

# RLWC 2017

## Sir Peter Leitch Club Newsletter

1<sup>st</sup> November 2017

# #194



Issac Liu on the move.



Leeson Ah Mau and Russel Packer embrace.



Roger Tuivasa-Sheck scores a try.



Shaun Johnson scores a try.

Photos courtesy of [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

# Chalk Up Win Number One

By David Kemeys

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



**T**HAT IS the first hurdle out of the way, and it is the usual story.

The optimists are pointing out that the boys scored seven tries to two, totally dominated a pretty good looking Samoa side in the second half, and that all you have to do is win.

The pessimists are banging on about the high error rate, and they have a point.

Kiwis coach David Kidwell gave his players a pass mark after the 38-8 win.

"I give everyone a pass mark, for the effort and grit," Kidwell said.

That seems a bit harsh on a couple of players in particular, the first and most obvious being Nelson Asofa-Solomona, who was exceptional off the bench, and scored quite amazing try, sticking out an arm and forcing the ball despite the attention of a number of tacklers.

Kodi Nikorima scored a smart try off a Shaun Johnson kick, and looked really comfortable alongside the much-criticised Warriors halfback.

Brad Takairangi also looked really good, and he runs on to the ball like an extra forward.

I would certainly argue that we have to be a bit smarter around some of our decisions, and we need to clean up the error rate, but I am not particularly worried about that, because they will get better as the competition goes along.

Keep in mind too that we did not play a warm-up game, so some of the combinations were a bit rusty, and they can only get better the longer the boys are in camp.

Two tries in the first 20 calmed the nerves, and it never looked likely that Samoa would put enough together to haul that in.

They were brave, and hard – as they always are – but they just lacked the cutting edge they needed, and in the second half in particular, frankly, they were woeful.

"We showed that good brotherhood and we're trying to make everyone belong," Kidwell said.

"I've talked a lot about the style of football, it was our first game and a lot of players hadn't played a lot. We've got some things to do better and the guys have recognised that."

You can not say fairer really.

Seventeen errors is just not good enough, and our completion rate left a bit to be desired too, but as I say, they will get better.

Except Gerard Beale, poor bugger.

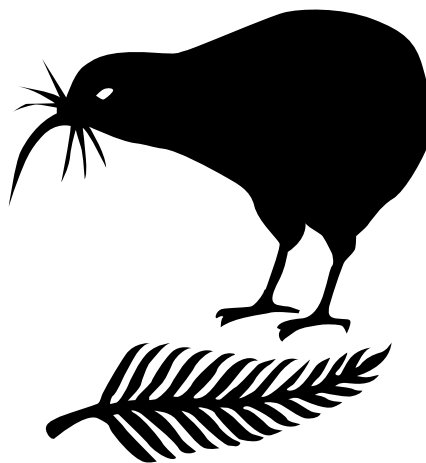
What a freak injury that was.

A broken tibia and a broken fibula, the inevitable surgery, and the end to his tournament...not to mention putting a pretty big cloud over his future at the Vodafone Warriors, since he is one of the players coach Stephen Kearney has brought in, and would have been relying on to turn things around.

One of the men in the squad who Kidwell will be looking to, is also destined for Mt Smart. Peta Hiku can play in the centres, and Kidwell also has the reliable Dean Whare too, and there is a player who never lets you down.

Next up is Scotland in Christchurch on Saturday, then Tonga in Hamilton.

New Zealand 38 (Jordan Rapana, Johnson, Takairangi, Nikorima, Isaac Liu, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Asofa-Solomona tries; Johnson 5 goals). Samoa 8 (Ken Maumalo, Joseph Paulo tries).



**NEW ZEALAND  
RUGBY LEAGUE™**



### Lock 'Em Up – Tossers

Just as well I am not a judge because the seven pitch invaders arrested at Saturday night's Rugby League World Cup match in Auckland would be in big trouble if they were appearing before me.

Good on the police for issuing a stern warning to anyone tempted to follow suit.

One of those arrested was only 15 for goodness sake.

Six have been charged with pitch invasion and the 15-year-old has been sent to Youth Aid.

It's not like it is going to happen, but you can actually be fined up to \$5000 or even get jailed for three months for this.

Under the Major Events Management Act, it is an offence to go on to the pitch or throw objects on to the ground at a major sporting event.

### David Kidwell Impresses

It is no secret I am one of those who thinks David Kidwell has had the dirty end of the stick.

So when he walked into the Kiwis Lunch last Friday I could not help but be impressed.

Dressed for training, he took the stage for just a few minutes to tell the audience he wanted to be there to salute those people who had given of their time – not to mention money – by supporting the event.

I thought it said a lot about the guy, who obviously had a lot on his plate preparing his charges for the game against Samoa.

### Physio Makes A big Effort

Another person who was at the lunch who impressed me greatly was one time Vodafone Warriors physio-therapist Gill Dunn.

She travelled up from Ashburton because she has attended other lunches, but especially because she wanted to support Sir Pete.

Straight after the lunch it was into a cab for a trip to the airport to return home., but not before passing on her Samoa v Kiwis ticket to another guest, so that person could take a family member along to the game.

Then she also sent Peter this email: *A huge thank you to you and your team for a brilliant lunch yesterday for the Legends of Kiwi League. As you know I just came up to Auckland for the day, and*

*I'm so pleased I did, with such a great opportunity to catch up with players and staff from my time working in league. You do an amazing job of organising events that keep people connected and celebrating the game we all love.*

How good is that?

### Lowie Chips In

I have not always agreed with what former Kiwis coach Graham Lowe has had to say, but I thoroughly enjoyed his impassioned plea for league fans to support the tournament.

And I was just as impressed when he too took the time to thank Pete by email.

*Mate what a great event your luncheon was. Thank you so much for inviting me and so many others.*

*You may not realise it mate, but your efforts have done much to really invigorate many who have worn the Kiwi badge. Seeing some of those former players there yesterday was humbling. But what also can't be underestimated is the fantastic enjoyment and opportunities your luncheon provided for so many fans.*

*Watching some of them chatting to these former great players really was inspirational. The sheer effort of many of those former greats to get to work, then to training and then play for the Kiwis against all odds and for no financial reward, is a reminder to all of us what it means to be a Kiwi.*

*You my old mate, once again, brought it all together at yesterday's lunch, and delivered memories that won't be forgotten.*

Graham Lowe ONZM, QSM

### Beale Injury A Cruel Blow

At the time of writing Kiwis management were still exploring if they might be able to bring in a replacement for Gerard Beale, who broke his tibia and fibula in Saturday night's game.

Poor Beale had surgery on Sunday morning and came through it well, but he must be absolutely gutted.

They won't be chuffed at the Vodafone Warriors either, given he is one of the players coach Stephen Kearney has brought in to help him turn our struggling club around.

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No one is quite sure just how long the injury will sideline Beale.

The Kiwis are seeking clarification over whether they can bring someone in as a replacement.

“We thought we could bring someone in, but we have to follow up on that process,” Kidwell said.

We do have Dean Whare, who I really like as a player – fierce, committed, and never lets you down.

We also have another one of Kearney’s signings, in Peta Hiku, a pretty good option at centre too.

Beale’s injury was a one of those totally freakish ones. No one was within miles of him when he went down, and it is possible the breaks actually happened earlier, when he was involved in a try-saving tackle on the line, because you could see him limping straight after that.

### **Jake Trbojevic Ruled Out**

The Kangaroos have not escaped the injury curse either, with forward Jake Trbojevic ruled out of the remainder of the cup after suffering a pectoral injury in their win over England.

“Jake has been a fantastic representative of the Kangaroos and this is obviously disappointing for him,” Coach Mal Meninga said.

Disappointing for the tournament too, because the Manly player was one of the best on show for the Aussies.

### **Hayne Makes History**

Depending on your viewpoint, superstar or arsehole Jarryd Hayne became the equal greatest try-scorer in Rugby League World Cup history when Fiji flogged the USA 58-12.

Hayne is now on 13 World Cup tries, equal with Bob Fulton, and odds on to overtake him now.

Hayne also set up two first half tries, while Kevin Naiqama, Taane Milne and Suliiasi Vunivalu each had doubles in the 11 tries to two slaughter.

### **I Didn’t See That Coming**

Credit where it is due, Lebanon have won their first ever Rugby League World Cup game, beating France 29-18.

Mitchell Moses scored 13 points, including a solo try and a field goal.

With the scores locked at 18 all and under seven minutes remaining, he drilled a field goal from 35 metres, then minutes later did a great chip and chase to score.

It was the nation’s first victory in a Rugby League World Cup match after previously playing in the 2000 edition without tasting success

Ireland were too good for Italy, winning 36-12, so they will be celebrating too. PNG gave Wales a lesson 50-6, which was no surprise, and Tonga demolished Scotland 50-4, which wasn’t either.



**I**WENT UP the hospital on Monday to see injured Kiwi player & and new Vodafone Warrior Gerard Beale. He broke his fibula & tubular just above the ankle when he collided with Peter Mata’utia. The good news he is out of hospital and will be staying on in Auckland as he doesn’t want to fly back to Sydney until his injury is 100%. I thought it was fantastic this group of Samoan players came to cheer him up. We had a good old laugh together it’s what you call sharing the rugby league love. Gerard appreciates all the people that have wished him well on social media he is now dedicated to getting himself right for the 2018 Vodafone Warriors Season.

- Sir Peter Leitch



# At the Kiwis First RLWC2017 Game Against Samoa



2 former kiwis entertain the crowd in the lounge at half time under the watchful eye of the butcher.



3 former Kiwis and good men; Graeme West (17 tests), Howie Tamati (24 tests and NZRL President) and Tawera Nikau (19 test and NZRL Board member).



John Grant (Australian Rugby League Commission Chairman and ex Aussie player) with our Jacinda Arden, Andrew Hill (CEO of the RLWC2017) and Andrea Nelson (NZ GM 2017RLWC).



Was nice to have our newly elected prime minister Jacind Ardern and the newly elected minister of sport Grant Robertson at the game.



Was great having these two former Kiwis at the test Graeme West & Howie Tamati.

We even had a rugby legend in the lounge at the game Michael Jones who had spoken to Samoan rugby league team earlier in the week he is a wonderful person.





# Crucial Changes In Key Pool B Clash In Hamilton

**T**OA SAMOA have been forced to make a change to their team to take on Mate Ma'a Tonga in the crucial Pool B clash at Waikato Stadium in Hamilton on Saturday, with Newcastle Knights back Peter Mata'utia having returned to Australia today with a quad injury.

Cronulla Sharks' Ricky Leutele comes onto the wing for Mata'utia in the Samoan side that is keen to avenge their error-riddled second half against New Zealand in Auckland in round one.

The Tongans have made several changes to their side with the major one being Solomone Kata coming in for fellow Tongan-born centre Konrad Hurrell. David Fusitu'a replaces former Warriors teammate Manu Vatuvai on the wing.

The clash is sure to draw a big crowd in Hamilton as the traditional rivals duel to grab the two points and hope to avoid a clash with most likely Australia in the quarter-finals.

In other team news:

The Australians will provide debuts to Tom Trbojevic (wing) and Reagan Campbell-Gillard (prop) in their starting line-up to take on France in the Friday night clash in Canberra (8pm kick-off). Josh Mansour also returns to the green and gold colours on the other wing and Cooper Cronk has been rested at halfback, with James Maloney taking the number seven jersey.

New Zealand will provide valuable match practice to several squad members, particularly in the backline which takes on a new look, in their clash against Scotland in Christchurch.

Dean Whare replaces the injured Gerard Beale (broken ankle) in the centre, Jason Nightingale and Peta Hiku, and Te Maire Martin comes in at five-eighth and the versatile Elijah Taylor will wear the number nine jersey.

## Australia v France, Friday 3 November, Canberra Stadium 8pm (AEDT)

### AUSTRALIA

- 1 Billy SLATER
- 2 Tom TRBOJEVIC
- 3 William CHAMBERS
- 4 Joshua DUGAN
- 5 Josh MANSOUR
- 6 Michael MORGAN
- 7 James MALONEY
- 8 Jordan MCLEAN
- 9 Cameron SMITH (c)
- 10 Reagan CAMPBELL-GILLARD
- 11 Wade GRAHAM
- 12 Tyson FRIZELL
- 13 Joshua MCGUIRE
- 14 Cameron MUNSTER
- 15 Felise KAUFUSI
- 16 Aaron WOODS

### 17 David KLEMMER

- 18 Valentine HOLMES
- 19 Matthew GILLET
- 20 Boyd CORDNER
- 21 Dane GAGAI

### FRANCE

- 1 Mark KHEIRALLAH
- 2 Fouad YAHA
- 3 Bastien ADER
- 4 Olivier ARNAUD
- 5 Ilias BERGAL
- 6 Remy MARGINET
- 7 Theo FAGES (c)
- 8 Maxime HEROLD
- 9 Eloi PELISSIER
- 10 Julian BOUSQUET
- 11 Benjamin GARCIA
- 12 Benjamin JULLIEN
- 13 Jason BAITIERI

- 14 Thibault MARGALET
- 15 Mickael ROUCH
- 16 Romain NAVARRETE
- 17 John BOUDEBZA
- 18 Lucas ALBERT
- 19 Antonio MARIA
- 20 Nabil DJALOUT
- 21 Lambert BELMAS

## New Zealand v Scotland, Saturday 4 November, Christchurch Stadium, 5pm (3pm AEDT)

### NEW ZEALAND

- 1 Roger TUIVASA-SHECK
- 2 Jason NIGHTINGALE
- 3 Dean WHARE
- 4 Bradley TAKAIRANGI
- 5 Peta HIKU
- 6 Te Maire MARTIN
- 7 Shaun JOHNSON

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- 8 Martin TAUPAU
- 9 Elijah TAYLOR
- 10 Jared WAEREA-HARGREAVES
- 11 Kenny BROMWICH
- 12 Joseph TAPINE
- 13 Adam BLAIR (c)
- 14 Nelson ASOFA-SOLOMONA
- 15 Russell PACKER
- 16 Addin FONUA-BLAKE
- 17 Danny LEVI
- 18 Thomas LEULIAI
- 19 Dallin WATENE ZELEZNIAK
- 20 Simon MANNERING
- 21 Jordan RAPANA

#### SCOTLAND

- 1 Alex WALKER
- 2 Lewis TIERNEY
- 3 Ben HELLEWELL
- 4 Lachlan STEIN
- 5 Matthew RUSSELL
- 6 Danny BROUGH (c)
- 7 Oscar THOMAS
- 8 Luke DOUGLAS
- 9 Danny ADDY
- 10 Ben KAVANAGH
- 11 Jarred ANDERSON
- 12 Dale FERGUSON
- 13 James BELL
- 14 Kane BENTLEY
- 15 Sam BROOKS
- 16 Brandan WILKINSON
- 17 Johnny WALKER
- 18 Andrew BENTLEY
- 19 Callum PHILLIPS
- 20 Shane TOAL
- 21 Frankie MARIANO

**Samoa v Tonga, Saturday 4 November, Waikato Stadium, Hamilton, 7.30pm (5.30pm AEDT)**

#### SAMOA

- 1 Young TONUMAIPEA
- 2 Ricky LEUTELE
- 3 Timoteo LAFAI
- 4 Joseph LEILUA
- 5 Ken MAUMALO
- 6 Joseph PAULO
- 7 Ben ROBERTS

- 8 Junior PAULO
- 9 Jazz TEVAGA
- 10 Herman ESE'ESE
- 11 Joshua PAPALII
- 12 Frank PRITCHARD (c)
- 13 Leeson AH MAU
- 14 Fa'amanu BROWN
- 15 Zane MUSGROVE
- 16 Sam LISONE
- 17 Bunty AFOA
- 18 Sam TAGATAESE
- 19 Frank WINTERSTEIN
- 20 Jarome LUAI
- 21 Matthew WRIGHT

#### TONGA

- 1 William HOPOATE
- 2 Daniel TUPOU
- 3 Michael JENNINGS
- 4 Solomone KATA
- 5 David FUSITU'A
- 6 Tuimoala LOLOHEA
- 7 Mafoa'aeata HINGANO
- 8 Andrew FIFITA
- 9 Siliva HAVILI
- 10 Sio Siua TAUKEIAHO
- 11 Manu MA'U
- 12 Sika MANU (c)
- 13 Jason TAUMALOLO
- 14 Sione KATO A
- 15 Sam MOA
- 16 Peni TEREPO
- 17 Ben MURDOCH-MASILA
- 18 Ukuma TA'AI
- 19 Manu VATUVEI
- 20 Konrad HURRELL
- 21 Samisoni LANGI

**England v Lebanon, Saturday 4 November, Sydney Football Stadium, 8pm (AEDT)**

#### ENGLAND

- 1 Jonny LOMAX
- 2 Jermaine MCGILLVARY
- 3 Kallum WATKINS
- 4 John BATEMAN
- 5 Ryan HALL
- 6 Gareth WIDDOP
- 7 Luke GALE
- 8 Chris HILL
- 9 Josh HODGSON

- 10 James GRAHAM
- 11 Ben CURRIE
- 12 Elliott WHITEHEAD
- 13 Sean O'LOUGHLIN (c)
- 14 Alex WALMSLEY
- 15 Chris HEIGHINGTON
- 16 Thomas BURGESS
- 17 James ROBY
- 18 George WILLIAMS
- 19 Mike McMEEKAN
- 20 Mark PERCIVAL
- 21 Stefan RATCHFORD

#### LEBANON

- 1 Daniel ABOU-SLEIMAN
- 2 Travis ROBINSON
- 3 Bilal MAARBANI
- 4 Adam DOUEIHI
- 5 Abbas MISKI
- 6 Mitchell MOSES
- 7 Robbie FARAH ©
- 8 Tim MANNAH
- 9 Michael LICHAA
- 10 Alex TWAL
- 11 Chris SAAB
- 12 Ahmad ELLAZ
- 13 Nick KASSIS
- 14 Mitchell MAMARY
- 15 Raymond MOUJALLI
- 16 Jamie CLARK
- 17 Jason WEHBE
- 18 Elias SUKKAR
- 19 Anthony LAYOUN
- 20 Andrew KAZZI
- 21 James ELIAS

**Italy v USA, Sunday 5 November, Townsville Stadium, 4pm (5pm EADT)**

#### ITALY

- 1 James TEDESCO
- 2 Mason CERRUTO
- 3 Justin CASTELLARO
- 4 Nathan MILONE
- 5 Josh MANTELLATO
- 6 Terry CAMPESE
- 7 Ryan GHIETTI
- 8 Paul VAUGHAN
- 9 Joseph TRAMONTANA

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10 Daniel ALVARO  
11 Joel RIETHMULLER  
12 Mark MINICHIELLO (c)  
13 Nathan BROWN  
14 Christopher CENTRONE  
15 Brendan SANTI  
16 Shannon WAKEMAN  
17 Jayden WALKER  
  
18 Gavin HISCOX  
19 Richard LEPORI  
20 Christophe CALEGARI  
21 Gioele CELERINO

#### USA

1 Corey MAKELIM  
2 Ryan BURROUGHS  
3 Junior VAIVAI  
4 Jonathan ALLEY  
5 Bureta FARAIMO  
6 Kristian FREED  
7 Tui SAMOA  
8 Eddy PETTYBOURNE  
9 David MARANDO  
10 Mark OFFERDAHL (c)  
11 Danny HOWARD  
12 Matt SHIPWAY  
13 Nicholas NEWLIN  
14 Sam TOCHTERMAN-TAL-BOTT  
15 Fotukava MALU  
16 Steve HOWARD  
17 Gabriel FARLEY  
  
18 Charles CORTALANO  
19 Joe EICHNER  
20 David ULCH  
21 Joshua RICE

**PNG v Ireland, Sunday 5 November, Oil Search National Stadium, Port Moresby, 4pm (??AEDT)**

#### PNG

1 David MEAD (c)  
2 Justin OLAM  
3 Kato OTTIO  
4 Nene MACDONALD  
5 Garry LO  
6 Ase BOAS  
7 Watson BOAS

8 Stanton ALBERT  
9 Kurt BAPTISTE  
10 Luke PAGE  
11 Rhyse MARTIN  
12 Willie MINOGA  
13 Paul AITON  
14 James SEGEYARO  
15 Wellington ALBERT  
16 Stargroth AMEAN  
17 Enock MAKI  
  
18 Moses MENINGA  
19 Lachlan LAM  
20 Nixon PUTT  
21 Wartovo PUARA

#### IRELAND

1 Scott GRIX  
2 Shannon McDONNELL  
3 Ed CHAMBERLAIN  
4 Michael MORGAN  
5 Liam KAY  
6 Api PEWHAIRANGI  
7 Liam FINN (c)  
8 1 Brad SINGLETON  
9 Michael MCILLORUM  
10 Kyle AMOR  
11 Louie McCARTHY-SCARS-BROOK  
12 Oliver ROBERTS  
13 George KING  
14 Tyrone MCCARTHY  
15 James HASSON  
16 Joe PHILBIN  
17 Anthony MULLALY  
  
18 Will HOPE  
19 Joe KEYES  
20 Matty HADDEN  
21 Jack HIGGINSON

**Fiji v Wales, Sunday 5 November, Townsville Stadium (double header), 6.30pm (7.30pm AEDT)**  
WALES

1 Elliot KEAR  
2 Rhys WILLIAMS  
3 Michael CHANNING  
4 Christiaan ROETS  
5 Regan GRACE  
6 Courtney DAVIES  
7 Danny ANSELL

8 Craig KOPCZAK (c)  
9 Steve PARRY  
10 Philip JOSEPH  
11 Rhodri LLOYD  
12 Joe BURKE  
13 Morgan KNOWLES  
14 Matty FOZARD  
15 Matthew BARRON  
16 Ben EVANS  
17 Dalton GRANT  
  
18 Josh RALPH  
19 Ben MORRIS  
20 Gavin BENNION  
21 Andrew GAY

#### FIJI

1 Kevin NAIQAMA (c)  
2 Suliasi VUNIVALU  
3 Taane MILNE  
4 Akuila UATE  
5 Marcelo MONTTOYA  
6 Jarryd HAYNE  
7 Henry RAIWALUI  
8 Ashton SIMS  
9 Apisai KOROISAU  
10 Eloni VUNAKECE  
11 Viliame KIKAU  
12 Brayden WILIAME  
13 Tui KAMIKAMICA  
14 Joe LOVODUA  
15 Jacob SAIFITI  
16 Junior ROQICA  
17 Ben NAKUBUWAI  
  
18 James STORER  
19 Pio SECI  
20 Salesi FAINGAA  
21 Sitiveni MOCEIDREKE





# WIN RLWC TICKETS

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KIWIS V TONGA IN HAMILTON**



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Manukau, Auckland  
New Zealand



Name:  
Address:  
Phone Number:  
Email:

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

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

**Competition Closes**

**Wed 8th of November at 12 Noon**

# World Cup 1985 to 1988

By Miles Davis



The 9th edition of the Rugby League World Cup took on a new format. The tournament would involve 5 nations, New Zealand, Australia, France, Great Britain and Papua New Guinea (who were making their first appearance at a World Cup) and be contested over a 4 year period, 1985 to 1988. Each side would play each other home and away over that period with a final played between the two top teams. The games would be part of scheduled tours with one game of the test series being nominated as doubling up as a World Cup clash.

The Kiwis long campaign started in spectacular style with an upset win over the Kangaroos at Carlaw Park. The foundation for the victory was set by Kiwi coach Graham Lowe who on the eve of the test dropped his squad off at the bottom of Queen Street and told them they were “going for a walk”. Unbeknownst to them he had rung several radio stations to let them know what would be happening and asking them to promote it to their listeners. The team began to walk up Queen St and as prop Kurt Sorensen recalled “We started walking as a team and soon it felt like the whole city came out to see us. People wanted to slap us on the back, shake our hands, went out of their way to talk to us. You can't describe that feeling unless you were there.” Lowe's plan seemed to have its desired effect and left him feeling confident “By the time we reached the Civic Theatre, I knew we would crush them, no matter who we were playing.” The side would also have been motivated by a cruel loss to a last minute John Ribot try just a week earlier.

The Kiwis were dominant winning 18-0 with Clayton Friend scoring a double, James Leuluai nabbing one and Olsen Filipaina kicking 3 goals. It was the first time the Kangaroos had been held scoreless for 67 years.

The Kiwis lost the away leg to the Kangaroos 32-12 but beat France away 22-0 (France were forced to forfeit all their away games in Australasia due to financial difficulties).

A trip to Papua New Guinea in 1986 saw one of the tournaments big upsets with the Kiwis going down 24-22 in Port Moresby. The shock loss saw coach Graham Lowe resign with his place taken by Tony Gordon. The home fixture against PNG was played in 1988 at Carlaw Park with the Kiwis gaining revenge 66-14.

The first World Cup game against Great Britain had been held in 1985 at Headingley resulting in a 6-6 draw (from memory the Poms were lucky to get that result with some key decisions going against the Kiwis). Other results during the qualifying period meant that the 1988 return leg in Christchurch would act as a decider for who would make the final to face Australia.

It was a tough affair in miserable conditions (trust me I was there). Great Britain needed just a draw to qualify so the Kiwis had to ensure victory in order to progress. Great Britain took an early lead and were looking good for the final until Gary Freeman came off the bench to score two tries and giving the Kiwis a 12-10 lead. The visitors had a couple of penalty attempts to give them the draw that would have seen them qualify for the final but were unable to convert and the home side became the team to progress.

The final was initially scheduled to be played in Australia but the ARL decided to give the final to New Zealand due to concerns about public interest in the game. The Aussies had been dominant for years and it was thought there would be greater interest if the game was held in NZ. Those thoughts proved correct as over 47,000 turned up at Eden Park to watch the final (this was the first rugby league game to be held at Eden Park since 1919 and the crowd is a record for a rugby league match in NZ).

The Kiwis were expectant as the game kicked off with a massive home crowd cheering them on but things soon took a downward turn. The Kangaroos flew out of the gates and were helped by several uncharacteristic errors from the Kiwis. Tries from Alfie Langer (2) and Gavin Miller saw the Kangaroos 21-0 up at half time. A further try to Dale Shearer saw the Kangaroo total move to 25 and although the Iro brothers (Tony and Kevin) managed a try each it was not enough as the Kangaroos prevailed 25-12.

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The game was ill-tempered with the Kiwis giving as good as they got but one of the main talking points of the game was the courage of Aussie skipper Wally Lewis. He had broken his arm in the 15th minute whilst tackling Tony Iro but played on for a further 25 minutes before being replaced at half-time by Terry Lamb.

The win gave Australia their 6th World Cup victory and their 3rd on the trot.

1988 World Cup Final New Zealand v Australia <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bshwsaO8QM>



Just got my new numberplates from Kiwi plates to show my support for the Vodafone warriors in 2018.



These two Warriors Fans love the butchers numberplates.

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

## Top Defensive Effort Kiwis

Photo: [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

**W**AY TO go Kiwis defensive coach Ben Gardiner!

That was my immediate thought as the final whistle blew on the Kiwis 38-8 win against Samoa in their World Cup opener at Auckland's Mount Smart Stadium on Saturday night. To restrict the Samoans to just two tries was an awesome effort by the Kiwis and although Aussie Gardiner had only been with the Kiwis less than three weeks before the match he deserves a decent sized chunk of the kudos for the victory.

It's no secret the Kiwis defensive systems have been far too leaky in recent times and it was pleasing to see improvement in that key aspect of the game. Perhaps security outfit Red Badge could employ Gardiner to coach some of their staff because their inability to cope with the seven pitch invaders was disgraceful.

Bring back the days when rugby league teams were paid to do security as fundraisers I say! Those pitch invasions weren't a good look on a memorable night.

It was awesome to have the Patea Maori Club perform their 1980s hit Poi E and the items by the Samoan cultural group were appropriate to the occasion. It was great to see former Kiwis and Samoa captain Olsen Filipaina do the ball presentation. Yes the crowd of just under 18,000 was disappointing but now Kiwis fans know their team can perform admirably there is no reason why capacity crowds of 18,600 and 25,000 can't be reached at their next pool matches against Scotland in Christchurch on Saturday night and against Tonga in Hamilton on November 11.

In addition to improving the security at pool games in New Zealand organisers need to make sure the tackle count is on display on the scoreboard and make sure the subs benches are covered in case of showers as was the case at Mount Smart on Saturday night. Now back

to the Kiwis performance.

Yes Kiwis assistant coach Brian Smith was right to point out at the post-match press conference their 17 errors were at least five to many and their set completion percentage of 62 was too low. Scotland will be the ideal opponents to improve these aspects of play against.

It was pleasing to see centre Brad Takairangi and forwards Isaac Liu and Nelson Asofa-Solomona score on debut. Asofa-Solomona was outstanding.

At the other end of the experience scale fellow forward Simon Mannering was again inspirational. Fullback Roger Tuivasa-Sheck was classy.

Experienced forward Jared Waerea-Hargreaves needs to improve his discipline. Conceding silly penalties like he did could prove the difference between winning and losing in closer encounters to come.

Defending champions Australia hardly got out of third gear in their Group A 18-4 win against England. They just did what they had to and will probably get away with this approach until semifinal time.

They will still be the team to beat no doubt about that. Fiji and Papua New Guinea proved they are serious contenders for semifinal berths with their respective wins against the United States and Wales as did Tonga with their romp against Scotland.

That Tonga-Kiwis clash in Hamilton is going to be a cracker. Kiwi rugby league fans need to get out and support their team.

World Cup matches don't come to our backyards that often so make the most of them when they are here.



Scotland rugby league captain Danny Brough and New Zealand captain Adam Blair. Photos: Grant Trouville/NRL Photos



By John Coffey

## Treat For Christchurch Fans

**S**OUTH ISLAND fans are in for a rare treat if, as expected, the Kiwis continue to develop their exiting “Kiwis style” football against the Scotland Bravehearts in Christchurch on Saturday. After a sloppy first half against Toa Samoa at Mount Smart last weekend they clicked through the gears to run away for a seven-try 38-8 victory in their opening World Cup fixture. That can now be filed away as the warm-up game they never had.

The Scots should be no match for the Kiwis, despite their thoroughly deserved 18-18 draw in last year’s Four Nations tournament. That was played on a rainy, freezing night in cheerless Workington on England’s north-east coast. Contrast the moderate debut of young Kiwis interchange forward Joe Tapine that night with his outstanding Man of the Match display in the second-row last Saturday in what was only his third Test.

Tapine would almost certainly not have been in the run-on team at Mount Smart had Kevin Proctor and Tohu Harris been available. Add in try-scoring debutants Brad Takairangi, Isaac Liu and Nelson Asofa-Solomona – plus energetic hooker Danny Levi, who also got over the Samoa goal-line but was held up – and we clearly have a new-look line-up to savour. True, the World Cup opposition will get better but so will the Kiwis.

Scotland, bruised and battered by the imposing Tongans at Cairns on Sunday, did not have the same depth of talent to replace NRL backs Euan Aitken, Lachlan Coote and Kane Linnett, who all played vital roles in the 2016 draw. Penrith playmaker Peter Wallace is also missing, as he was last year. That leaves Scotland’s long-serving talisman, stand-off half Danny Brough, to carry far too much of a burden on his admittedly sturdy shoulders.

Brough, who turns 35 in January, is one of Britain’s most celebrated players during a career with York, Hull, Castleford and Huddersfield. He holds many scoring records, won a Challenge Cup with Hull, was Super League’s 2013 Man of Steel, twice the Albert Goldthorpe Medal winner, twice in Super League Dream Teams, and is captaining his country at a third World Cup. In all, Brough has played more than 400 major games, scored more than 100 tries and kicked more than 1500 goals.

The nightmare of Workington will be a world away in Christchurch this week. The Kiwis are training at head coach David Kidwell’s former Hornby Panthers club. The Panthers are based at Leslie Park in a suburb synonymous with rugby league heroes starting with the late Mel Cooke, Canterbury’s Player of the Century. Weather forecasts predict a warm, fine week and the 5pm kick off on Saturday should ensure perfect playing conditions.

*Continued on next page...*



*Continued from previous page...*

I have written about Test matches in Christchurch since France toured in 1964. One that was truly unforgettable was the 28-12 victory over a strong 1984 Great Britain side. That was played in mid-winter on a muddy field. But the enduring memory is of a rampaging pack led by Kevin Tamati setting up tries for fleet-footed backs Dane O'Hara (two), James Leuluai, Dean Bell and captain Fred Ah Kuoi. Olsen Filipaina kicked four goals.

Coached by Graham Lowe, that was one of the greatest Kiwis teams of all time, also featuring the Sorensen brothers, Hugh McGahan and Howie Tamati. They won that Test series 3-0 against a touring team which included the brilliant Ellery Hanley, Andy Gregory, Joe Lydon and a tough forward pack led by captain Brian Noble, Andy Goodway and Mick Adams. We saw "Kiwis style" football at its best that day.

Meanwhile, Shaun Johnson became only the third New Zealander to exceed 150 Test points with his try and five goals against Samoa. Johnson's aggregate is now 153, well within range of overtaking record holder Matthew Ridge (168 points from 1990 to 1998) and Stacey Jones (160 between 1995 and 2006) during the tournament. Rounding out the top five are Daryl Halligan (137 from 1992 to 1998) and Des White (132 from 1950 to 1956).

Footnote (1): Just how great is that Melbourne Storm production line? One former Storm wing, Marika Koroibete, scored the winning try for the Wallabies against the All Blacks. Two days later, another, Matt Duffie, became an All Black. Yet they are already a fading memory in Melbourne. In 2016 Suliasi Vunivalu set a new



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By Barry Ross

# Emotion

RLWC2017 Opening Ceremony Australia v England, Melbourne Rectangular Stadium. Photo NRLPhotos

There was plenty of genuine emotion coming from the opening World Cup matches. Players and fans, thousands of kilometres apart, showed just how much the games meant to them. The pre-game spectacle in Melbourne on Friday night set the scene for what was to follow. Sure it wasn't a Super Bowl spectacle but Casey Donovan and her backup crew did well, as the team national flags were coming on to the ground. Her excellent version of the song, "Mercy," which sold over a half of million recordings for Welsh singer, Duffy, was performed as the Welsh flag came on to the arena. It was good to see the flag ambassadors involved by the various nations. Several of these, such as New Zealand's Ruben Wiki ONZM and England's Garry Schofield OBE, brought back memories of their on-field successes from the past. Now 44, Ruben played 55 Tests for his country. Gary Schofield OBE, 52, played 46 Tests for Great Britain and 3 Tests for England.

Australian fullback, Billy Slater, played with plenty of enthusiasm, which showed just how much his return to the Australian team after more than three years, meant to him. His team-mate, Dane Gagai, an Indigenous Australian who was playing his first Test match, played strongly and was elated to be part of the Kangaroos' Welcome to Country tribute before the kickoff.

England's efforts in the match proved they came to win. A doubtful penalty goal and a late try against the run of play by the home team, inflated the scoreline to 18-4 and this did not reflect England's second half performance. I was impressed by the two English wingers, Jermaine McGillvary and Ryan Hall. An interesting thing from this match was the age of both starting teams. The average age of England was about 28.5 while the Australians average was 27.5.

What an atmosphere at Port Moresby on Saturday afternoon. Rugby League fans everywhere must be thrilled with what came through on our television screens. Playing in front of their home fans, the Papuan/New Guinea men were aggressive, determined and committed, while the energy and pride of the local crowd added further impetus to the home team. The noise level when their captain, David Mead, touched the ball was deafening and they maintained this throughout the game. Mead scored his team's first two tries during the first nine minutes of play and led his team well. Mead, who has played 159 NRL games, turns 29 this Saturday and still has plenty to offer Papua/New Guinea Rugby League. He grew up near Port Moresby and came to Australia with his family when he was 12 years of age. After eight seasons with the Titans, he joined the Broncos for the 2017 season. Papua/New Guinea has two more games to play at their home venue, Oil Search National Football Stadium, and I will be watching both. They meet Ireland on 4 November and the USA on 11 November. International Rugby League has been played in Port Moresby since 1975 at the Lloyd Robson Oval. Around 2015, this was transformed by the Oil Search company to what is being used in this current World Cup. It contains 10 Corporate suites, a 250 person club lounge, food and beverage outlets, management offices and several other facilities.

*Continued on next page...*

Nearly 18,000 fans were at Mt. Smart Stadium to see the Kiwis withstand an early barrage of fire from the Samoans before winning comfortably, 38-8. Brad Takairangi deserves his opportunity with New Zealand. Now 28, Takairangi grew up in Sydney's south, deep in Sharks territory. He has played 125 NRL matches with the Roosters, the Titans and the Eels. As usual, Simon Mannering never stopped working for the Kiwis in his 43rd Test. The loss of Gerard Beale due to injury is a blow to New Zealand, but several other countries also have injury worries. Ball playing Kangaroo forward, Jake Trbojevic, will not only miss the remainder of the World Cup, but could be in doubt for the start of the 2018 NRL competition with his club, Manly.

Up at North Queensland, Jarryd Hayne equalled Bob Fulton's all time World Cup try scoring tally with his 46th minute touchdown against the USA in the 58-12 win. Both now have 13 World Cup tries to their credit, with nine of Hayne's coming with the Australian team and four with Fiji. Hayne had a dominant attacking match at Townsville on Saturday night and as well as his try, he had a hand in many others in Fiji's 11 try haul. Fijian captain, Kevin Naiqama, was very emotional during the playing of the national anthems before the game. The 28 Year old Naiqama shed a tear as he proudly sang the Fijian anthem.

As expected there were some one sided games, but the last game of the first weekend, between Lebanon and France, was a real contest. Led by Robbie Farah at halfback, Lebanon got home 29-18 on the back of a top class effort from Mitchell Moses. The Parramatta playmaker scored a try, set up two others and landed a field goal for the Cedars.

There will be plenty of interest in the Tonga-Samoa clash at Hamilton this Saturday. After their 50-4 victory over Scotland at Cairns, Tonga will be favourites but the Samoans will provide plenty of opposition. In Sydney, England will be keen to record their first win when they meet Lebanon at Allianz Stadium on Saturday.

Congratulations to 31 year old Englishman, Robbie Dolan, who is running from Melbourne to Brisbane during the World Cup for charity. An amateur Rugby League player, Robbie has completed a London Marathon in under four hours. He left Melbourne on Sunday 22 October, when his fellow countrymen were preparing for the opening World Cup game with Australia. He plans to be in Brisbane for the World Cup Final on 2 December after the 1,800 km journey. Robbie has called his campaign "THE LONGEST TRY" and his website is [www.thelongesttry.com](http://www.thelongesttry.com). All donations and proceeds from his efforts will go to charity and his charities are Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity, the Miracle Babies Foundation of Australia and the Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia. This is a genuine thing by Robbie and if you are interested in supporting him go to his website. On Monday morning, 30 October, he was near Howlong, a town on the Murray River, which is the border between NSW and Victoria.



*This is Robbie running through Victoria about 100 kms north of Melbourne on his second day. Robbie is on the left with the football.*

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**Check out this article from the New York Times on the 2017 Rugby League World Cup**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/27/sports/rugby/rugby-world-cup-league-and-union.html>



## THE ULTIMATE RLWC2017 EXPERIENCE

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# Back To The “Show Grounds”

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)



**A**FTER THE 2010-11 Christchurch earthquakes, the national government, city council and rugby union authorities combined their not inconsiderable forces to push rugby league out of its spiritual home in Addington so that a “temporary” stadium could be built for the use of the 15-a-side code. But in the minds of Canterbury rugby league fans, that strip of grass is still the Show Grounds or Rugby League Park, a sacred place where more than a century of skin, blood and sweat had been shed.

On Saturday at 5pm our game returns to Addington (or Christchurch Stadium, as it is listed in the Rugby League World Cup draw) for a one-off comeback, with the Kiwis fronting up against Scotland in their Pool B match. This will be the first Test match at the venue since New Zealand beat France 32-10 in 1991 and the first anywhere in Christchurch since the Kiwis beat Great Britain 18-14 in the 2006 Tri-Nations at Jade Stadium (Lancaster Park).

It might surprise many readers that Christchurch, not Auckland, is the city boasting most rugby league Test venues. While Auckland can count four (Domain Cricket Ground, Carlaw Park, Mount Smart Stadium and Eden Park), Christchurch has had six – Sydenham Park, Lancaster Park, English Park, Monica Park, Addington Show Grounds and Queen Elizabeth II Park. Some of them no longer exist and only Sydenham Park still bears any resemblance to its original layout.

An open, suburban field which is home to the local cricket club and hosts only club sport, Sydenham Park holds a special place in rugby league history. With spectators standing on wooden planks around the sidelines to keep their footwear dry, New Zealand achieved its first Test victory on home soil by beating Australia 26-10 in 1919. The Aussies won all three other Tests in that series, so naturally blamed the Christchurch referee for their only loss!

A year later the 1920 England tourists beat New Zealand 19-3 at Lancaster Park, which had just been reopened after serving as a giant potato patch during the First World War. But from 1921 the war memorial gates to the city’s biggest sports stadium were locked to rugby league until rugby union went professional in 1996. That year the Kiwis beat Great Britain 32-12 but most true leaguies missed the intimacy of the Show Grounds, where you could hear and almost feel the hits.

With Lancaster Park no longer an option because of the rugby union veto, the deciding Test of the great 1928 series against England (won by the visitors 6-5) was held at English Park, the traditional home of Canterbury soccer in St Albans. When the next England team returned in 1932, rugby league had its own ground, Monica Park in Woolston. It was named after the wife of CRL president Dr Henry Thacker. But that did not help New Zealand, beaten 25-14 by the Lions.

As mentioned above, Sydenham Park is still much as it was in 1919. Not so those other early venues. Lancaster Park is being demolished in the aftermath of the earthquakes. English Park is still Canterbury soccer headquarters but has been reduced in size to a boutique ground. The long-gone Monica Park caused financial strain and internal dissension within the CRL. Later renamed Athletic Park, it was eventually sold off for housing and school playing fields in the early 1950s.

In 1951 the CRL gained the winter lease of the Show Grounds in Addington where the very first rugby league game had been staged in 1912. A successful promotion of the Kiwis’ 15-10 defeat of Great Britain in 1950 swayed the Agricultural and Pastoral Association to accept the CRL tender over that from the CRU. Ten Test matches were held there from 1950 until 1988, when Gary Freeman’s two tries won a 12-10 victory over Great Britain in what was a virtual World Cup semi-final.

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In 1989 and 1990 the NZRL decided to play its Tests at the far bigger Queen Elizabeth II Park, where the opening ceremony and track and field events of the 1974 Commonwealth Games had been held. In 1989 a bumper crowd watched the Kangaroos overwhelm the Kiwis 26-6. But again the fans found they were too far from the action at this athletics venue and there was a far smaller attendance when the Kiwis beat Great Britain 21-18 in 1990. QEII was also a victim of the earthquakes.

When France visited in 1991 it was back to the Show Grounds for an eleventh Test, then second only to Auckland's Carlaw Park. But problems arose after the A and P Association swapped land with the city council. Although the council entered into a 40-year lease with the CRL it later tried to renege on the deal and sell the property. Threatened legal action halted that but the quakes subsequently wrecked the venue and the present stadium was hurriedly built for the CRU. It will never be returned to rugby league.

The 2011 Anzac Test was to be at AMI Stadium (Lancaster Park) but was relocated to the Gold Coast after the earthquakes. Of the 19 Tests in Christchurch, New Zealand has won eleven and lost eight. The Kiwis have not been beaten since 1989. The biggest winning margin was 27-0 over France in 1975 at the Show Grounds; the most decisive loss was that 1989 defeat (26-6) to Australia at QEII. A 2017 World Cup quarter-final is also scheduled for Christchurch on November 18.

## Kiwis and Scotland Open Trainings in Christchurch



### **This weekend's matches are (local times):**

Friday, November 3: Australia v France, Canberra Stadium (8pm).

Saturday November 4: New Zealand v Scotland, Christchurch (5pm); Samoa v Tonga, Waikato Stadium

(7.30pm); England v Lebanon, Sydney Football Stadium, 8pm.

Sunday, November 5: PNG v Ireland, Oil Search National Football Stadium (4pm); Italy v USA, Townsville Stadium (4pm) and Fiji v Wales, Townsville Stadium (6.30pm) in a double-header.



# Round 1 Match Reports

**A**USTRALIA, TONGA, Papua New Guinea and Fiji lead their pools after the opening round of Rugby League World Cup 2017 matches.

The first weekend of RLWC2017 matches concluded on Sunday, with Ireland, Lebanon and Tonga joining the Kangaroos, New Zealand, Kumuls and Bati as Round 1 winners.

The Wolfhounds shocked an Italy team featuring the likes of James Tedesco, Mark Minichiello and Paul Vaughan in the first match of a double-header at Barlow Park while the Mate Ma'a proved too strong for a brave Scotland in the second game.

A thriller in Canberra finished with Lebanon snatching a late win over France after the scores had been locked at 18-18 in the 74th minute.

The matches followed Australia's 18-4 win over England in Friday night's World Cup opener and three games on Saturday in which Papua New Guinea beat Wales 50-6 in Port Moresby, the Kiwis overcame an emotion-charged Samoa 38-8 in Auckland and Fiji defeated a spirited USA 58-12 in Townsville.

RLWC2017 has provided the following rights free match reports for use by news outlets. To access these rights free match reports only, click on the links below.

All other editorial content on the rlwc2017.com website is unavailable for use elsewhere without permission or unless advised otherwise.

## **Ireland v Italy**

An impressive Ireland have upset Italy at Barlow Park in Cairns, claiming a surprising 36-12 victory and throwing the pre-tournament predictions out the window...

Read more here: <http://www.rlwc2017.com/news/match-report-ireland-v-italy>

## **France v Lebanon**

A Mitchell Moses masterclass has secured Lebanon their first ever World Cup victory as they defeated France 29-18 at Canberra Stadium on Sunday afternoon.

Read more here: <http://www.rlwc2017.com/news/match-report-france-v-lebanon>

## **Scotland v Tonga**

Tonga's opening forty minutes in their 50-4 win over Scotland at Barlow Park in Cairns will leave the Tier-One nations with another foe to fear after they lived up to their hype and delivered a brilliant display to conclude the opening round of RLWC2017 action.

Read more here: <http://www.rlwc2017.com/news/match-report-scotland-v-tonga>

## **Papua New Guinea v Wales**

PNG captain David Mead and backrower Rhys Martin set new try scoring and points scoring marks to spearhead the Kumuls to their biggest win ever in a World Cup match, beating Wales 50-6 in Port Moresby.

Read more here: <http://www.rlwc2017.com/news/match-report-png-v-wales>

*Continued on next page...*



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### **New Zealand v Samoa**

New Zealand scored five unanswered second half tries to blow Samoa off the park in a physical opening round World Cup clash in Auckland, but the win was soured by the loss of centre Gerard Beale with a leg injury.

Read more here: <http://www.rlwc2017.com/news/match-report-new-zealand-vs-samoa>

### **Fiji v USA**

Jarryd Hayne equaled the Rugby League World Cup all-time try-scoring record as he inspired Fiji to a resounding 58-12 victory over the USA in Townsville on Saturday night.

Read more here: <http://www.rlwc2017.com/news/match-report-fiji-vs-usa>

### **Australia v England**

England may have to qualify for the Rugby League World Cup final for Sam Burgess to play again in the tournament, while Australian lock Jake Trbojevic has been ruled out after suffering a torn pectoral muscle.

Read more here: <http://www.rlwc2017.com/news/australia-england-suffer-injury-blows-after-grip-ping-start-rlwc2017>

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# Go to the Rugby League World Cup

## By Harbour Heather

**E**VEN IF the Warriors have drained your interest in the sport. Even if all the suspension and defection drama before the tournament has left you disenchanted with the Kiwis. This tournament is something sports fans should revel in.

The nature of international league is fickle, often seen as secondary by our Aussie neighbours to their mate-against-mate series. Eligibility rules are cloudy and cause confusion. But, evidenced by a 17,000 strong crowd at Mt Smart on Saturday night, when the whistle blows, the contest can still bring out passion and pride.

The Samoan fans made the evening with their tremendous atmosphere. Pacific nations are proud people. They need very little encouragement to be flying flags from their front gates, their cars, their person. Arriving in droves, facepainted Samoan fans were in full voice and song, excited at seeing Toa Samoa play in the opening match of the tournament on New Zealand soil.

They sang their anthem with passion, they echoed and called in response to the Siva Tau. They booed the haka to remind the Kiwis that this wasn't necessarily a home game. And when Samoa scored with time up on the board, the crowd erupted. Last try wins? Both sides of the crowd left buoyant – Kiwis fans with a sound win and good points differential under the belt, the Samoan fans high on a bonus try after a very long second half.

Leaving the ground, it was all blue shirts, flags and honking. As if the game was played in Apia.

And therein lies the best part of this tournament. Even if you don't have a team to support, jump on board one of the smaller nations. It is not difficult to be swept up in their enjoyment. Crowd numbers may not compete with what the All Blacks are accustomed to, but the noise generated by the fans will have you wondering.

It's their passion which makes it. Joy at seeing their team, their homeland, represented in front of them. Some of these teams almost cease to compete outside of World Cup rotations. This is a once in four-year opportunity for players to represent their country, their heritage, and they will give their all. As will their supporters from the stands. Quiet and subdued New Zealand fans are left in their wake.

There are six games remaining around the country – two in Christchurch, two in Hamilton, a quarter final in Wellington and a semi-final back in Auckland. This gives people nationwide the chance to see at least four teams – the Kiwis, Scotland, Tonga and Samoa – in action, with others potentially appearing in the knockout stages. Ticket prices are reasonable with kids starting at \$10 and adults from \$35.

Hot tip: Samoa v Tonga in Hamilton will be an incredible, hard-hitting, full-voiced night of entertainment. Money well-spent.

Often the future of international league is debated. This tournament gives the New Zealand sporting public the chance to help cement it. As a nation, we are quick to tout our love of sport, especially at the highest level. The next few weeks bring the opportunity to support a game which offers skill and spark, and needs attendance to ensure that the international level is regularly seen on our shores.

Go to the Rugby League World Cup.

---

**Congratulations to my mate Beauden Barrett appointed captain for the All Blacks game this weekend!**



# Reader Mail



Kia ora Tā Peter,

**T**WO WEEKS leave and return home to find these beauties waiting for me. Yippee for me.

All set for Warriors 2018, my mokopuna and I will look like twins now, lol.

Thank you so much and a shout out to Canterbury NZ as well

GO KIWIS\*\*\*\*RLWC  
2017\*\*\*\*GO KIWIS YEAH!!!!!!

(Lynne) Frances Whata



Hello Sir Peter

**M**Y SON is a loyal fan of the warriors and has collected several jerseys ...including a framed one commemorating his cousin Glen Fisiiahi's debut game/season

Here he is showing off his newest Jersey and hat that he won from your newsletter competition – he was STOKED !!

Thanks for all do in league – my son thinks you're the best !!

Vikki & Leon



Michael Hill and Lady Christian were off cape Colville fishing on Sunday morning when they caught this 12 pounds snapper.

**D**EAR SIR Peter and team

A massive thanks to you for gifting the tickets to last nights game, we had the best time and the support from the crowd for both teams made the atmosphere just awesome!

Thanks again and enjoy the rest of the competition all!

Regards  
Amanda & family

Hi there Sir Peter Leitch

**O**NCE AGAIN that you so much for topping off my evening, I couldn't believe my luck when I recognised you.

Here's a little bit about myself and my flag.

I am a rural South Islander, a die hard League fan since 1985. After the last world cup I decided to tick something off my bucket list so I made my own flag to take to a Kiwi test match, I began with the Rugby league "V's and worked on the different parts over 18 months finially finishing with a trip to Nelson for the material to replicate the 2008 world cup insignia. The flag is a work in progress, we proudly hang the

flag while watching leauge on the big screen. This trip with my flag to Auckland was a dream come true, with many highlights at the game. Thanks to players and family for making this happen.

Kind regards

Juile  
McDonald





# Happy Luncheon Attendees

Dear Sir Peter Leitch

**O**N BEHALF of my parents Vali and June Taylor, I wish to acknowledge and thank-you for the opportunity to share a wonderful luncheon with you and the Kiwi Legends of Rugby League. My parents with my Uncle Charlie Dunn, traveled from the Far North (Awanui) to be part of these celebrations, and thoroughly enjoyed rekindling of old friendships and the vibrant atmosphere of the occasion.

I wanted to also mention a special thank-you to Gill Dunn who shared our table with us and gave her ticket to Saturday nights game for my daughter as she had to fly back to Christchurch the same evening. Looking from a positive result of the Samoa Kiwi match on Saturday night, I wish them a successful campaign and Good Luck for the duration of the 2017 World Cup.

Kind regards

Eilleen Taylor

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# League Greats Luncheon



Always fantastic to catch up with legend Olsen Filipaina.



Gary Kemble, Roy Christian, Dane O Hara and James Leuluai all ex kiwis.



Graham Lowe super coach and Freddy Ah Kuoi one of our best #kiwi players.



Lyndsey Proctor & Dane O'Hara two former kiwis and great guys.



My moment of glory as I say a few words to the audience.



Ngani Whatua, Joe Hawke, Taiaha Hawke and Alec Hawke.



Gillian Dunn former Warriors and Kiwi physio (who flew up from Christchurch especially) with Stephen Kearney.



Some of the former Kiwi stars that attended the Kiwi Luncheon.



Some of the former legends turned up to Ellerslie racecourse for the New Zealand Rugby League greats luncheon.



The Hawk family doing a Karakia supported by 2 League Legends, Tawera Nikau & Wairangi Koopu.



Tony Feasey introducing the former Kiwis to the luncheon.



Tony Iro, Brian McLennan and Tawera Nikau enjoying a catch up at the RLWC pre tournament luncheon.



## Photos from the Tongan Team Meet in Otahuhu Yesterday



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## The Newsletter Team

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

**Sir Peter Leitch** - Editor  
**David Kemeys** - Editor at Large  
**Hayden Woodhead** - Graphic Designer

**John Deaker** - Correspondent  
**John Coffey** - Southern Correspondent  
**Barry Ross** - Australian Correspondent  
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**Miles Davis** - Correspondent  
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