

RLWC 2017

It's 17 days until the Kiwis play their first game of the 2017 RLWC

**Sir Peter
Leitch Club
Newsletter**

11th October 2017

#191



Kiwis Name 24-Man Squad For Rugby League World Cup

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

NEW ZEALAND Rugby League revealed its 24-man squad last week to represent the Kiwis in this year's Rugby League World Cup to be jointly hosted between New Zealand and Australia.

The squad includes five debutants, Nelson Asofa-Solomona, Addin Fonua-Blake, Danny Levi, Isaac Liu and Brad Takairangi as well as three from the victorious 2008 Rugby League World Cup Kiwis side, Captain Adam Blair and veterans Thomas Leuluai and Simon Mannering.

Three players who featured in the recent NRL Grand Final have been selected including Kenneath Bromwich and Nelson Asofa-Solomona who were a part of the victorious Melbourne Storm.

Dally M Winger of the Year Jordan Rapanu has also been named alongside Shaun Johnson, Te Maire Martin, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Jason Nightingale, Kodi Nikorima, Peta Hiku, Gerard Beale, Dallin Wattene-Zelezniak and Dean Whare.

Martin Taupau, Russell Packer, Elijah Taylor, Joseph

Tapine and Jared Waerea-Hargreaves round out the 24-man squad.

Coach David Kidwell says he and his fellow selectors, Tawera Nikau, Hugh McGahan and Tony Iro are all proud and excited to name an enthusiastic squad that includes leadership, experience and a real want to work hard for each other.

"This is a unique opportunity, a World Cup in our country is a great honour and I can't wait to get into camp and work with this group of men and women who are all committed to the Kiwis," Kidwell said.

"There's a great mix of enthusiasm and experience in this side and a real desire to win this World Cup, I can't wait to show the people around New Zealand all the work we have been doing and how committed we are to this campaign."

Players not considered due to injury include Tohu Harris, Jordan Kahu, Kieran Foran and Ben Matulino.

Continued on next page...

New Zealand Kiwis Rugby League World Cup 2017 Squad

- Nelson Asofa-Solomona (Melbourne Storm)
- Gerard Beale (Cronulla Sharks)
- Adam Blair (Brisbane Broncos)
- Kenneath Bromwich (Melbourne Storm)
- Addin Fonua-Blake (Manly Sea Eagles)
- Peta Hiku (Warrington Wolves)
- Shaun Johnson (New Zealand Warriors)
- Thomas Leuluai (Wigan Warriors)
- Danny Levi (Newcastle Knights)
- Isaac Liu (Sydney Roosters)
- Simon Mannering (New Zealand Warriors)
- Te Maire Martin (North Queensland Cowboys)
- Jason Nightingale (St George Illawarra Dragons)
- Kodi Nikorima (Brisbane Broncos)
- Russell Packer (St George Illawarra Dragons)
- Jordan Rapana (Canberra Raiders)
- Brad Takairangi (Parramatta Eels)
- Joseph Tapine (Canberra Raiders)
- Martin Taupau (Manly Sea Eagles)
- Elijah Taylor (Wests Tigers)
- Roger Tuivasa-Sheck (New Zealand Warriors)
- Jared Waerea-Hargreaves (Sydney Roosters)
- Dallin Watene-Zelezniak (Penrith Panthers)
- Dean Whare (Penrith Panthers)

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Tonga Drop Selection Bombshell As They Include Taumalolo And Fifita In 24-Man Squad For Rugby League World Cup

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

THE TONGAN Rugby League have officially named North Queensland Cowboys' star Jason Taumalolo and Kangaroo Andrew Fifita in their 2017 Rugby League World Cup squad

Parramatta forward Manu Ma'u, Warriors' winger David Fusitu'a and Roosters' prop Sio Siua Taukeiaho will also play for Tonga.

Taumalolo yesterday pledged his allegiance to Tonga for the tournament that starts later this month and will now be joined in the squad by a host of high-profile NRL stars.

Fifita joined Taumalolo this morning after advising Australian coach Mal Meninga he wished to switch to Tonga, while Taukeiaho, Fusitu'a and Ma'u also advised New Zealand they would commit to Tonga.

The five big names are joined in the 24-man squad by former Kangaroos Michael Jennings and Daniel Tupou.

Other players to note include Titans' centre Konrad Hurrell, Tigers' half Tuimoala Lolohea, former Storm grand final winner Sika Manu and ex-Warriors' crowd favourite Manu Vatuvei.

"The Tongan Rugby League is very pleased with the squad we have been able to assemble, and when you see names like Taumalolo, Fifita, Taukeiaho, Ma'u, Hopoate, Jennings and Tupou in the team, you can understand why," said Tongan head coach Kristian Woolf.

"We have been drawn in a very strong group that includes the might of New Zealand, traditional neighbours and foes Samoa, and previous Four Nations participants Scotland.

Tonga Rugby League World Cup 2017 Squad

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| • Andrew Fifita | • Manu Ma'u |
| • Mahe Fonua | • Sam Moa |
| • David Fusitu'a | • Ben Murdoch |
| • Siliva Havilli | • Masila |
| • Ata Hingano | • Joe Ofahengaue |
| • Will Hopoate | • Tevita Pangai jnr |
| • Konrad Hurrell | • Ukuma Ta'ai |
| • Michael Jennings | • Sio Siua Taukieaho |
| • Solomone Kata | • Jason Taumalolo |
| • Sione Katoa | • Peni Terepo |
| • Samisoni Langi | • Daniel Tupou |
| • Tuimoala Lolohea | • Manu Vatuvei |
| • Sika Manu | |



Here's another way to support the Kiwis and get a ticket to watch them take on Samoa!

The patron of New Zealand Rugby League, Sir Peter Leitch, invites you to join him and other league fans at...

Rugby League World Cup 2017

Rugby League Greats Luncheon

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"

Confirmed Kiwis Include: Richard Blackmore, Brent Webb, Richard Barnett, Paul Rauhihi, Ken Stirling, Gary Prohm, Fed Ah Kuoi, Jerry SueSue, Stephan Kearney, Logan Swann, Jerome Ropati, Stacey Jones, Tawera Nikau, Olsen Filipaina, Nathan Cayless, Graeme West, Nigel Vagana, Gordon Gibbons former kiwis manager, Gary Kemble, Hugh McGahan, Graham Lowe ex kiwi coach, Shane Cooper, Clayton Friend, Dane O'Hara and Henry Faafili.

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

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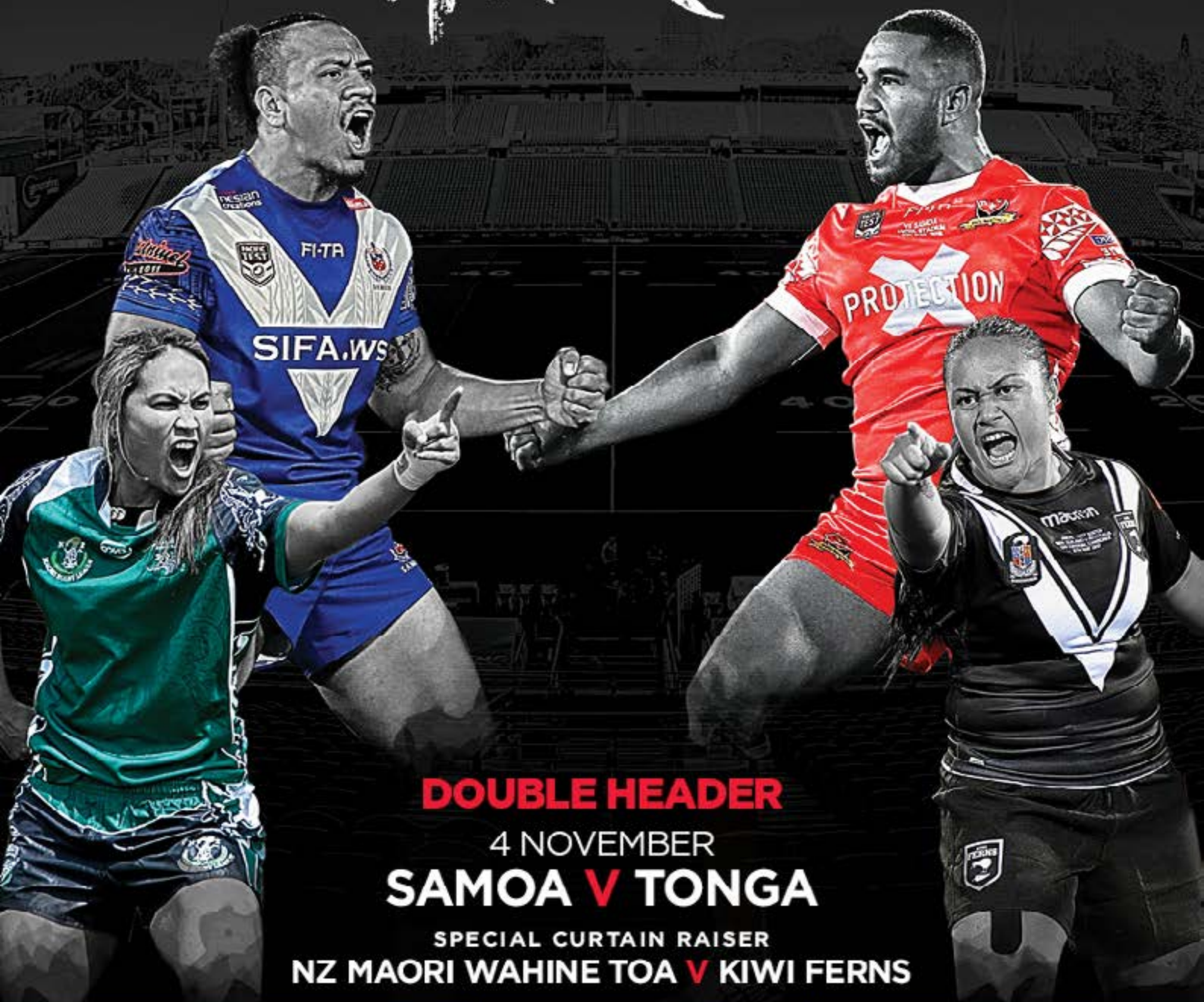
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By John Coffey

Taumalolo Betrayal Boosts Cup

Jason Taumalolo charges at Boyd Cordner during the 2017 ANZAC test. Photo www.photosport.nz

WORLD CUP organisers owe Jason Taumalolo a huge vote of thanks for shaking rugby league fans and media out of their post-NRL snooze. Despite the opening match fast approaching, the news media was showing scant interest. They and the fans needed a kick start. Auckland-born Taumalolo provided it by turning his back on the Kiwis to align with Tonga, his country of heritage. The ruckus Taumalolo caused increased ten-fold when Cronulla prop Andrew Fifita withdrew from the Kangaroos and a bevy of other Kiwis also sided with Tonga.

They gave up potential \$50,000 payouts for the meagre allowances they will now receive during six weeks in Tonga's camp and have probably conceded any real chance of competing in the final at Suncorp Stadium on December 2. Their actions have seriously damaged the prospects of the 2017 Kiwis joining their 2008 counterparts as World Cup winners. Conversely, eleventh-ranked Tonga suddenly became a glamour team as the drama pushed even the All Blacks aside in newspaper, radio and TV bulletins.

But while Taumalolo gave the Cup a publicity boost, the manner in which he betrayed the Kiwis and conspired with others to withdraw as late as one hour before the announcement was despicable. The "mutineers" reportedly cost Alex Glenn a World Cup. Having been told he was not selected, Glenn booked a family holiday and could not be recalled at the eleventh hour when coach David Kidwell and his selectors were blindsided by the late withdrawals. Kiwis captain Adam Blair doubts whether he could trust, or play alongside, Taumalolo again.

Tonga can now field its strongest-ever line-up, with 13 previous Kiwis or Kangaroos. The former Kiwis are Fusitu'a, Siliva Havili, Solomone Kata, Tuimoala Lolohea, Sika Manu, Manu Ma'u, Sam Moa, Sio Siua Taukeiaho, Taumalolo and Manu Vatuvei. Realistically, only Fusitu'a, Ma'u, Taukeiaho and Taumalolo were strong contenders for this New Zealand squad. In addition to Fifita, Michael Jennings and Daniel Tupou have worn the green and gold of Australia. Tonga lacks only a specialist scrum-half.

Townsville-based Tongan coach Kristian Woolf has done a remarkable job assembling a very competitive team but denies he was actively recruiting players. Tonga's clash with the Kiwis at Hamilton on November 11 is already shaping as a must-see, as well as a must-win, game. In fact, the city of Hamilton is doubly blessed, for the Mate Ma'a also play arch rival Samoa there a week earlier.

There had previously been little mainstream media publicity surrounding the World Cup. Taumalolo's change of allegiance dominated Radio Sport for days as the hosts – all of them from rugby union or soccer backgrounds – were inundated by a deluge of calls and texts. The hosts' lack of rugby league knowledge allowed the usual hearsay, supposition, guessing, exaggeration and prejudice to run rampant. One host even claimed to be "looking into his (Taumalolo's) head".

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Kidwell, the NZRL and international rugby league were all targets of redneck callers, radio hosts and newspaper columnists. One damning Fairfax comment was penned by a journalist touring with the All Blacks in South Africa! The press conference announcing the Kiwis squad attracted 33 media representatives, about 30 more than would have been the case had Taumalolo not lobbed his back-flipping grenade into the proceedings. But they say all publicity is good publicity (if it sells tickets).

The original story in a Sydney newspaper linked Taumalolo's defection to the suspensions of Jesse Bromwich and Kevin Proctor. (Yet Bromwich's brother Kenny was available). To his discredit, Taumalolo had said nothing to Kiwis selector Tawera Nikau only three days earlier and hid from Kidwell's and team manager Shane Richardson's phone calls, emails and texts. When a Queensland newspaper finally tracked him down he refused to answer the most vital questions about his motives for snubbing Kidwell, the NZRL and the Kiwis.

New Zealand will line up for its opening fixture against Samoa at Mt Smart Stadium on October 28 without five senior forwards, Jesse Bromwich, Proctor, Taumalolo, Tohu Harris (injured) and Issac Luke (dropped). Add to them injured playmaker Kieran Foran, prop Ben Matulino and goalkicking utility back Jordan Kahu and the Kiwis have lost half of a probable starting XIII. Ironically, Bromwich and Proctor should be welcomed back in 2018 but Blair is probably not alone in not wanting to play with Taumalolo and his cohorts again.

The non-capped Kiwis are Melbourne forward Nelson Asofa-Solomona, Manly forward Addin Fonua-Blake, Newcastle hooker Danny Levi, Roosters forward Isaac Lui and Parramatta utility Brad Takairangi. Only Fonua-Blake, who is of Tongan heritage, has not previously been part of a Kiwis squad. Wests Tigers loose forward Elijah Taylor returns after playing six Tests between 2011 and 2013 before injuries disrupted his career. Also belatedly recalled is Roosters prop Jared Waerea-Hargreaves, who has made only two of his 19 Test appearances since the 2013 World Cup.



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By Miles Davis

Defections

Jason Taumalolo

THERE IS an old English proverb that says "Cometh the hour, cometh the man". I have a feeling that will be the case with the Kiwi Rugby League World Cup squad as they overcome some late defections.

Jason Taumalolo's late switch of loyalties from New Zealand to Tonga was a shock as was similar moves from 3 other potential Kiwis. Whilst the International Rugby League must take some responsibility (last year's change of eligibility rules were always likely to be abused) the bulk of the blame lies squarely with Taumalolo. There is no problem if he wants to represent Tonga but to do so in the manner he did is reprehensible. He should have fronted up to the Kiwi management and told them how the land lied. There is no doubt that Taumalolo does not overly enjoy Kiwi coach David Kidwell but surely that is not an excuse for poor behaviour. I for one would never let him near a Kiwi jersey again but selector and Kiwi legend Tawera Nikau leaves the door slightly ajar when asked about his future with the Kiwis "Those will be tough decisions that we've got to make and discussions that we've got to have once we get to that position."

Nikau also said that he wanted players that had a desire to play for the Kiwis. Ones whose loyalty would ensure everyone would be giving their all "When you look at the guys that you really want in the team, it's those guys that are going to do the hard yards when the going does get tough, you want them to be there."

International sport is being undermined by a small number of mercenary players who will sell their soul to gain International appearances on their CV. Players selected for National duty should feel a love and affinity towards that country. They should feel uplifted at the National Anthem and be gutted when their country loses at any sport. For those mercenaries it's just another game to lift their commercial value.

Other rumours include Taumalolo being angry at Kidwell for dropping Kevin Proctor and Jesse Bromwich for their drug indiscretion. Now the punishment may or may not have been too severe but surely there is no denying they were extremely foolish and deserve punishment of some sort?

There is no guarantee that Tonga will be a much greater threat just because of a late influx of talent and the whole incident may just lift the Kiwis. All those selected are loyal to the jersey and country and will be determined to show defectors that they chose the wrong horse. It will also galvanise the Kiwis' fan base.

You can guarantee that the World Cup clash in Hamilton on the 11th November between the Kiwis and Tonga will have an extra edge to it. Make sure you get tickets to witness a bit of Utu.



Tawera

A photograph of Te Maire Martin, a rugby player, wearing a pink jersey with 'PANTHERS' and 'OAKLEY' logos. He is looking off to the side with a focused expression. The background is a blurred crowd at a stadium.

Te Maire Martin

Te Maire Martin of the Panthers looks on during Day 2 of the NRL Auckland Nines in 2016. Photo www.photosport.nz

IN THE case of Kiwis five eighth Te Maire Martin, it's incredible what a difference a year makes. This time 12 months ago Martin was a surprise selection for the New Zealand tour of England, as the rookie picked for his country after only six games of first grade.

He resembled a wide-eyed teenager for the first part of the trip, still getting used to being on tour with some players he regarded as heroes.

Martin didn't even expect to play a match on tour, though he eventually got on the field in the 18-18 draw with Scotland in Workington.

A year on from that experience and Martin was one of the first names picked in coach David Kidwell's World Cup squad, and is expected to start alongside Shaun Johnson in the halves, after the injury-enforced absence of Kieran Foran.

And the 22-year-old Martin will handle that responsibility well, after a coming of age season in the NRL.

He's experienced significant highs and lows in 2017, which has helped him develop, on and off the field.

Martin played the first few matches of the season at Penrith, before being axed by coach Anthony Griffin in April.

"I was playing reserve grade at the start of the year," said Martin. "Then I had a chance to play first grade [at the Cowboys], then getting into the finals – just – by the Bulldogs beating the Dragons, then everything else that happened."

His mid-year move from the Panthers to the Cowboys was seen as a chance to resurrect his career, as well as learning his trade under Johnathan Thurston.

But that all changed with Thurston's season-ending injury in June which mean

that Martin, with only 13 first grade matches under his belt, had to become one of the main men in the halves.

"I had to take my chance," said Martin. "They gave me a simple role to play at the Cowboys but I am still learning as much as I can and slowly getting a feel for how the game is played at this level."

"I was trying to get amongst the physicality of it all and learning about that side of it too. But overall the move [north] has been terrific."

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That showed in his play. He was superb in the No6 jersey for the Cowboys, scoring 6 tries in 12 matches, including a crucial try in the preliminary final against the Roosters. Martin also averaged almost 50 running metres per match, and on three occasions exceeded 70 metres.

His progress was shown in the grand final, where, in a match of limited chances for the Queensland-based club, Martin crossed for their only try and came close to another one.

"It was on the last play and for the previous few weeks everyone had noticed that [Michael] Morgan was the main man," said Martin. "Whenever he was tries were scored so they were trying to shut him down. [Cameron] Smith went running at him and it left a gap for me. Morgan heard me screaming for it and lucky enough he gave it to me. All I had to do was run through 10 or so metres and it was a move we had been working on over the [previous] few weeks."

Despite the crushing 34-6 defeat on the big day, Martin enjoyed what he called an "incredible" experience.

"It's something I will never forget, especially the crowd and how loud they got," said Martin. "Nerves started pumping on the walk out, I got really nervous and it brought it all back to reality. And then the game went by so fast."

Martin has enjoyed a brief catch up with his family, before the Kiwis assemble next week.

"It will be a great opportunity, being part of this tournament," said Martin, "There are a lot of good teams. Especially the Island teams... Tonga and Samoa are a lot stronger than they used to be. But it is going to be great to be playing in front of home crowds and I'm looking forward to spending time with the boys."

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SAMOA V TONGA
4 NOVEMBER
NZ V TONGA
11 NOVEMBER

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Kiwis World Cup

New Zealand celebrate winning the Tri-Nations Cup in 2005.

Photo www.photosport.nz

THE KIWIS have had a far from ideal buildup to the World Cup – but they need to take inspiration from an outstanding New Zealand triumph 12 years ago.

Events over the last two weeks have conspired against the Kiwis.

The shock loss of Jason Taumalolo – who had given no advance indication of his plans to represent Tonga instead – was a hammer blow.

The Cowboys lock is arguably the most destructive forward in the NRL with ball in hand, and was a key part of David Kidwell's game plan.

Tohu Harris has a much lower profile, but his absence is almost as telling, as he is a tireless worker on attack and defence, has plenty of big match experience and was one of the best players on the field in the recent grand final.

Given that the New Zealand side were already deprived of the suspended Jesse Bromwich and Kevin Proctor, coach Kidwell now has only two members of his starting pack from the Anzac test in May.

The versatile David Fusitua (Tonga) will also be missed, while Parramatta's Manu Ma'u has been a regular member of the forward pack over the past two years.

The withdrawal of Kieran Foran was also unfortunate. He could have taken a lot of pressure off Shaun Johnson in the halves, and among the backline only Thomas Leului and Jason Nightingale have more experience than Foran.

But there are reasons for hope, and the 2005 Tri Nations campaign provides a pertinent example.

Before the tournament Kiwis coach Brian McClennan lost Sonny Bill-Williams (off season surgery), who was regarded at the time as the best forward in the NRL (think Taumalolo). McClennan was also deprived of the superlative skills of Benji Marshall, who had just come off a premiership-winning season with the Tigers and was a key attacking weapon for New Zealand in the halves (think Foran).

Fellow premiership winner Dene Halatu was also scratched for the same reason, as were blockbusting wingers Matt Utai and Lesley Vainikolo.

Warriors utility Jerome Ropati was also ruled out, while Thomas Leuluai had a broken leg.

They were key men, key withdrawals.

But the relentlessly positive McClennan looked beyond the disappointment to find opportunities.

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"I was excited," said McClennan. "I'd met with Ruben [Wiki] and he wanted to have a big one. [Assistant coach] Graeme Norton was full of ideas and I had the Mad Butcher [Peter Leitch] as manager - he makes things happen. And I was confident in what I could do, what I was going to bring."

McClennan had the benefit of a strong coaching and management staff, and veterans like Wiki, Stacey Jones and Nigel Vagana in the fold. But he was also creative, and brave in his selections.

He used Vagana in the No6 jersey throughout the tournament, an astonishing call given the class of the Kangaroos' spine. He also had faith in two rookie wingers; the relatively unknown Jake Webster from the Storm and a teenager from the Warriors called Manu Vatuvei.

He picked Shontayne Hape at lock in the final, and got the best out of players with modest CV's, some of whom didn't hit the same heights again.

Behind the scenes management helped to create the right environment, with a mix of discipline and down-time that included occasional days away from camp for players not involved in the match day 17.

The results were spectacular.

The Kiwis broke a long running jinx in Sydney to defeat the Kangaroos (who included Darren Lockyer and Andrew Johns in that match) before losing a thrilling contest 28-26 the following week in Auckland. They later racked up a record 42 points against England in London, before the historic 24-0 victory over the Kangaroos in the final at Elland road.

"We needed good tactics," McClennan says. "I spoke with our leaders about our territorial game and they bought into it. We wanted the Aussies back-peddalling. We wanted aggressive defence, winning the ruck."

Times have changed and moved on, but that tournament showed that with detailed planning, good preparation, and the right culture and off field environment, a united team and innovative tactics and strategy anything is possible.

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Northland Players Named In World Cup Squads

By Ben Francis



NORTHLAND BORN prop Adam Blair will lead the Kiwis at this year's Rugby League World Cup after being named the captain of the 24-man squad.

Blair will be competing in his second World Cup. He was a part of the Kiwis squad in 2008 which won the tournament but missed out in 2013 due to poor form.

But the 31-year-old has bounced back and is determined to lead the Kiwis to glory despite all the criticism.

"It's obviously a massive privilege to lead this group of boys on home soil," said Blair.

"We haven't been home since 2014 so to have the World Cup at home is really exciting.

"It would be great if everybody got behind us and supported us including the New Zealand public and fans.

"I know these boys will put their heart and soul into this team and at the same time we really need to build what we believe in, what we want and want we want to drive in this tournament."

Meanwhile former Kaitia College pupil Elijah Taylor was also named in the squad, however, his election was not confirmed, minutes before the final squad was announced.

According to reports, the back-rower was told he would not be named in the squad, but after Jason Taumalo-pu pulled out, he was given the call-up.

However, for Panthers duo James Fisher-Harris and Corey Harawira-Naera, they both did not make the cut.

After having a breakout debut season in 2016 which earned a Kiwis call-up, Fisher-Harris was limited to 15 games in 2017 after battling the season with a number of injuries

Harawira-Naera, made his NRL debut season and was one of the Panthers standouts and was named joint-winner of the Ben Alexander Rookie of the Year award for the club but shoulder surgery ruled the 22-year-old out of the club.

Former Whangarei Boys High School student and Panthers Under-20s fullback Caleb Aekins has been named in a 38-strong Wales training squad - but the final squad for the World Cup in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea is yet to be confirmed.



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Harvey Norman Jillaroos World Cup Squad

HARVEY NORMAN Jillaroos Coach Brad Donald has named a squad of 24 ahead of the 2017 Women's Rugby League World Cup, commencing on Thursday 16 November in Sydney.

The squad includes 16 World Cup debutants, as well as five players who have captained Australia this year in Sam Bremner, Karina Brown, Steph Hancock, Renae Kunst and Ruan Sims.

Donald said that every Jillaroos team member this year – either playing in matches or as part of training camps – had contributed to elevating the team to its highest professional point and was confident in the abilities of the squad selected for the World Cup.

“Every member of the Jillaroos has had the opportunity to press for selection across training camps and matches this year and there is no doubt that as an extended team, we are closer than we have ever been and committed to our goal of retaining the World Cup,” Mr Donald said.

“It seems a long time since we first sat down as a group and discussed what we wanted to achieve in 2017.

“Pleasingly, we have ticked off several objectives, but retaining the World Cup remains at the top of the list.

“With the tournament being staged in our home country, we will be drawing on local support and our intention is to complete the year with a World Cup win.”

Rugby League World Cup Chief Executive Andrew Hill congratulated the Jillaroos on their success to date and wished the team well, ahead of their opening match against the Cook Islands at Southern Cross Group Stadium in Sydney.

“The Jillaroos have demonstrated a consistent level of hard-work and determination throughout 2017 and it's exciting to see the support for not only the Jillaroos, but women's rugby league in general as it continues to grow, with more girls and women participating,” Mr Hill said.

“I'm looking forward to a fantastic Women's Rugby League World Cup – played for the first time concurrently with the men's World Cup and one that will feature both the men's and women's final on the same stage as a double-header in Brisbane on

December 2.”

Tickets to the Women's Rugby League World Cup tournament are available from www.rlwc2017.com, with prices starting from \$10 for triple header pool games.

Those 15 years or under and concession holders can gain entry for free to women's pool matches.

Tickets to the doubler-header Final in Brisbane can also be purchased from the Rugby League World Cup website, with the cost of a ticket covering both the men's and women's matches.

Further information on the Women's Rugby League World Cup, including the full draw, can be found at www.rlwc2017.com.

2017 Harvey Norman Jillaroos World Cup Squad (in alphabetical order)

Name – Rugby League Club – State Representation

Kezie Apps * – Helensburgh (NSW)
Chelsea Baker * – Wallabies Gladstone (QLD)
Heather Ballinger – Wests Panthers (QLD)
Annette Brander * – Beerwah Bulldogs (QLD)
Brittany Breayley * – Brothers Ipswich (QLD)
Sam Bremner – Helensburgh (NSW)
Ali Brigginsshaw – Brothers Ipswich (QLD)
Karina Brown – Easts Tigers (QLD)
Nakia Davis-Welsh * – Redfern All Blacks (NSW)
Vanessa Foliaki * – Easts Tigers (NSW)
Steph Hancock – Easts Tigers (QLD)
Isabelle Kelly * – North Newcastle (NSW)
Renae Kunst – Wests Panthers (QLD)
Corban McGregor * – Cronulla-Caringbah (NSW)
Caitlin Moran * – North Newcastle (NSW)
Lavina O'Mealey * – Redfern All Blacks (NSW)
Talesha Quinn * – Cronulla-Caringbah (NSW)
Ruan Sims – Cronulla-Caringbah (NSW)
Maddie Studdon * – Redfern All Blacks (NSW)
Zahara Temara * – Burleigh Bears (QLD)
Simaima Taufua * – Mounties (NSW)
Elianna Walton – Greenacre (NSW)
Meg Ward * – Northern Territory (NT)
Rebecca Young * – North Newcastle (NSW)

* Denotes World Cup debutant



England Announce Squad for RLWC2017



James Roby. Photo SWPix

H EAD COACH Wayne Bennett has today selected the 24-man squad that will represent England at the 2017 Rugby League World Cup.

Captained by Sean O'Loughlin, the squad includes Luke Gale, who was crowned Steve Prescott MBE Man of Steel winner last week, Dally M Half-Back of the Year, Gareth Widdop and Betfred Super League's top metre-maker, Alex Walmsley.

Betfred Super League Grand Final winners, Kallum Watkins and Ryan Hall are included. Between them, the experienced Leeds Rhinos duo have 52 international appearances. Hall debuted in 2009 and has gone to score 32 tries in 32 games. Watkins made his 20th appearance in May against Samoa.

Warrington Wolves' Ben Currie is one of two (Walmsley) uncapped players called up by Bennett. Currie was selected in 2015 for the New Zealand Test Series but never picked in the starting 17.

St Helens hooker, James Roby also returns to the squad. Last featuring against New Zealand in 2015, this will be the 31-year-old's third World Cup after representing England in 2008 and 2013.

The 24-man list features 18 players that travelled to Sydney in May for the mid-season Pacific Test against Samoa – a game in which England won 30-10 and saw tries from Ryan Hall, Jermaine McGillvary, James Graham, Josh Hodgson and Stefan Ratchford.

On the squad, Wayne Bennett, said: "Selecting the final 24 with the help of my coaching staff was tough and that was down to the effort and performances of many players throughout the season.

"The competitiveness of Super League and NRL and knowing the goal of playing for your country in a World Cup has made many raise their game and become better athletes.

"The England programme has been very active leading into this tournament and having the squad meet up on regular occasions – on and off the field – has put us in a positive place before everyone gets into camp.

"We had to put the disappointment of the Four Nations behind us quickly and the meetings that followed that tournament set out what was required to be successful in the World Cup. Everyone has fully bought into this and we can't wait to get started."

On the World Cup, Bennett, added: "This is shaping up to be a very competitive tournament. Squads are being confirmed now and it's clear to see the spread of talent will add to some exciting games.

"The organisers have been doing a fantastic job in generating excitement in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Continued on next page...

“There’s some travel involved but we’re looking forward to spending time in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth during the group stage.”

England Rugby League World Cup 24-man squad (number of caps, professional and community club in brackets):

- John Bateman (6, Wigan Warriors, Bradford Dudley Hill)
- Kevin Brown (6, Warrington Wolves, Thatto Heath Crusaders)
- Sam Burgess (18, South Sydney Rabbitohs, Dewsbury Moor)
- Thomas Burgess (14, South Sydney Rabbitohs, Dewsbury Moor)
- Ben Currie (0, Warrington Wolves, Golborne Parkside)
- Luke Gale (4, Castleford Tigers, Middleton Marauders)
- James Graham (33, St George Illawarra Dragons, Blackbrook)
- Ryan Hall (32, Leeds Rhinos, Oulton Raiders)
- Chris Heighington (5, Cronulla Sharks, Umina Bunnies)
- Chris Hill (19, Warrington Wolves, New Springs Lions)
- Josh Hodgson (11, Canberra Raiders, East Hull)
- Jonny Lomax (4, St Helens, Orrell St James)
- Jermaine McGillvary (6, Huddersfield Giants, Deighton Juniors)
- Mike McMeeken (1, Castleford Tigers, Staines Titans)
- Sean O’Loughlin (18, Wigan Warriors, Wigan St Patricks)
- Mark Percival (3, St Helens, Halton Farnworth Hornets)
- Stefan Ratchford (2, Warrington Wolves, Wigan St Patricks)
- James Roby (26, St Helens, Blackbrook)
- Scott Taylor (2, Hull FC, Skirlaugh)
- Alex Walmsley (0, St Helens, Dewsbury Celtic)
- Kallum Watkins (20, Leeds Rhinos, Latchford Albion)
- Elliott Whitehead (10, Canberra Raiders, West Bowling)
- Gareth Widdop (21, St George Illawarra Dragons, King Cross)
- George Williams (5, Wigan Warriors, Wigan St Patricks)

Fiji Bati Rugby League Squad

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Kane Evans - Sydney Roosters | (Siti-ve-nee Mor-there-n-drek-eh) | Sea Eagles |
| 2. Salesi Faingaa - Parramatta Eels (Sa-le-see Fa-ing-ar) | 11. Marcelo Montoya - Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs (Mar-selo Montoya) | (Ark-willa Oo-art-teh) |
| 3. Jarryd Hayne - Gold Coast Titans | 12. Kevin Naiqama (C) - Wests Tigers (Kevin Nigh-ing-garma) | 22. Eloni Vunakece - Sydney Roosters/ Wyong Roos |
| 4. Tui Kamikamica - Melbourne Storm/ SC Falcons (Too-ee Ka me-ka-me-tha) | 13. Ben Nakubuwei - Gold Coast Titans/ Tweed Heads Seagulls (Ben Na-koo-boo-why) | (Ee-lo-nee Voo-na-care-there) |
| 5. Villiame Kikau - Penrith Panthers (Villi-arm-eh Kik-our) | 14. Mikaele Ravalawa - Canberra Raiders (Mee-ka-el-air Rava-la-wa) | 23. Suliasi Vunivalu - Melbourne Storm |
| 6. Apisai Koroisau - Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles (Api-sigh Ko-roy-ee-s-our) | 15. Junior Roqica - London Broncos (Junior Rong-g-ee-tha) | (Sool-ee-are-see Voo-nee-va-loo) |
| 7. Joe Lovadua - St George-Illawarra Dragons (Joe Lovo-do-a) | 16. Jacob Saifiti - Newcastle Knights (Jacob Sigh-fee-tee) | 24. Brayden Wiliame - Catalans Dragons |
| 8. Henry Raiwalui - Mounties RLFC (Rye-wa-loo-ee) | 17. Ashton Sims - Warrington Wolves | (Brayden Wili-arm-eh) |
| 9. Taane Milne - St George-Illawarra Dragons/ Illawarra RLFC (Tarn-eh Milne) | 18. Korbin Sims - Brisbane Broncos | *Standby Replacement* |
| 10. Sitiveni Moceidreke - South Sydney Rabbitohs/ North Sydney Bears | 19. Pio Seci - Nabua Broncos (Pee-o Se-thee) | 25. Etuate Bola - Nabua Broncos |
| | 20. James Storer - Port Kembla Blacks | (Et-oo-art-ee Bol-ah) |
| | 21. Akuila Uate - Manly-Warringah | |



England Women's Squad Named For RLWC2017

ENGLAND WOMEN Head Coach Chris Chapman has named a 23-strong squad for the Women's Rugby League World Cup which takes place in Australia in November and December.

Players from four different clubs are represented, with Women's Super League Grand Final champions Bradford Bulls boasting 10 members, while runners-up Featherstone Rovers have five and seven players come from Thatto Heath – St Helens.

Goalkicking full-back Katie Hepworth is Castleford Tigers' only player named in the squad and becomes the first women's player to represent the club in a Rugby League World Cup.

Captain Andrea Dobson is set to make her fourth World Cup appearance alongside half-back Kirsty Moroney, hooker Lois Forsell, prop Emma Slowe and second row Emily Rudge.

Vice-Captain Jodie Cunningham is one of six recalls to the squad after missing the side's tour to France earlier this year due to injury.

Head Coach Chris Chapman said, "It's been extremely tough to select a squad of only 23 players to compete in this year's World Cup as all players have worked hard throughout the season for England and their respective clubs.

"We appreciate it is a big challenge against experienced professional players and it is one we are all looking forward to.

"It is a task that we believe we can achieve and all the players and staff have been working hard to ensure we are the best prepared team."

The squad will fly out to Australia on Friday, November 10 and will play three pool games at the Southern Cross Group Stadium, Sydney against Papua New Guinea Orchids, Australian Jillaroos and The Cook Islands.

All Women's Rugby League World Cup games are staged as triple-headers and will be played on Thursday November 16, Sunday November 19 and Wednesday November 22.

Full England Women's Squad for the Women's Rugby League World Cup 2017:

Amy Hardcastle - Bradford Bulls
Andrea Dobson - Featherstone Rovers

Beth Sutcliffe - Bradford Bulls
Charlotte Booth - Bradford Bulls
Claire Garner - Bradford Bulls
Danielle Bound - Thatto Heath St Helens
Danika Priim - Bradford Bulls
Emily Rudge - Thatto Heath St Helens
Emma Slowe - Featherstone Rovers
Faye Gaskin - Thatto Heath St Helens
Jenny Welsby - Thatto Heath St Helens
Jessica Courtman - Bradford Bulls
Jodie Cunningham - Thatto Heath St Helens
Katherine Hepworth - Castleford Tigers
Kayleigh Bulman - Featherstone Rovers
Kirsty Moroney - Bradford Bulls
Lois Forsell - Bradford Bulls
Rachel Thompson - Thatto Heath St Helens
Rhiannon Marshall - Featherstone Rovers
Sarah Dunn - Featherstone Rovers
Shona Hoyle - Bradford Bulls
Stacey White - Bradford Bulls
Tara-Jane Stanley - Thatto Heath St Helens

Fixtures for the tournament are as follows:

Round One – England v PNG. Thursday, November 16, 6.30pm kick-off (AEDT)

Round Two – Australia v England. Sunday, November 19, 1.45pm kick-off (AEDT)

Round Three – England v Cook Islands. Wednesday, November 22, 1.45pm kick-off (AEDT)

Semi-Finals – Sunday, November 26 at either 1.45pm or 4.00pm (AEDT)

All the above fixtures will be played at the Southern Cross Stadium.

This year will be the first time ever the women's and men's Rugby League World Cups will be played concurrently, with the women's World Cup final played as a curtain-raiser to the men's World Cup final at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium on December 2.



Ireland Announce Squad for RLWC2017

RUGBY LEAGUE Ireland have announced their squad for the upcoming World Cup and there is an exciting look to the squad which has a mix of seasoned Irish internationals, previous members of the squad, domestic players and new recruits.

Mark Aston has kept the core squad together that have been a part of the last few European Championships and the players that qualified for the tournament last Autumn.

The evergreen Liam Finn and Scott Grix lead the side out as captain and vice-captain and they have over 20 years experience now playing for Ireland.

Irish born NRL and Super League giant James Hasson leads out an impressive pack that includes youngsters like Brad Singleton, the King brothers and Joe Philbin of Warrington who impressed in the qualifiers, as well as Kyle Amor, Anthony Mullally, Tyrone McCarthy and Louie McCarthy-Scarsbrook who bring real quality and experience to the side.

The hooker position sees Michael McIlorum return to the Wolfhounds after a long absence and his direction and aggression will be a huge asset.

Youth is a key part of the squad and players like Liam Kay, Jack Higginson, Ollie Roberts and Will Hope are likely to star for Ireland into the future.

The domestic competition has got a greater involvement this time round and Matty Hadden features again after being involved in 2013 and is selected alongside James Kelly, Casey Dunne and Alan McMahon who have been central to the growth of the game in Ireland. Mikey Russell is also involved in the party and will travel as a reserve.



Name	Club		
1. Liam Finn (C)	Wakefield Wildcats	14. Anthony Mullally	Leeds Rhinos
2. Scott Grix (V.C)	Wakefield Wildcats	15. Tyrone McCarthy	Salford City Reds
3. James Hasson	Wakefield Wildcats	16. Brad Singleton	Leeds Rhinos
4. Kyle Amor	St. Helens	17. Micky McIlorum	Wigan Warriors
5. Liam Kay	Toronto Wolf Pack	18. Louie McCarthy-Scarsbrook	St. Helens
6. Will Hope	Sheffield Eagles	19. Api Pewhairangi	London Broncos
7. Oliver Roberts	Huddersfield Giants	20. Matty Hadden	Rochdale Hornets
8. Ed Chamberlain	Widnes Vikings	21. Shannon McDonnell	Camden Rams
9. George King	Warrington Wolves	22. Casey Dunne	Longhorns RL
10. Toby King	Warrington Wolves	23. James Kelly	Sheffield Eagles
11. Joe Keyes	Bradford Bulls	24. Alan McMahon	Waterford Vikings
12. Joe Philbin	Warrington Wolves	25. Mikey Russell – (Travelling Reserve) – Coventry Bears	
13. Jack Higginson	Wigan Warriors		

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



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Wales Name Squad for RLWC2017

WALES HEAD coach John Kear has named his final 24-man squad for Rugby League World Cup 2017.

A 38-man train-on squad was announced back in July, but it has now been whittled down to 24 names for the tournament.

14 of the 17 players who featured in Wales' victory over Italy last October to secure World Cup qualification have been included in the squad.

Despite not being named in the initial train-on squad, uncapped Chester Butler and Gavin Bennion have both been called up to the final squad.

Halifax's Butler is the grandson of former Wales international Colin Dixon, while Bennion has recently left Rochdale Hornets to join Super League club Salford Red Devils.

The only other uncapped player is Josh Ralph, who plays in the Queensland (Intrust Super) Cup for Tweed Head Seagulls.

Ben Evans and Matty Seamark return to the frame for the first time since the last World Cup, while Super League Young Player of the Year nominees and St Helens duo Regan Grace and Morgan Knowles are included.

Ben Flower (Achilles), Jake Emmitt (elbow), Lloyd White (hamstring), Ollie Olds (ACL), Rhys Evans (shoulder), Calvin Wellington (hamstring), Daniel Brown (ACL) and Ant Walker (concussion) have all been ruled out through injury.

Gil Dudson, Larne Patrick and Dan Fleming, meanwhile, are unavailable for the tournament.

Craig Kopczak will captain Wales during the World Cup, while Phil Joseph and Elliot Kear will assist him in vice captain roles.

Wales head coach John Kear said: "I'm really happy with the squad that I've got for the tournament.

"We've had withdrawals – some because of injury and some for personal reasons – but the lads who are going are showing a great deal of desire to represent their country.

"I'm pretty certain that they will perform at this World Cup on the biggest stage. It's a great opportunity.

"We've not won a World Cup match since 2000. We didn't qualify for the 2008 World Cup and we didn't win in 2013.

"It's a long time between World Cup wins, but we're unbeaten in six matches and the main goal is to get that first win. There's then nothing to say that we can't get out of the group and make the quarter-finals."

WALES' 24-MAN SQUAD FOR RLWC2017: Courtney Davies, Steve Parry (both Gloucestershire All Golds), Chester Butler (Halifax), Danny Ansell (Hunslet), Sam Hopkins (Leigh Centurions), Michael Channing, Ben Evans, Dalton Grant, Elliot Kear, Rhys Williams (all London Broncos), Matty Barron (Newcastle Thunder), Joe Burke (Oldham), Gavin Bennion (Rochdale Hornets), Craig Kopczak (Salford Red Devils), Matty Fozard (Sheffield Eagles), Andrew Gay, Christiaan Roets (both South Wales Ironmen), Regan Grace, Morgan Knowles, Ben Morris (all St Helens), Rhodri Lloyd (Swinton Lions), Josh Ralph (Tweed Head Seagulls), Phil Joseph (Workington Town), Matty Seamark (Wynnum Manly Seagulls)

Wales' 24-man squad will meet up later today to begin a two-day training camp in North Wales, concluding with a celebration dinner tomorrow evening.

The squad will then fly out to Brisbane for a further training camp on Tuesday, October 17.

Wales will open their Rugby League World Cup 2017 campaign against Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby on Saturday, October 28.

They will then travel to Townsville in North Queensland to take on Fiji on Sunday, November 5.

One week later, the Dragons will play their final group match against Ireland in Perth.



A Letter from Ray French Former Dual International

HOW WELL I recall the first of my fifteen visits Down Under, whether playing, commentating for BBC Radio and TV, or reporting for any number of newspapers. And, sorry to mention it to you Kiwis, my part in Great Britain's 38-14 win over New Zealand on the Sydney Cricket Ground in the 1968 World Cup! What a small but dramatic part it was too! Relishing the action during the first half alongside the likes of Tommy Bishop, Cliff Watson, Roger Millward and company I was enjoying myself. But then, galloping for the try line with only New Zealand fullback Doug Ellwood in front of me and with Tommy Bishop alongside waiting for the final try scoring passed I was felled from behind and hit the floor like a tiring heavyweight boxer who has been caught in the last round by his opponent's favourite uppercut punch. After almost exhausting a bottle of smelling salts, three minutes later I was helped off the pitch and back to the dressing room through the small wooden gate which fronts the pavilion on the Sydney Cricket Ground. My world Cup was over. But the friendships and the companionship forged with team mates and opponents on such a trip still remain.

As we greet another World Cup the sheer numbers of the nations which have already contested with each other and which will compete in the 2017 tournament are evidence of the growth of rugby league at international level - a far cry when only Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and France competed in my 1968 World Cup. Indeed the 13 a side code is expanding internationally at an amazing rate with countries like Bosnia, Ukraine, Herzegovina, Malta, Greece, Norway and many more competing regularly this year on the world stage. In the past our game, especially in England, has been far too club orientated but not so now such is the extent of Rugby League's international calendar. It was thanks to the entrepreneurial zeal of Wellington businessman A. H. Baskerville who inspired the New Zealanders' Tour of Great Britain in 1907/08 that international rugby League was established.

Rugby League has, in the past, often been too inward looking and too obsessed with its parochialism. Occasionally too smug and self-satisfied to bother to extend its boundaries. Indeed I am often reminded of William Shakespeare's words offered to Brutus in the play Julius Caesar whenever the topic of expansion in rugby league is discussed

"The fault Dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

Go for it you Kiwis, help to promote a wonderful World Cup tournament and place our game once again at the forefront of international sport.

Ray French MBE

Raymond James "Ray" French, MBE (born 23 December 1939)[2] is a former rugby union and rugby league dual-code international player who achieved the rare honour of representing his country (England) at international level in both codes of the game. [Wikipedia](#)

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A Letter from Howie Tamati

Hi Peter

Tena koutou katoa

I'M CONSCIOUS of the issue that have arisen with the team deflections and injuries with members of the Kiwi team to contest the RL World Cup .

We all are disappointed with the decision made by some to not play for our national team the “Kiwis” and also the discourtesy of the late notice by some.

I reflect on team selections of the past and the injuries and late withdrawals from other NZ squads named .

Player withdrawals have been part and parcel of team selections whatever the reason over many years

For me it is nothing new and is to be expected. The key thing now is to make the stand and move forward .

The only time we should think about those players and be concerned about them is when we play them.

We need to support the Kiwi team wholeheartedly. These are the men that will go into battle for our country.

They are all quality players who play in the toughest RL competition in the world week in and week out.

On their day they are capable of beating any team.

This team can play.

The best we can do is to support the Kiwis and the Coaching staff.

They need to know and feel that we as a country all believe in them.

#GIVE THEM A TASTE OF KIWI !!

Regards

Howie Tamati

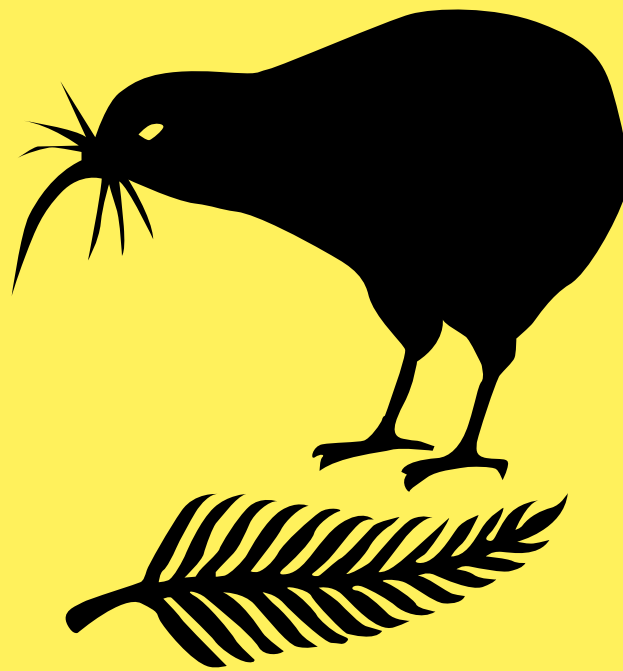
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INVITES YOU TO JOIN HIM AND OTHER LEAGUE FANS AT...

RUGBY LEAGUE GREATS LUNCHEON

DATE 27TH OCTOBER 2017

LOCATION ELLERSLIE EVENT CENTRE NEWMARKET ROOM

DOORS OPEN 11.30AM

BUFFET LUNCH 12.15PM

INCLUDES BEVERAGE PACKAGE UNTIL 3.00PM

**This is the list of the ex-Kiwis
who are attending the luncheon:**

Richard Blackmore

Brent Webb

Richard Barnett

Paul Rauhihi

Ken Stirling

Gary Prohm

Fred Ah Kuoi

Jerry Seuseu

Stephan Kearney

Logan Swann

Jerome Ropati

Stacey Jones

Tawera Nikau

Olsen Filipaina

Nathan Cayless

Graeme West

Nigel Vagana

Gordon Gibbons

Gary Kemble

Hugh McGahan

Graham Lowe

Shane Cooper

Clayton Friend

Dane O'Hara

Henry Fa'afili

Murray Eade

Lyndsay Proctor

Double The Action

By David Kemeys

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



SO WE are to get double-headers in the NRL.

There is one at Mt Smart, which will see the Vodafone Warriors take on the Cowboys on April 7, the fifth round, with the Storm against the Tigers acting as the curtain-raiser.

That's a home game for us, and the Tigers.

Personally I am Warriors fan, but will I go to the ground early to see the Storm play the Tigers? Hell yes, though I will be a committed neutral and care not one jot who wins, as long as it's not the Tigers.

But there will be plenty of stars on show in both games, and why would you not take the chance to see another NRL game live?

Unfortunately we are also involved in another of the double-headers, this one on March 10 in round one, where our winning record is awful, and it is in Perth, where our winning record is worse than awful.

We will face Souths, who seem to adore dragging us to Perth, and why wouldn't they when our record there is so poor?

The other match will see the Doggies as the home side against the Storm, and again I will care not one jot who wins that one either, as long as it is not the Doggies.

The interesting thing about this one is that it will be played in the brand new 60,000 seat Perth Stadium. The Aussie Rules lot will be fuming that NRL has grabbed the opening events, because that sport is battling hard to grab the sporting dollar in Western Australia, and must have rubbed its hands together with glee when the Western Force rugby side went tits up.

Our new boss Cameron George is pretty chuffed with the idea, saying it's great opportunity to showcase the NRL.

"Having so many of the game's stars on show is going to be fantastic. It's exciting for our club, for our members and fans, and also for Auckland and the surrounding region."

Apparently chairman Jim Doyle has been working away on this one with ATEED – the Auckland council's tourism and events organisation.

They must be pretty pleased with the outcome too, especially given the demise of the Auckland Nines.

The best news of all as far as I am concerned is that it means all our home matches will be played in Auckland.

Continued on next page...

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



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I appreciate that the club wants to take the game to the rest of the country, but as a totally selfish supporter, I want to get too as many games live as I can.

The downside of all this is that the “membership”, that’s season-tickets to you and me, is still based on 11 home games – so the double-header is excluded, although members will get a chance to buy seats before tickets go on general sale.

That is expected to happen late next month.

If anyone cares, the other double-headers are Souths v Manly, and Parramatta v Cronulla on March 24, and Melbourne v Gold Coast and Manly v Brisbane on May 12.

[REGISTER YOUR INTEREST - Click Here](#)

Hingano Hissy-fit

Back in May the media was full of stories about promising Vodafone Warrior Ata Hingano being eagerly sought by other clubs. Given that we knew we were losing Kieran Foran to the Doggies, this news was about as welcome at Mt Smart as the Melbourne Storm, who happened to be one of the clubs said to be interested in the youngster, with the Cowboys and Broncos the others.

At the time Hingano said he wanted to stay but a move to secure a better first-grade chance was not out of the question.

In June fans of the Tongan international were relieved when he signed a new deal.

Also putting pen to paper at that time was Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad, another one for the future.

Hingano’s deal was to the end of the 2020 season, and we were told he was willing to bide his time, although he did want assurances he would feature next year.

But come the weekend, agent Peter Brown was warning Hingano would be off if we signed Blake Green from Manly.

“If he is going to be third or fourth wheel then he might as well look elsewhere,” Brown told the Herald on Sunday. “We told the Warriors that when he re-signed. If they did sign Green we would have to re-evaluate.”

That’s pretty clear.

But hold on a minute, Warriors chief executive Cam-

eron George was just as clear: “Ata is a big part of the club - he was extended because we see him as a big part of our future.”

Now here’s the thing. Te Maire Martin.

We were dead set to add his signature, remember. Did we? No.

When we didn’t, I had a bit of a wobbly about it, but if we had, what message would it have sent Hingano?

We passed on Martin, although the conspiracy theorists will tell you it was for this reason or that.

Passing on Green, if he were actually available, might be a bad idea, given he can cover for Shaun Johnson or Ata.

But one thing is for sure. You don’t get to tell the Warriors who they can and can’t sign Ata, and playing it out in the media is not actually the smartest strategy available.

Let’s go back to May, when it was said the Storm wanted him to replace Cooper Cronk, the best in the business.

You think the Storm need Cronk’s permission to sign his replacement.

No, me neither.

Storm Grab Old Boy

Good luck to the bloke, in the worst kept league story of the moment, Ryan Hoffman has signed with his former masters, the Melbourne Storm.

The 33-year-old former Vodafone Warrior and ace goal-kicker looks like being a ready-made replacement for Tohu Harris, who is of course headed to us.

It’s quite a nice end for the bloke – assuming this one-year deal is his last – since he already has 245 games at the Storm between 2003-10 and 2012-14, including five grand finals.

They don’t get too many wrong at the Storm, and they have also signed Patrick Kaufusi, Felise Kaufusi’s younger brother.

They certainly needed to, having lost Harris to us, Jordan McLean to the Cowboys and Slade Griffin to Newcastle.

Storm boss Dave Donaghy said Hoffman would bring experience and leadership, which is pretty-much what we said when he came to Mt Smart.



*By Shane Hurndell
Hawke's Bay Today
Sports Reporter*

Kahuranaki Create History In Bay

HISTORY MAKERS: Kahuranaki players celebrate their first Hawke's Bay premier rugby league title on Saturday. PHOTO/HAWKE'S BAY TODAY

HOW APPROPRIATE it was that one half of Kahuranaki's father-son combination should have such a major influence on the club's first taste of Hawke's Bay premier rugby league grand final title glory on Saturday.

"That try was for him. Dad deserved a title in his last game," Kahuranaki winger Titiana Araia-Waaka said as he pointed to his father and captain Boy Waaka jnr.

Just minutes earlier Araia-Waaka, a 16-year-old St John's College year 11 student who is in his first season of league had scored a last minute try to give his team a thrilling 20-18 victory against defending champions Bridge Pa at the Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park in Hastings. Twelve months earlier Kahuranaki had won the reserve grade title.

Prop and player-coach Waaka jnr, 37, announced before the final it will be his last appearance as a player as he wanted to make coaching his priority. Shortly after the prizegiving Waaka jnr was on the phone telling his father Boy Waaka snr, a former Te Whatuiapiti Warriors player who is based in Australia, the good news. No doubt he would have been proud of his son and grandson's exploits.

Kahuranaki trailed 10-0 at halftime and 14-6 six minutes into the second half. Former Hawke's Bay NZNBL basketball player Czebalos Smiler, who played at scrumhalf for the winners, was at the top of their list of heroes with a hat-trick. Close behind him was Waaka's brother and hooker Sironen Waaka who shone with his darts from dummy half and huge defensive workrate.

Former Magpies rugby speedster Shannan Chase, who played fullback, was safe under the high ball and produced some quality offloads in the slippery con-

ditions. Both of Kahuranaki's centres Kody Lancaster and Joe Phillips operated well.

Waaka and fellow prop Wes Rapana were powerful on the carry. Prop Ramiha Smiler was the best of the Bridge Pa forwards and deserved his two tries. Secondrower Ivan Bellamy had some memorable patches.

Fullback Jarome Mareikura and winger Harris Solomon made the most of their limited opportunities in the Bridge Pa backline. Former Magpies halfback Isaac Paewai was a busy substitute for Bridge Pa and did well to put Solomon away for his 34th minute try.

"Kahuranaki deserved their title. We made a few mistakes and Kahuranaki came to play. But we will be back next year," Bridge Pa co-coach George Hokianga said.

The best quote of the day came from Kahuranaki stalwart Tom Harrison. "We play clean and we play with mana."

He was bang on and both teams deserve praise for the tremendous sportsmanship they displayed during the nailbiter and after the final whistle.

Bridge Pa beat Tamatea 24-6 in the women's grand final and Maraenui beat Bridge Pa 30-12 in the reserve grade grand final. The Maraenui side was coached by 79-year-old Waka Leonard the most successful Hawke's Bay club coach who has more than 15 premier grand final titles on his CV.

Rugby League Hawke's Bay chairman Mike Tamati was thrilled New Zealand Rugby League's Well-Being and Women's Development manager Luisa Avaiki, a world championship-winning Kiwi Fern, was among the guests on the day.



By Miles Davis

Puig Aubert

RUGBY LEAGUE has had its fair share of characters but none more enigmatic than French legend Puig Aubert.

He was born Robert Aubert Puig in Germany on 24 March 1925. As a young man he moved to Carcassonne in France with his French father and German mother. Originally playing Rugby Union he switched to league in 1944 when the Vichy Government fell (they had banned Rugby League and seized its assets). He signed for his local club AS Carcassonne and made his debut that season as a teenager.

With several other players also having the surname Puig, the local paper put his name back to front and it stuck. A goal-kicking full-back he was to help his local club win 5 championship titles (along with 4 runners-up appearances) as well as 4 Lord Derby Cups (the French Rugby League knockout cup).

After 10 years with AS Carcassonne he moved to rivals XIII Catalan where his form fluctuated, along with his weight, and it was a less successful time although he did win another French Championship with them in 1957.

He was given the nickname Pipette which referred to his legendary love of smoking, he would often light up during a game. Once in a game against Wigan, played in blizzard-like conditions, he caught the ball in one hand whilst holding a lit cigarette in the other. A controversial character he would occasionally refuse to tackle an opponent if he thought it would show up an error of a team-mate. He was also known to drink up to 3 glasses of wine at half time and occasionally leave a mocking poem under the opposition goal-posts after scoring a try.

It was with the French national side that he really crafted his legend. He played 46 games (27 tests) at a time when French rugby league was on a high. He was imperious in his country's 1951 tour to Australasia. He captained the side, playing 25 games and scoring 221 points. The French beat Australia 2-1 in the test series with Aubert kicking 18 goals from 18 attempts.

After a successful Australian leg of the tour the French came to New Zealand and suffered a dramatic 16-15 loss to the Kiwis in Auckland. It was a game touted as the most violent in the history of the game with George Menzies and Jimmy Haig both taken off after vicious head-butts. Despite being down to 11 men the Kiwis grabbed victory with a Des White penalty in the last minute.

In 1954 he captained France in the very first Rugby League World Cup and in the opening game, against the Kiwis, kicked the first penalty in World Cup history as well as the first dropped goal.

In 1969 he became a French National selector and held that position for the next decade. In 1988 he was inducted into the Rugby League Hall of Fame.

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He was diagnosed with lung cancer in the late 1980's and passed away in 1994 after suffering a heart attack.

He is regarded as a sporting icon in France, especially in his beloved Carcassonne where in 2000 they unveiled a 300lb statue of him outside the Stade Albert Domec.

They don't make them like Puig Aubert anymore.

Puig Aubert leads France to a 26-15 win in first ever test v Australia on Australian soil.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgrvoHib3dQ>

Puig Aubert and the French demolish Australia in the 3rd test 1951

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRbxSkWoFJs>

France v England at Parc Des Princes. Puig Aubert kicks penalties and dropped goal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oofYxGFkyek>

1954 World Cup Final France v Great Britain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwUV2Y30JVM>



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THE DECISIONS of Andrew Fifita and Jason Taumalolo to join the Tongan World Cup team has added some extra spice to the coming tournament. Depending on the Tongan results, the Australians may not play them in the tournament until the Final, but New Zealand certainly will in the Group stages. Going into their match at Hamilton on 11 November, both New Zealand and the Tongans should be unbeaten and if this is the case, the result of the clash will decide who tops Group B. The winner of Group B will probably meet France or Lebanon in the Quarter Finals and if they come through this, England would be the likely semi final opponent. So the winner of Group B would have a good chance of reaching the final, but the second placed team, would appear to have Australia as a semi final opponent. Of course to play in the semi final, they would have to defeat the winner of Group D (Fiji, USA or Italy) in the Quarter Finals.

But without looking too far ahead, Hamilton is certainly the place to be on Saturday 11 November. As well as Taumalolo and Fifita, the Tongans have many other top class players. Men like Will Hopoate, Konrad Hurrell, Michael Jennings, Sam Moa, Daniel Tupou and Solomone Kata will be up for the challenge and so will the Kiwis. With forwards such as Adam Blair, Martin Taupau, Jared Waerea-Hargreaves, Russell Packer, Ken Bromwich and Simon Mannering in their squad, the Kiwis definitely have the firepower to match the Tongan pack. Add to this the skill and brilliance of Shaun Johnson and it is obvious what a match awaits us in Hamilton. This is a real crowd pleasing fixture, while the TV rating figures should also be high. While the spotlight will be on New Zealand and Tonga in Group B, Samoa should not be forgotten. With Frank Pritchard, Bunty Afoa, Leeson Ah Mau, Josh Papalii and Ken Maumalo among the NRL men in their squad, they will be more than competitive.

When the Fijian team was named on Saturday, Jarryd Hayne received most of the media coverage, but they have also included Kane Evans, Apisai Koroisau, the Sims brothers Ashton and Korbin, Akuila Uate and captain Kevin Naiqama. They should do well in Group D.

At the time of writing, Wayne Bennett had not named the English team, as he was waiting till after the Super League Grand Final between Castleford and Leeds on Monday our time.

Aussie rugby fans were happy when the Wallabies beat Argentina 37-20 on Sunday morning in our part of the world. The win resulted in the Australians finishing second behind the All Blacks and in front of South Africa, in this year's Rugby Championship. Former Melbourne Storm winger, Marika Koroibete scored one of the Wallabies five tries. He now has three tries from his three rugby Tests. Wallaby captain, Michael Hooper has played every minute of Australia's nine Tests this season. The match against Argentina was 25 year old Hooper's 74th Test. By the time the Wallabies return to Sydney at the end of November, following their European Spring tour, Hooper will have flown around 70,000 kilometres in 66 days. The Wallabies left Sydney on 22 September for Johannesburg and then they had to fly on to Bloemfontein for the Test against South Africa on 30 September (27-all). Next they went across the Atlantic to Buenos Aires and on to Mendoza for Sunday's game with Argentina. They then make the long trek home to Australia where most of the players will have a few days rest before taking on the All Blacks in Brisbane on 21 October. But there will be no rest this coming week for Hooper as he has to go to Fiji for his brother, Richard's wedding. In late October the team flies to Japan for the Test with the locals on 4 November and then on to Britain where they play, Wales (11 November), England (18 November) and Scotland (25 November).

I was looking at a list of cricket's top 10 Test wicket takers recently. Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan, known as Murali, heads this list with 800 wickets from his 133 Tests. That is an average of just over six wickets in each Test. Australia's Shane Warne is second with 708 victims in 145 Tests, average 4.9. Then comes Anil Kumble, Glen McGrath, Courtney Walsh, James Anderson, Kapil Dev, Richard Hadlee, Shaun Pollock, Harbhajan Singh and Dale Steyn. Although he is eighth on the list, Hadlee, along with Murali are the only ones who have an average of more than five wickets per Test. The Kiwi has 431 wickets from 86 Tests which gives him an average of over five.

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Congratulations to Cronulla's 23 year old Nathan Walker, who became the first Australian ever to play in America's professional Ice Hockey League. Playing for the Washington Capitals in the NHL (National Hockey League) on Saturday night in Washington against the Montreal Canadiens, Walker scored one of his team's goals in their 6-1 win. Born in Wales, Walker came to Australia with his family when he was two and grew up in Cronulla, where he was a good junior Rugby League player in the Sharks competitions. He spent several of his teenage years playing ice hockey in the Czech Republic before being drafted by the Capitals in 2014. Walker joins Luc Longley (NBA), Joe Quinn (MLB) and Colin Ridgway (NFL) as Australian sporting firsts in top American sports. Longley, who played five years with Michael Jordan at the Chicago Bulls, as well as Minnesota, Phoenix and the New York Knicks, is now 48, while both Quinn and Ridgway are dead. Born in Queensland, Quinn died in 1940, aged 75. He played Major League Baseball from 1884 to 1901 with St. Louis and Washington. A Victorian, Ridgway passed away in 1993 aged 56. He played for the Dallas Cowboys in 1965.



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1954 Lions Should Inspire 2017 Kiwis

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)



IF DAVID Kidwell's grossly under-strength Kiwis need inspiration on the eve of the World Cup they should look to the deeds of the 1954 Great Britain team at the inaugural tournament in France. Despite those Lions being reduced to rank outsiders by the absence of more than 20 top class players – twice as many as the Kiwis have lost through defections, suspensions and injuries – their young and inexperienced team brought home the Cup in triumph.

By October 1954 Britain's finest footballers were either exhausted or disillusioned, or both.

They had slogged their way through the 1953-54 northern winter season before embarking on a 32-match tour of Australia and New Zealand. Almost before they knew it they were back into another tough home season, sometimes playing two or three times a week. The prospect of a French-inspired World Cup simply did not appeal. Other reasons have also been offered.

The 1954 tour Down Under was marred by unruly on-field behaviour, culminating with the match against NSW being abandoned by the referee as most of the players brawled around him. The deciding third Test had been lost to the Kangaroos 20-16 and a 2-1 series victory in New Zealand was scant consolation. Even in the last game, against Auckland, the Lions were condemned for their brutal methods in near crippling New Zealand fullback Des White.

It has been reported some British players were subsequently disciplined for their behaviour on tour, and that others withdrew from World Cup contention in protest. Sound familiar with recent happenings involving the Kiwis? Legend has it that a total of 23 players made themselves unavailable and two more were injured. Some dismissed the World Cup as a "tin pot tournament" devised by the despised French. Only three of the 26 players who had toured Australasia remained when the team crossed the Channel.

Favouritism was shared by Australia, on the basis of its Ashes success, and France, which had home advantage and the infectious enthusiasm of FRL president Paul Barriere, the World Cup founder who had been a resistance fighter during World War II. New Zealand was also confident after back-to-back Test series wins over Australia in 1952-53. The depleted British were the outsiders. As it transpired, both southern hemisphere nations were to be found short of a gallop two months into their off-seasons.

Great Britain was operating on an impossible budget. After two training runs in England it was learned there were insufficient funds for coach Joe Egan to go to France. While the other three countries were outfitted in smart blazers, the Lions had no proper uniforms. They also travelled around France on an old bus with some of the petrol money being provided by newspapers so their reporters could tag along.

When the Lions reached Paris for the final against France they found their training ground was locked and lacking equipment. After players and reporters had climbed the fence the journalists rolled their overcoats into bundles so they could be used as footballs. By then they had become a very special group of men, bonded by adversity.

Just as David Kidwell has done with Adam Blair, the British looked to the far north for their captain. Huddersfield loose forward Dave Valentine was a proud Scotsman who proved to be an inspirational leader. Not only was he captain, but also coach and head trainer. Yet Britain beat Australia 28-13 and New Zealand 26-6 and drew 13-13 with France in the round-robin before beating the French 16-12 in an absorbing final which was televised live by the BBC throughout Britain. While the rest of the country celebrated, the players who had stayed home were gobsmacked.

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Nor will 2017 be the first time a New Zealand World Cup team has experienced the shock withdrawal of its most celebrated forward. In 2008 Sonny Bill Williams not only fled his Canterbury-Bankstown club to play rugby union in France but also left the Kiwis in Cup year. Considering SBW's poor international record (in rugby league) it might actually have benefited the Kiwis by depriving the Kangaroos of an obvious man to target in the final.

The comparatively unheralded David Fa'alogo, Bronson Harrison and Jeremy Smith were the backrowers for the final. They all contributed magnificently as the Kiwis recovered from a 10-point deficit to stun the Australians 34-20. David Kidwell knows all about that. He might not have actually played in the final – though Adam Blair, Simon Mannering and Thomas Leuluai did -- but the current coach was also in the only New Zealand squad to have won a World Cup.

Footnote: There were no fairy tale finishes to a couple of finals last weekend. Castleford's 91-year wait for a maiden British championship continues after Leeds won the Super League Grand Final 24-6 before a capacity Old Trafford crowd. Castleford went into the game without star fullback Zak Hardaker, who was suspended for breaching team protocols. At Mount Smart, Akarana retained the national provincial title with a 30-4 victory over surprise but courageous finalist Waikato, while Counties-Manakau romped away 64-4 with the promotion-relegation match against Bay of Plenty.

Canterbury Rugby League

Senior Prize-giving Awards Evening

Date: Friday October 27th

**Location:
Hornby Workingmen's Club**

Time: 6.30pm start

Dress code: smart casual

Cost: \$50/person



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Akarana Win Second Successive National Premiership Title

By Brooke Hurdell
NZRL

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS, Akarana Falcons have done it again cementing their second successive National Premiership title over Waikato, 30-4.

The Falcons put a lid on Waikato's hopes of a fairy-tale finish with a clinical game of footy at Mt Smart Stadiumtonight.

Despite Waikato being presented with the first opportunity to put four points on the board in the first three minutes, the Aucklanders made excellent work of beating them to it. Following back-to-back sets of six and a knock on from Waikato Captain, Aaron Jolley, Akarana's Siliga Kepaoa crossed the line for the first try of the game, shortly converted by Mark Graham, 6-0.

Relentless defense from Waikato just wasn't enough to stop the force of Akarana who got another try on the board minutes later to push the score out to 12-0 following another successful conversion from Mark Graham.

A massive set of six from Waikato saw them gear up for their first try but a stray pass that missed the hands of their right-hand winger had Akarana turn the ball over. Waikato continued to match Akarana set for set but just couldn't quite convert the several opportunities they did have into points.

Coming out of halftime with a 12-0 lead, Akarana caught Waikato napping to put another four points on the scoreboard, once again successfully converted by Mark Graham, 18-0. That was shortly followed by a try from their captain, Philip Kingi that after a conversion, took the score to 24-0.

A sin-bin for Waikato captain, Aaron Jolley, was then matched by Akarana when their star second-rower, Daniel Reuelu-Bachanan was binned too. It was Wai-

kato that took full advantage of the situation when they scored their first well deserved four-pointer of the night in Eric Taiulu. An unsuccessful conversion meant that would be the last points the visitors would put on the board.

Akarana dealt Waikato their final blow in the last 10 minutes with Cole Waaka getting across the line, and Graham successful with his boot to make the final score 30-4.

Although they fell short of creating a fairy-tale finish, Waikato captain, Aaron Jolley was impressed with his team's performance considering it was only last year they were promoted into the National Premiership.

"We're super proud just to get into the final with the big boys and our province is proud of us too so we're happy with the campaign we've had this year,"

"The brotherhood is as strong as ever with some new blood in our team – we'll be back next year to have another crack," Jolley said.

Lifting the champions' shield for the second straight year, Akarana's captain Philip Kingi was quick to thank his opposition.

"I'd like to thank Waikato for a great game, they really deserved to be here and the score doesn't quite reflect their efforts this year,"

"We play a lot of footy together so it was just a matter of stringing together our plays and I think we managed to do that tonight," Kingi said.

MVP of the match: Taylor Daniels - Akarana

1st/2nd : Akarana v Waikato - October 7, Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland, 7.30pm

Akarana Falcons 30 (Siliga Kepaoa, Daniel Reuelu-Buchanan, Taylor Daniels, Philip Kingi, Cole Waaka tries; Mark Graham 5, goals) **Waikato 4** (Eric Taiulu try)

Kiwis Association Luncheon

Last Sunday the Kiwis association held a luncheon in Auckland. Here are some photos of the ex Kiwi players and management in attendance.



5 ex kiwis who all played for the Ellerslie Eagles Gary Kemble, Ken Stirling, Graham Brown, Bruce Castle, Murray Eade and Grahame Coutts.



Alex Hayton the CEO OF NZRL addressing the gathering at the kiwi association luncheon.



Ex kiwi Jason Lowrie and Ruben Wiki former kiwis captain and rugby league legend.



Dean Bell ex kiwi and captain of the kiwis with his cousin ex kiwi Clayton friend 2 legend of the game.



Ex kiwi John Wilson & Eric Carson ex kiwi.



Ex Kiwis & Warriors Jerry Suesue & Jerome Ropati.



Ex kiwi John Wilson, ex kiwi Bruce Castle, NZRL chairman Reon Edwards and ex kiwi Graham Brown.



Ex kiwis Ray Williams and Paddy Tuimavave.



Ex kiwis Tea Ropati & James Leuluai (his son Thomas is in the RLWC2017 team).

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Kiwis Association Luncheon



Graeme Coutts (ex kiwis trainer 1969-1983, Ray Haffenden ex kiwis manager from 1990-1995, ex kiwi Graeme Farrar, Brian Keane treasurer kiwis association.



Ex kiwi & ex Tonga coach Mike McClennan & his son Brian McClennan a winning ex kiwis coach, his team beat Australia 24-0 in Leeds in 2005. And ex kiwi Monty Betham now working for sky tv covering the league.



Ray Cranch the oldest living ex kiwi, 94, and one of the nicest guys you will ever meet. With Graeme Farrar kiwi number who over from the Gold Coast to be at the luncheon.



Rugby legend Stacey Jones who captain the kiwis in 2002, ex kiwi Tony Tuimavav, ex kiwi Brent Web and ex kiwi Francis Leota.



Selwn Pearson ex chairman of NZRL plus ex chairman of the ARL and Gary Whittle president ARL and ex referee.



Francis Leota, Mike Paton and Paddy Tuimavavy



These ex kiwis are all from the 1950s era Tom Hadfield, Don Hammond, Duncan McCrae, Roy Moore, Allan Reikelman and sitting is the oldest living Kiwi Ray Cranch.



Tom Hadfield played for the kiwis from 1956 -1961 and played in two Rugby League World cups with his son Mark.



Trevor Maxwell ex chairman of NZRL and Shane Cooper.

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Kiwis Association Luncheon



Ex kiwis Gus Fepuleai, Barry Dyer and Shane Varley.



Two former Kiwis and Ellerslie Eagles players Ken Stirling former captain and Murray Eade a former vice captain.



Ex kiwi Nolan Tupaea and former International rugby league referee Neville Kesha. Who penalised Wally Lewis at Lang park for swearing at him. Refereed 11 games and 7 matches.



John Bray ex kiwi, manager and board member. Allen McLaughlin former rugby league commentator who was part of 8 overseas tours and 21 years of Warriors commentary. Jim Campbell former NZRL board member and Kiwis manager.



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Hi Pete,

BIG THANKS to you and BLK from the U6 Spartan Mangere Hawks for these great Kiwi Tees!!!

Tasha Tasmania - Mangere East Rugby League Club

DOING NOTHING on Saturday night? Pop over to Waiheke for a great night with a Kiwi legend Kevin Greaves



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