealand winner was Manly centre Darrell Williams in 1987, when yet another prop, Brent Todd, was in the beaten Canberra front-row. Todd went on to appear in three more grand finals, winning two of them.

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Noonan and Tatana were rare exceptions to be granted clearances when international transfer bans were in force. By the time Williams and Todd moved to Australia the initial trickle had become a steady stream and the floodgates were about to open. If anything, the dam has burst in recent years and too many of our young players are leaving before they are anywhere near ready to chase professional contracts. No doubt they all dream of playing on the first Sunday in October but only a few will get to experience the triumph or despair which goes with it.

Records – Most grand finals, 10 Norm Proven (St George) and Brian Clay (Newtown and St George). Most wins, 10 Proven 1956-65. Most tries, 4 Johnny Graves (South Sydney 1951), most tries since 1954, 3 Eddie Lumsden (St George 1959 and 1961), Steve Renouf (Brisbane 1997 SL), Michael Robertson (Manly 2008). Most goals and points, 8 and 16 Harry Bath (St George 1957). Biggest win, Manly 40 beat Melbourne 0 in 2008. Most wins as a coach, 7 Wayne Bennett (Brisbane 6 including one SL and St George Illawarra). Lowest score, 4-2 Parramatta beat Canterbury in 1988. Most consecutive wins, 11 St George 1956-66. Biggest crowd, 107,999 Melbourne v St George Illawarra at Olympic Stadium in 1999 before it was reconfigured. (SL = Super League).

Me and Prostate Cancer CEO, Graeme Woodside, went out to the Gough Group in Wiri to take part in a Blue September BBQ. I gave the staff a few tips... of course.



THE RADIATION Therapy department at ADHB Cancer and Blood Service had a 'Blue day' where staff wore blue and made donations to enjoy a range of yummy treats! All in support of Blue September and Prostate awareness - something close to our hearts here.





By Barry Ross



Australian Jiltaro Maddison Bennett plays with kids in Papua New Guinea

Fairytale

CAN THE Cowboys complete the Fairytale in this Sunday's Grand Final? They will go in as the underdogs just as they have been in their three finals series matches. They were expected to crumble against the Sharks but got the job done 15-14 on 10 September. Then came the in-form Eels on 16 September but the Cowboys won 24-16 and last Saturday night, they finished strongly against the Roosters to win 29-16. Despite the absence of the injured Johnathan Thurston and Matt Scott, coach Paul Green has his team in a very positive mind set and they will be formidable opponents in the Grand Final. Of course, particularly after their 30-0 win over the Broncos on Friday night, the Melbourne Storm will be favourites. The Storm will have added motivation knowing it is Cooper Cronk's last match for the club. Craig Bellamy also has his side primed to produce their best on Grand Final day. Bellamy now 57, is in his 15th season with Melbourne after joining the club at the beginning of the 2003 season. He has coached the Storm in 394 matches for 268 wins, which is a winning percentage of 68.

The battle between the two forward packs will have a major bearing on the result of the match. The X-factor is imposing Cowboy lock Jason Taumamolol. He ran for 256 metres against the Roosters and in his three final series matches this season, against the Sharks, Eels and Roosters, he has run for a total of 757 metres in 64 runs, which is an average of around 12 metres each time. Add to this 98 tackles in the three games, which is an average of around 33, and it is obvious what a damaging player the 24 year, 191 cms and 113 kgs New Zealander is. Cowboys halfback, Michael Morgan, has really stepped up to the mark after Thurston's injury and he has the ability to take advantage of Taumalolo's ability to break the first line of defence.

The Toyota Cup under 20 Grand Final should be another entertaining clash. Minor Premiers, Cronulla bombed out with two successive losses in the final series games and fourth placed Parramatta will meet eighth placed Manly for the Premiership. Coached by 36 year old Luke Burt, who scored 1,793 points including 124 tries, in his 264 first grade matches with the Eels, Parramatta outclassed second placed Penrith 28-6 on Saturday. They have a powerful pack of forwards with plenty of enterprise in their backline. Manly had to withstand plenty of second half pressure from St. George/Illawarra before winning 34-18 to earn their Grand Final position. Coached by Wayne Lambkin, the Manly youngsters can score tries but their defence could be better. Although they came in at eighth on the ladder they were second for tries scored behind Cronulla. After working with lower grade teams at Penrith, the Bulldogs and the North Sydney Bears, Lambkin is in his first season with Manly. He has also been involved with the Rugby League programme at Westfield Sports High for 15 years or so.

Manly captain, hooker, Manase Fainu was involved in a car accident on the way to the match with the Dragons. The car in which he was travelling, was rear ended in the M5 tunnel on the way to Allianz Stadium.

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Kangaroo coach, Mal Meninga, has a pleasing problem on his hands before he names his 24 man Australian team for the coming World Cup. In Port Morseby on Saturday, young stars, Tom Trbojevic, who turns 22 next Monday 2 October and James Tedesco, 24, each scored three tries in the Australian Prime Minister's 48- 8 victory over the Papua New Guinea Prime Minister's XIII. With Darius Boyd and Billy Slater also in line for a fullback berth in the Australian team, Meninga will have to decide whether he can also include Tedesco and Trbojevic.

Australian Prime Minister's XIII 48 (Tom Trbojevic 3, James Tedesco 3, Tyson Frizell, James Maloney tries; James Maloney 6, Valentine Holmes, Andrew Fifita goals) beat Papua New Guinea Prime Minister's XIII 8 (Talita try; Missian 2 goals). In the ladies game, the Australian Jillaroos 42 defeated the Papua New Guinea Orchids 4.

They will be partying in Papua New Guinea for months after the Papua New Guinea Hunters won the Queensland Intrust Cup Grand Final on Sunday afternoon. Before a record crowd of 11,260 at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium, Willie Minoga, 30, pounced on a grubber kick from his captain and five eighth Ase Boas, to score the vital try with about two minutes remaining. Ase Boas, 28, landed the pressure conversion to give his team a 12-10 win over the Sunshine Coast Falcons. Minoga had replaced Stanton Albert in the Hunters front row after 25 minutes. Another Ase Boas grubber kick resulted in the Hunters first try, scored by his younger brother and halfback, Watson Boas, aged 22. Coached by 43 year old Michael Marum, who has played four Tests for Papua New Guinea, the Hunters have been playing in the Queensland cup for four seasons. They won the minor premiership this season As well as the major title. Ryley Jacks, 25, who has played 12 first grade games for the Storm this year and scored one try, was the Sunshine Coast halfback.

Papua New Guinea Hunters 12 (Willie Minoga, Watson Boas tries; Ase Boas 2 goals) beat the Sunshine Coast Hunters 10 (Matt Soper-Lawler, Joe Stimson tries; Joe Stimson goal).

In Sydney on Sunday night, Penrith defeated the Wyong Roos in the Grand Final of the NSW Intrust Super Cup. The Roos were the minor premiers but the Panthers were deserved winners on Sunday. Jedd Cartwright, the 20 year old son of former Kangaroo and current Manly assistant coach, John Cartwright (7 Tests), scored one of Penrith's four tries. His cousin, Bryce Cartwright is a current first grader with Penrith.

Penrith 20 (Maika Sivo, Tony Satini, Corey Waddell, Jedd Cartwright tries; Darren Nicholl 2 goals) beat Wyong 12 (Brock Gray, John Tuivasa-Sheck tries; Mitchell Cornish, Paul Momirovski goals).

Penrith will now play the Papua New Guinea Hunters in the third match on Grand Final day at Sydney's ANZ Stadium.



Kangaroo Josh Dugan showing PNG kids the proper form.



By Miles Davis

Joseph Parker

Joseph Parker holds up his belt after his successful defence of the WBO Heavyweight World Title.
Photo www.photosport.nz

NOW THAT Joseph Parker's fight with Hughie Fury is over and the good guy prevailed we can properly focus on his road to the top of the heavyweight boxing world.

There were aspects of this fight that were a concern for me but Parker's ability to prevail was not one of them. Let's get one thing clear – Joseph won this fight comfortably. Ok it wasn't the most dominant of performances but those who feel Fury won are fooling themselves. Running backwards is a legitimate tactic in boxing but not if you do it constantly for 12 rounds. Although Fury got some decent punches in on the odd occasion far too often his strikes were merely slaps with the back of his glove (for which the referee cautioned him). For his manager to liken his tactics to that of Muhammad Ali is not only farcical but frankly offensive. Ali had the ability to dance around the ring but he also became the aggressor, something which Fury failed to do.

There was a lot of focus on the originally appointed referee, Terry O'Connor, with the Parker camp demanding he be withdrawn as they had doubts as to his impartiality, bearing in mind he was British. Whilst many celebrated his being replaced I was more concerned that he had been moved from the middle of the ring to the side of it, becoming instead a judge of the fight. A judge has far more say as to the result of a fight than a referee in my book. Ironically after all the concerns O'Connor gave the fight emphatically to Parker, scoring it 118-110 in his favour. Despite all the bitching from the Fury camp Joseph Parker comfortably defended his crown and struck a blow for the decent people in sport. The difference between Parker's affable and considerate demeanour and the base behaviour and attitudes of the whole Fury clan is like chalk and cheese. Fortunately the good guys won this time and hopefully Parker's next bout will be promoted in a more upmarket way rather than the low rent effort his time around.

But where to from here?

I have a couple of concerns about Parker's ability to get to the very pinnacle of the sport. He struggled to get inside Fury's jab on many occasions and considering the likes of Anthony Joshua and Deontay Wilder have an even greater reach that could be a problem. When he managed to get inside his punches were too often inaccurate and he has to work on making each opportunity to inflict damage count.

I also have concerns as to Joseph's ability to knock someone out. David Tua's ace up the sleeve was his knock-out punch. Even if he was well down on the card there was always the prospect that one punch could turn the fight in his favour. I don't feel that Parker has that punch.

There is no doubt that Parker will improve and that he is a fine athlete with plenty of time left before he hits his prime. So fingers crossed that he can hone his technical skills and give himself the best chance to stand atop of the heavyweight division as undisputed Champion of the World. It couldn't happen to a nicer bloke.

Congratulations to Joseph Parker on his win!

Grand Finals

By Miles Davis



AFTER TWO engaging NRL semi-finals we now have a Grand Final that offers something for all league fans – unless of course you are a Sydneysider.

On one side of the equation we have the Melbourne Storm. The dominant force in league for over a decade with several of their players nearing the end of their stellar residency in Victoria's biggest city. Cooper Cronk is to leave at the end of the season and Cameron Smith has a year left on his contract (although there are thoughts he may kick on after that) and who knows how much longer Billy Slater will last.

Smith was his usual influential self in his side's 30-0 win over the Brisbane Broncos. His statistics are phenomenal and he has the chance to have arguably the greatest season for an individual in the history of the game. Currently just one point behind Andrew Johns on the all-time point-scoring table – that would put him second behind Hazem El-Mazri. On Friday he became the first player ever to kick 1000 goals and has already broken Darren Lockyer's record of 355 NRL appearances. He could well end up with a Premiership Ring, Dally M, Clive Churchill, Golden Boot and World Cup winners medal (although the Kiwis will hopefully have something to say about that).

Billy Slater had a game for the ages scoring 2 tries and although he is a polarising figure his efforts are remarkable considering he had looked unlikely to play any part after being out for 18 months and watching last year's Grand Final from the stands.

Although it took a while to wear the Broncos down it was another impressive performance from the Storm, outlining their current status as best team in the competition.

On the other side we have the massive underdogs of the play-offs, the North Queensland Cowboys. They were a side that scraped into the top 8 thanks to the Bulldogs last game victory over the Dragons. On top of that they were without their talisman Johnathan Thurston.

Their first opponents were the reigning Premiers, Cronulla. A dramatic 1 point victory saw them move on to tackle the Parramatta Eels who they despatched 24-16. Surely their Preliminary Final against the in-form Roosters would be a bridge too far? Not a chance as they battled before kicking clear late on. When you consider that all of those games were played away from home their achievement in reaching the Grand Final is all the more impressive.

Can the Cowboys become the first team to win the Grand Final from 8th? I for one would like the fairytale to have a happy ending but when look at their opposition that seems unlikely. Mind you that is what the pundits have said before each of the previous play-off rounds and were proven wrong.

Should the Cowboys prevail it will go down as one of the greatest upsets in NRL history and will spark off celebrations in most parts of the rugby league world other than a certain part of Victoria.



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On Kearney and the Grand Final

IT'S NOT hard to guess where Stephen Kearney's loyalties might lie this Sunday. The Warriors coach has enjoyed a long association with the Melbourne Storm, both as a player and as an assistant coach.

Though Kearney also played for the Western Suburbs Magpies and the Warriors across 264 matches in first grade, the greatest moment of his club career came with the team from the Victorian capital.

Kearney was a key part of the side that won the Storm's first premiership in 1999, navigating their way through a tough finals series then prevailing in a dramatic grand final.

Indeed, even with all the success enjoyed by the Melbourne club in the past decade, it's hard to imagine they will ever have a season to compare with 1999.

"It's what every kid dreams of," said Kearney. "The whole series we did it the hard way, we had to go the hard road just to make it to the grand final."

The Storm finished third in the regular season, but were upset in the first week of the finals by sixth placed St George-Illawarra 34-10.

"That wasn't a great start," said Kearney. "Then we had to go to Sydney and play the Bulldogs, and we beat them by two. The following week we had to go to Sydney again to play Parramatta, and we beat them by two. That built a pretty special spirit among the lads."

However, the Storm struggled in the first half of the grand final in a rematch against the Dragons, in front of more than 107,000 people

They trailed 14-0 at halftime – with Dragons winger Nathan Blacklock scoring one of the best tries in grand final history with a slashing run – and the Storm dressing room wasn't a happy place at halftime.

"[Coach] Chris Anderson really got stuck in to us," said Kearney. "It needed to be said. We had worked so hard to get there, but weren't sticking to what we had done so well."

Kearney was sitting next to fellow Kiwi teammate Tawera Nikau, and the two forwards also made a pact to do everything they could to change the momentum.

"I can't exactly remember who said what, but I know Tawera was pretty keen on having a go," said Kearney. "We knew we had to get physical, we had to start dominating them up front."

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The plan worked. Nikau and Kearney were at the forefront of a Storm revival, with some brutal defence and strong charges. After Dragons five eighth Anthony Mundine dropped the ball over the line early in the second half, Melbourne began their comeback.

“We were going well and you could feel the energy lift throughout the team,” said Kearney. “The belief came back.”

The Dragons led 18-14 in the 77th minute, before referee Bill Harrigan awarded the Storm a penalty try, after Jamie Ainscough's high shot on Melbourne winger Craig Smith behind the try line. The Storm then led for the first time, and hung on to claim the victory, in only the second season of their history.

“It feels pretty good,” said Kearney, when asked what it is like to win the NRL's ultimate prize. “It's an amazing feeling, through every single fibre of your body. Relief, happiness, joy...a bit of everything.”

Kearney isn't a big drinker – and never has been – but admits that the celebrations continued for a “good few days” after their amazing win.

Kearney will be watching on television this time round, as he spends some time with his family in Brisbane, before returning to Auckland in late October to begin the Warriors' pre-season preparations.

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



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Tui Lolohea and Solomone Kata Choose To Turn Out For Mate Ma'a Tonga At Rugby League World Cup

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

SOLOMONE KATA and Tuimoala Lolohea have chosen to play for Tonga ahead of New Zealand in the Rugby League World Cup – and Michael Jennings is also set to pledge his allegiances to the Mate Ma'a.

Lolohea and Kata, who have both previously played for the Kiwis, announced they had opted to play for Tonga at the World Cup, while Jennings – a member of Australia's 2013 World Cup winning squad – will choose the Mate Ma'a over Fiji.

"I'm just passionate about my little country and there are not many chances to play for Tonga so I have had the World Cup in the back of my mind," Lolohea told Radio Sport.

"We don't play for money, we play for the pride of the jersey and our families back in the islands. That is how passionate we are about representing Tonga.

"I represented New Zealand two years and I wasn't eligible to play for Tonga but they changed the rules so it's happy days for me. I get another opportunity and I think the World Cup is going to be awesome."

Despite playing five Tests for the Kiwis last year, Tonga-born Kata told the New Zealand Herald: "I want to play for Tonga - I just know that is what I want to do. I want to play a World Cup for my country, to represent my family".

Jennings, who is eligible for Fiji through his father, rejected approaches to play for the Bati and said he was also looking forward to representing Tonga.

"My eyes are set for Tonga if I don't get the opportunity to play for Australia," Jennings told The Fiji Times. "My first preference is Australia, then Tonga."

With Titans centre Konrad Hurrell also likely to be available, Tonga coach Kristian Woolf's biggest problem could be finding a position for the trio in the outside backs as he already has Will Hopoate, Manu Vatuvei, Daniel Tupou at his disposal.

"My gut feel is that Konrad would prefer to play for Tonga [over New Zealand]," Woolf said.

"He is very passionate about it and it has certainly been a stance of his before. He is born and bred and very proud of that. All the conversations I've had is that he is preparing to play for Tonga."

Tickets and information from rlwc2017.com





NZ Resident 18s take revenge on Taurahere winning 28-10

*By Brooke Hurndell
NZRL*

NEW ZEALAND Rugby League's young talent looked to be in fine form following the NZ Resident 18s win over Taurahere this afternoon at Pulman Park.

Three years on from when the two teams last met, the NZ Resident 18s took to the field with a point to prove after the side went down 20-10 in 2014. This time the tables were turned seeing the home side out on top, 28-10.

The clash was one that promised plenty of action with players from the Taurahere team, those currently playing in Australia originating from New Zealand, returning to home soil to face off against the NZ Resident 18s side. Each player set out to put their best foot forward in hopes of earning a spot in the New Zealand 18s team who will take on the Australian Schoolboys next weekend.

Hayze Perham from Upper Central zone was one of the many players who carried on from their impressive performances at the National Secondary Schools Tournament earlier this month scoring two tries for the NZ Resident 18s. One of those included a runaway try off the back of a classy intercept that, combined with his defensive smarts, saw him as one of the stand out players of the match.

Although the halftime score was close, 18-10, the second half saw the NZ Resident 18s extend their lead with Southern zone representatives, Seth Tauamiti and Jordan Riki, crossing the line.

NZ Resident 18s Captain Javier Pitovao was dominant in the number 13 jersey but was quick to credit his teammates for their 28-10 win.

"It was great to see some of the new boys on the scene combine well with the senior players in the team, we gelled together and were quite relaxed going into the game which I think worked well for us,"

"Our outside backs provided the spark for a lot of our sets which lead to tries and points on the board so full credit has to go to them,"

"The boys in the middle did their job and the halves had good control of the game and that really helped us get over the line today," he said.

Taurahere co-captains Sean Mullany and Mawene Hiroti were also impressed with the pace their opposition brought to the game.

"It was a fast game, we had some strong carries by our forwards and some great defensive edges but the errors cost us today," Mullany said.

"It was a great opportunity that New Zealand Rugby League provided to bring our team over from Australia to have a hit out against the Resident 18s side, our team really enjoyed it," Hiroti said.

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New Zealand Resident 18s 28 (Hayze Perham 2, Mike Williams, Jordan Riki, Seth Tauamiti tries; Dylan Tavita 4 goals) Taurahere 10 (Kea Pere, Jackson Paulo tries; Mawene Hiroti goal)

Below is the New Zealand 18s Select team who will take on Australian Schoolboys at Puketawhero Park in Rotorua on Tuesday 26 September, 6pm.

New Zealand 18s Select:

Livestream available on the @NZLeague Facebook page.

Upper Central: Sheldon Rogers; Akarana: Mikey Williams, Emanuel Gerard Tuimavave, Lewis Sio, Javvier Pitovao, Kayal Iro; Mid Central: Awatere Kiwara, Wesley Veikoso; Counties Manukau: Dredin Sorenson-McGee; Southern: Seth Tauamiti, Daniel Sakisi; Brisbane Broncos: Dre Ngatui-Woe; Manly Sea Eagles: Zaane Weatherall, Mark Tepu-Smith; South Sydney Rabbitohs: Kea Pere; Sydney Roosters: Baylee Bentley-Hape; Canberra Raiders: Ranapiri Baker, Aublix Kaharoa-Tawha

Below is the New Zealand 18s team who will take on Australian Schoolboys at Trust Arena, Auckland on Saturday, September 30, 11.30am before Round three of the National Premiership takes place.

New Zealand 18s:

Live on Sky Sport.

Upper Central: Hayze Perham; Akarana: Matt Timoko, Tyler Slade, Soane Hufanga; Northland: Paul Turner; Southern: Jordan Riki; Counties Manukau: Dylan Tavita; St George Illawarra Dragons: Steven Marsters; Gold Coast Titans: Jackson Paulo, Darius Farmer; South Sydney Rabbitohs: Mawene Hiroti; Parramatta Eels: Joseph Taipari, Vallance Harris; Cronulla Sharks: Fine Kula; North Queensland Cowboys: Peter Hola, Sean Mullany; Melbourne Storm: Kelma Tuilagi; Sydney Roosters: Phillip Makatoa

Congratulations to the Storm and Cowboys for making it the NRL Grand Final!



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New Zealand Police Rugby League 30 - 16 winners over Canadian Wolverines

THE NEW Zealand Police Rugby League (NZPRL) team have kicked off their Canadian tour with a convincing 30-16 defeat of The Wolverines, Canada's Official National Rugby League side.

Under the lights at a chilly John Oliver Park in the Delta area of Vancouver, British Columbia, the NZPRL impressed the crowd with their free-flowing football, said team manager Tony Feasey.

The Wolverines were hungry for success after a recent unsuccessful series against the USA Eagles but they were not going to crack the Kiwi cops.

"Sturdy and dogged defence was the winner, and submission was the result," Mr Feasey said.

The NZPRL are touring to assist development of Rugby League in Canada, so the win on the field was also a win for the tour goal, he said.

Tonight's game was the coaching debut for North Harbour and Northcote premier player Lafele Filipo, and Junior Fiu, formerly of Richmond and the New Zealand Warriors, and current St Paul's Collegiate Coach. Both coaches are also former Auckland representative players.

The young Police team are drawn from constabulary staff from around New Zealand, including Fox Premiership winning Glenora player, Chase Bernard and Nate Solomona of Richmond.

The next fixture for the victorious side is on Sunday 24 September, when they play British Columbia at Klahanie Park in West Vancouver. Their final fixture is a night game back at John Oliver Park on Wednesday 27 September against old foes, the British Police Rugby League, also touring Canada.

Sponsors of the New Zealand Police Rugby League who have made this tour possible are:

- New Zealand Police Council of Sport
- New Zealand Police Association
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- Ebbetts Holden Pukekohe.

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New Zealand Police Rugby League 40 - 4 Winners Over British Columbia

THE NEW Zealand Police Rugby League (NZPRL) team has cemented success on their Canadian tour by trouncing the British Columbian provincial side forty points to four.

With the fall weather in Vancouver turning up a warm sunny Sunday afternoon for the Kiwi Cops, they kicked off the second of their promotional games at Klahanie Park, home of the Capilano Rugby Club. The promotional aspect of the tour is to demonstrate League at its competitive best to the British Columbia public, with the game in it's infancy in the province.

Certainly the local side had trouble demonstrating the Latin motto of British Columbia, which is Splendor sine occasu (Splendour without Diminishment) as they were well and truly diminished by the New Zealand Police side's free flowing attacking football and dogged defence.

Again the afternoon's events served the educational purpose, drawing a large and vocal crowd to the park, the small group of parents who have followed the NZPRL team to Canada proving more than a match for the local supporters.

Having now beaten the Canadian national side, as well as British Columbia, there remain only two goals left for the NZPRL side. The first is an extension of the educational theme, a planned visit to Children's hospital Tuesday, the other is their final game.

That match is against their old foes the British Police Rugby League, also touring British Columbia, and it is scheduled for this Thursday New Zealand time.

Manager Tony Feasey says his team are proving great ambassadors, not just for Rugby League but for New Zealand





Join Former All Black Captain Stu Wilson Riding for Prostate Cancer

Stu Wilson with former teammates Joe Stanley and Bernie McCahill prepare to ride in Pedal 4 Prostate

STU WILSON, a former All Black captain is hopping on his bike to raise awareness of the huge toll prostate cancer takes on Kiwi men every year.

Stu is pulling together a team to take part in the inaugural Pedal 4 Prostate event, run by the Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand on 8 October.

The event will see teams of four ride around the famous track at Hampton Downs, in relay fashion, for four hours. This event is ideal for a group of workmates or riding buddies to get together for a great ride, and to support a great cause. This is the final event in what has been a very successful Blue September prostate cancer awareness and fundraising month.

[Read more about it here.](#)

There are heaps of great prizes, including a 4-day holiday with airfares in Hawaii courtesy of Hawaiian Airlines!

If you haven't already, what are you waiting for? Grab your mates, hop on your bike and help support the fight against Prostate Cancer. [Sign up here.](#)



IF YOU THINK CYCLING ROUND A RACE TRACK FOR FOUR HOURS WOULD BE A PAIN, IMAGINE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE PROSTATE CANCER!

Grab your team mates and head to www.pedal4prostate.org.nz to find out more

Nations Begin to Name Squads for Rugby League World Cup

THE USA is the first nation to announce their squad for the Rugby League World Cup, with players based in Auckland, London, Toronto, Sydney, Newcastle, Gold Coast and Wollongong among the 23 named today by coach Brian McDermott.

With just over a month until Australia meet England in the opening match of Rugby League World Cup 2017 at the Melbourne Rectangular Stadium on 27 October, the 14 countries are set to announce their squads in coming weeks.

The Kangaroos will name a 24-man squad on Tuesday week (3 October) after the NRL Grand Final next Sunday (1 October) and the England squad will be announced after the Super League Grand Final (7 October).

Some nations have indicated they will announce their squads as early as next week.

No changes will be permitted after 13 October, when the final squads for the tournament are due to be submitted to RLWC2017 before being officially announced.

Under international Rugby League eligibility rules, players who qualify for more than one country can play for a tier two nation if they are not chosen by Australia, England or New Zealand.

To be eligible, a player must have been born in the nation he represents or qualifies if he had parents or grandparents born there, or has been a resident of that country for 60 months.

The eligibility rules will ensure one of the best and most competitive Rugby League World Cups since the concept began in 1954.

The USA has named 12 players from the domestic US competition, who will be joined by the likes of Mark Offerdahl (London Broncos), Ryan Burroughs (Toronto Wolfpack), Junior Vaivai (Wests Illawarra), Bureta Faraimo (NZ Warriors) and Eddy Petttybourne (Tweed Heads Seagulls).

The 14 nations competing for the Paul Barrierre Trophy are Australia, England, Fiji, France, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Scotland, Tonga, USA and Wales.

In total, the World Cup will feature 28 matches in 13 cities across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, which will host the Kumuls three pool matches.

The winner of the 15th installment of the World Cup will be crowned in Brisbane on 2 December at a double-header featuring the final of the Women's tournament, which will be staged as a standalone event for the first time.



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SAMOA V TONGA
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NZ V TONGA
11 NOVEMBER

WELLINGTON

QUARTER-FINAL
18 NOVEMBER

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USA Hawks Name 23-Man Squad for RLWC2017

USA START their Rugby League World Cup campaign by naming 12 players who have participated in USARL's club competition.

What started back with the Hawks qualifying in December 2015, the 23-man squad to represent USA at this year's Rugby League World Cup has been arduous task since the USARL first became recognized as the National Governing Body back in 2014.

Since then a selection process was put in place taking over 22-months that included several countries, many hours of communication and the commit of traveling many miles extending the length of the east coast, from Boston to Tampa all with the effort to put eyes on emerging USA players.

USARL Chairman Peter Illfield who led the selection panel was pleased with the final squad, "USA's second World Cup Campaign demonstrates a significant increase in USA competition players from the 2013 campaign while also recognizing their contribution, talent and dedication.

Along with our domestic players, we also acknowledge those players outside the USA who have contributed their talent and subsidized their costs to ensure the USA qualified for RLWC2017 along with a successful lead-up, winning the America's Championship and Colonial Cup."

USA Hawks domestic coach Sean Rutgeron celebrating winning the 2017 Rugby League Americans Championship between USA, Canada and Jamaica and 2017 Colonial Cup now takes on the reigns as Assistant Coach to Brian McDermott.

"Having a large group of actual American players is a massive thing for USA rugby league, it shows how much the game is developing and that will only help attract sponsors, fans and more people who will want to play," McDermott said.

"The American people want to see Americans playing. We expect to show that we are more than competitive against the world's best rugby league countries."

Nick Newlin, USA Hawks domestic Captain celebrated the naming of so many American based players.

"We've assembled a squad full of USA domestic players who are going to continue to grow the game of Rugby League in the United States," he said.

"I'm so proud to be a part of this team and having the honor of being compete on the world stage against the world's best, I couldn't be more elated for everyone involved."

Continued on next page...

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The 23 Man Squad also includes a handful of players from USA's previous World Cup campaign that 'Shocked the World' when they advanced from their pool stage only to lose to Australia in the Quarter Finals.

Names include Bureta Faraimo, Edward Pettybourne, Gabriel Farley, Daniel and Stephen Howard, Kristin Freed and Mark Offerdahl. Another player joining the USA for his first World Cup is Junior Vaivai. Junior was MVP of the 2017 Colonial Cup and hails from the Illawarra competition in NSW and also has NRL playing experience.

World Cup Qualifiers Captain Mark Offerdahl spoke about this World Cup's Squad. "This World Cup once again puts the USA Rugby League on the global stage but this time to showcase up-and-coming USA talent. Whatever the results, I'm proud to wear the Red, White and Blue and will continue to help grow the game in the US anyway I can."

Coach, Brian McDermott will finish his season with Leeds and take up his duties with the USA Hawks in Townsville on 21 October.

USA 23-man Squad:

Jonathan Taylor Alley (Central Florida Warriors)

Ryan Burroughs (Toronto Wolfpack)

Charles 'CJ' Cortalano (White Plains Wombats)

Joseph Eichner (Toronto Wolfpack)

Bureta Faraimo (NZ Warriors)

Gabriel Farley (Philadelphia Fight)

Kristian Freed (White Plains Wombats)

Daniel Howard (Wentworthville Magpies)

Stephen Howard (Mounties)

Martwain Johnston (Delaware Black Foxes)

Andrew Kneisly (Philadelphia Fight)

Corey Makelim (Mounties)

Fotukava 'Hiko' Malu (Atlanta Rhinos)

David Marando (Belrose Eagles)

Nicholas Newlin (Atlanta Rhinos)

Mark Offerdahl (London Broncos)

Edward Pettybourne (Tweed Heads Seagulls)

Joshua Rice (New York Knights)

Matthew Shipway (South Newcastle)

Samuel Tochtermann-Talbott (Tweed Heads Seagulls)

David Ulch (Tampa Mayhem)

Taioalo Junior Vaivai (Illawarra Wests Devils)

Matthew Walsh (White Plains Wombats)

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



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2017 RLWC Support for our #Kiwis - Joyce Putohe





Penrith Crowned Intrust Super P'ship NSW Premiers

THE PENRITH Panthers have booked a date with the PNG Hunters in next Sunday's NRL Intrust Super Championship after producing an upset victory against minor premiers Wyong in tonight's Intrust Super Premiership decider at Leichhardt Oval.

On a day which featured four Grand Finals, the Panthers celebrated their third Intrust Super Premiership NSW title with an impressive display, running in four tries to claim a 20-12 victory. Intrust Super Premiership NSW match report.

In today's earlier Grand Finals, the Redfern All Blacks cruised to victory in the inaugural Harvey Norman NSW Women's Premiership decider against North Newcastle. The competition's minor premiers capped off a dominant season as the best defensive and attacking team, losing just one game on their way to title glory. Harvey Norman NSW Women's Premiership match report.

Wentworthville celebrated their fifth Ron Massey Cup premiership after thumping Auburn Warriors, 38-4. Despite upsetting minor premiers St Marys last weekend, the fairytale finish Auburn was hoping for slipped away as the Magpies capitalised on a number of Warriors handling errors. Ron Massey Cup match report.

In the Sydney Shield Grand Final which featured the top two teams of the regular season, St Marys ran out victors over minor premiers Mounties, 34-20. Hooker Peter Nay proved the star, leading his side to victory with an inspiring defensive performance. Sydney Shield match report.



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SP Hunters Given A Hero's Welcome

By Gorethy Kenneth

LEADERS IN PNG joined hands with the 8 million people of PNG in congratulating the winning SP Hunters on arrival with the Intrust Super Cup in Port Moresby yesterday.

Prime Minister Peter O'Neill had arrived from the United States in the morning, in time to welcome home the winning PNG Hunters at Jackson International Airport after their historic win.

Government Ministers, Members of Parliament, sponsors and supporters joined Mr O'Neill to meet the Hunters, who arrived about 1.30pm, saying the 12-10 victory against Sunshine Coast Falcons in the Grand Final of the Queensland Intrust Super Cup last Sunday had united this land of a 1000 tribes.

Hunters coach Michael Marum was tongue-tied as the team arrived in the afternoon to a colourful welcome. He could only repeat his "thank you" to the government and sponsors for their support, and for being there right up to victory at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane.

Captain Ase Boas, who made the win possible with his last-minute grubber that led to the try and conversion, was left speechless as he and his team mates savoured every moment of the airport welcome.

He forced back tears and kept repeating that the victory was for the country's eight million people.

Mr O'Neill said this win had become the pride of PNG and that he was very happy that the SP Hunters have ensured leaders and people's trust and confidence and that this was the beginning of much better things to come.

"This has become the pride of our country and I am

very happy that they have ensured our trust and confidence that we have put in them by all the sponsors, all the supporters. The government and investments that we've made in rugby league it is starting to show the results. The government is the biggest winner," he said.

"I would have liked to be there, but PNG also needs us to do work.

"I was still on the plane when they played and won. Of course it was a proud moment for me and every one of us in the country.

"This is the beginning of much better things to come. This is a good confidence build up for us. We are proud of them, doing things that are not possible many years ago.

"We will continue to support the team until we enter NRL, until we win the World Cup one day, we will continue to do our part," Mr O'Neill said.

There were no official announcements of a day off for celebrations or a parade through the streets of Port Moresby.

The Hunters will be preparing to travel again, probably tomorrow, to Sydney to meet Penrith, the winner of the New South Wales Cup Grand Final on Sunday.



Grand Final Match Officials

MATT CECCHIN and Gerard Sutton will referee the 2017 NRL Telstra Premiership Grand Final this Sunday, 1 October between Melbourne Storm and North Queensland Cowboys at ANZ Stadium.

NRL General Manager Officiating Tony Archer said Cecchin and Sutton had been the best referees through the Finals Series and deserved their place in the decider.

“Matt and Gerard have experience in big games. They also have experience refereeing together in big games,” Mr Archer said.

“They worked very well together in the State of Origin series, so we know they work well together on the biggest stages.

“They are the best referees for the job and I am very confident that they will officiate the game well on Sunday.”

Cecchin refereed in the 2011 and 2016 Grand Finals, while Sutton refereed in the 2014 and 2015 deciders.

The match officials for the Grand Final are:

Lead Referee: Matt Cecchin

Assist Referee: Gerard Sutton

Senior Review Official: Bernard Sutton

Review Official: Ben Galea

Touch Judges: Nick Beashel and Chris Butler

Standby Referee: Ben Cummins

Standby Touch Judge: Brett Suttor



Check out this heartwarming story of Konrad Hurrell's unlikely friendship: <http://bit.ly/2hrFLxF>

Good luck to the All Blacks playing Argentina on Sunday in Buenos Aires!!



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



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PROUDLY SUPPORTING THE STEPS FOR LIFE FOUNDATION

Auckland Charity Insurance Golf Day

29 September, 2017 - Maungakiekie Golf Club



HELLO EVERYONE. We are very lucky this year to be supported by the Auckland Charity Insurance Golf Day.

As our loyal supporters we would like to offer you all the opportunity to join in the fun and enter a team in this event. So dust off your clubs and get ready for an epic day on the green!

Here are all the details...

Date: Friday 29 September, 2017

Venue: Maungakiekie Golf Club, Mt Roskill, Auckland

Time: Registration starts at 11am for a 12 noon briefing

There will be a huge amount of entertainment, refreshments and a laden prize table, plus a handful of desirable auction items. Monty will be there on the day and will say a few words before tee-off.

If you would like to register a team or find out more please contact Murray on Murray.McChesney@nzi.co.nz or Janine on jmostert@cl-nz.com

Of course this day would be possible without the generosity of others, in particular a huge big thank you to Morgan Coakle and Smith & Smith, gold sponsors for the event.

In addition to other fabulous prizes, we would also like a big shout out to the following sponsors who provided prizes and items for auction:

- AIG is donating a signed AB's jersey with proceeds going to Steps for Life. This is authentic and framed with the All Blacks approved background and name plate.
- Manheim is providing a professional auctioneer to auction off items on the night
- Hyundai New Zealand and North Harbour Hyundai - Ladies and Gentlemen, this prize is a once in a lifetime opportunity, not only are we auctioning off a ride in the passenger seat of an extremely high performance Hyundai with New Zealand's own top rally driver, Hayden Paddon at the wheel, but you also have the opportunity to drive away with a brand new Hyundai Tucson Elite Turbo (or similar) valued at over \$50K (hole in one prize on the third tee - T&C's apply)
- Prodrive Golf is providing a mountain of quality golf paraphernalia to be given away amongst other incredible prizes
- Cunningham Lindsey is coming to the party and sponsoring the Bacon Butty BBQ stand to feed the cast of thousands
- Bunnings have donated hardware and power tools
- Hole Sponsors: Partstrader, AA Insurance, Noel Leeming, Novus Auto Glass, Master Glaziers, Insured HQ, The Reinstatement Specialists Ltd (TRSL), North Star Group



Otago Whalers v Wellington Orcas

By Ricki Allan

THE OTAGO Whalers came away with a hard-fought 22-18 win over the Wellington Orcas in their first match of the national championship at Kettle Park on Saturday.

The Whalers established dominance early on and were able to score two tries near the beginning of the match through Jordan Ruatoe and Taua Piri. The Otago backline was at its brilliant best, with halves Piri and Vila Apuula directing play skilfully to put the outside backs in threatening positions. Centre Hyrum Martin ran rampant through the Orca's defence. His seven runs for the match included a staggering 16 tackle busts and two line breaks.

Martin's attacking prowess gave the Whalers real momentum, and was instrumental in the lead-up to their two first-half tries. The Orcas found their way into the game midway through the first half, scoring on the back of a Whalers error which meant they have to face up for repeat defensive sets on their line. The Whalers' small lead was lost when the Orcas scored their second try with just minutes left in the first half enabling the Orcas to lead 12-10 at the break.

Whalers coach David Reedy stressed the importance of composure and set completion to his side, and challenged the players to look after the ball and close out their attacking sets with better kick options. Hooker Sam Johnstone led the charge in the second half for the Whalers, racking up 34 tackles and 11 carries in his man-of-the-match performance. Johnstone's snipes out of dummy half tested the Orcas' marker defence, and he gained major metres when he was able to get in behind the markers through sheer pace and elusive footwork.

The Whalers won the battle in the middle of the field due Johnstone, hooker Hagan Free, who notched up 39 tackles and 20 carries in yet another impressive performance, and second rower Camrin Brown, whose physicality on defence and attack was remarkable.

The platform that the forwards set allowed them to improve their set completion rates in the second half, and resulted in two more tries. Captain Apuula was one of the try-scorers, crossing the line to give his side a much needed lift, but it was Jordan Ruatoe's try that really stood out. Ruatoe charged towards the line in the left-hand corner and chipped the ball over the defence before regathering it at pace and diving down to put his side in front.

The Orcas threw everything they could at Otago in the last 10 minutes of the match but the Whalers remained composed, and closed the game out with control.

The win means the Whalers' game versus the Bay of Plenty Lakers at Puketawhero Park in Rotorua on Saturday will determine the side that goes through to the national premiership promotion-relegation play off at Mt Smart Stadium on October 7.

Sir Peter Leitch Club Members at the Vodafone Warriors Prize Giving

Thanks to Dave McKee for sending in the photos.



Guess Who it could be that pommie bastard lol.



Kathy Anderson and Lorna Warrington relaxing after dinner.



Lady Janice chatting while Sir Peter enjoys supper.



Lorna and Trevor Warrington enjoying a great evening.



Lorraine and Dave McKee with Ben Matulino st the awards evening.



Lorraine enjoys a chat With Isaac Luke.



Peter and Christine Taylor ready for an enjoyable evening at the awards evening.



Raewyn Neilson and Margie Graydon from, Waiheke Island having a great evening at the awards evening.



Ron Gibbon's and his brother Gordon enjoying the evening.



Sandra Penerata showing of the trophy Simon Mannering gave her awesome.



Sir Peter enjoying a dance.



Sir Peter enjoying the evening while trying to take Lorraine's seat.



Simon Mannering Cup



West Coast Suburbs win the Tasman Rugby League Simon Mannering Cup competition..



Hokitika team.

Richmond Tigers Finals Day



Noah Mills breaks through the defensive line.



Playing tackle sport for the first time with mum taking time off work to come and watch. She couldn't believe his effort and skills.



Richmond Shark player on the side line injured one minute, roaring off down the field with copybook technique – ball in 2 hands.



Richmond Tigers showing the inclusion of females playing. We had 2, one playing for the first time..



Richmond Warriors competing in the beginner grade with many playing league for the first time..



Team work and the joy of being physical and muddy – every 9 – 11 year olds dream.

Reader Mail

Hello Peter

IT IS I that received four phone calls from you today in regard to your Warriors pack competition (no email address). Your last call was pocket dialed I believe - all I could hear was you talking back to radio talk in regard to the elections.....lol funny..... your calls today made my day you are indeed a loyal supporter and I thank you for taking the time the call for our email addresses to enter in the draw successfully, I have subscribed to your news letter :). I have included a photo of me and my boys in my lounge and have since taken possession of Roger who is absent from this photo.

Kind Regards

Janine Banks



Hi Peter,

ON BEHALF of the U7 Dragon Hawks we wish to Thank you and BLK for donating our Mini Hawk Players these fantastic Kiwi T.Shirts.

Attached is a picture of the The U7 Dragon Hawks who celebrated there 2017 Team breakup at Rainbow's End on Sunday 24 September. Both our players and parents were over the moon to receive these, a huge thank you to both you and BLK!!!! The timing is perfect with world cup only weeks away!

More photos to come of more teams with these Tees.

Kind Regards, Tasha Tasmania



Hi Peter

IT WAS great to see you on Saturday. You are looking fantastic! Keep doing whatever it is you are doing!

Here's a pic of you and Nic.

Take care, Rhondaa

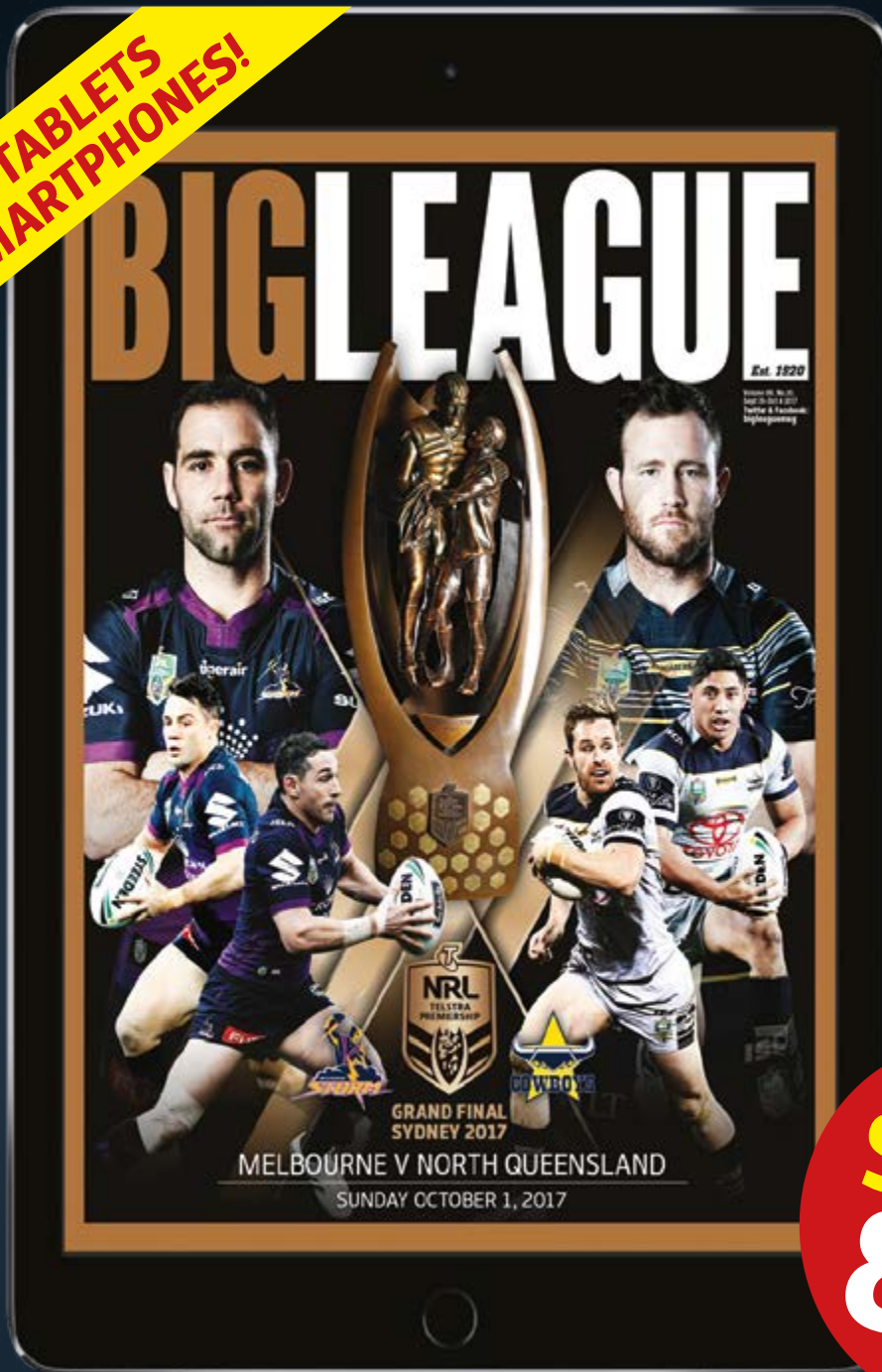


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THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S HUGE GRAND FINAL ISSUE...

NRL TEAM LISTS AND PLAYER PROFILES, FEATURES AND STATISTICS, GRAND FINAL TEAM PHOTOS PLUS HOLDEN CUP AND STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM LISTS AND INFORMATION AND A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF GRAND FINAL RECORDS.

INSIDE

- **Billy Slater** and **Cooper Cronk** will play their last game together this weekend after almost 15 years of pulling on their jerseys side-by-side. From Brisbane Norths to the Storm, Queensland and Australia, they credit one another each other for their excellent careers. "He's made my job so easy in my career. I thank him for that, he's helped me a lot," says Slater.
- Cowboys players have done remarkably to get to the grand final and according to their injured superstar **Johnathan Thurston**, this season has been coach **Paul Green's** biggest success. "This is where I've seen him grow as a coach. He's been the forefront of what we're driving. He's kept everyone motivated because he's got the respect of the players and everyone listens to what he says."
- **Michael Ennis** has lost and won a grand final against the Storm and he says if the Cowboys can do enough to fatigue key player **Cameron Smith**, they have a big chance of upsetting the minor premiers.
- In our final **Top 8** of the season, we run through the most **pivotal grand final plays** in history.

PLUS... the ultimate rugby league **grand final quiz**, a **retirees tribute** and **grand final flashbacks** from 1997 and 1987.



GRAND FINAL

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NEWSLIFEMEDIA



Mahe Fonua, and ex NZ Warriors, Motu Tony (#90), Carlos Tuimavave (#177).



NZ Warriors Old Boys Hull FC Football GM, Motu Tony (Warrior #90) and Carlos Tuimavave (Warrior #177) celebrate back to back Challenge Cup wins at Wembley Stadium.

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