

RLWC 2017

The big game this weekend is this Saturday night in Hamilton when the Kiwis take on Tonga.

**Sir Peter
Leitch Club
Newsletter**

8th November 2017

#195



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz

Predictable, But I Don't Care

By David Kemeys

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



THE KIWIS walloped Scotland, and everyone knew they would, even if last time we faced them we did draw. That was then, this is now.

We scored a staggering 14 tries as we blew Scotland away, three each to Peta Hiku and Te Maire Martin.

Even with a triple each, they did not get the headlines, because Shaun Johnson kicked nine goals and added a try for a 22 point haul that made him the Kiwis top scorer of all time, with 175 points, overtaking some bloke called Matthew Ridge, who managed 168.

I thought we were pretty bloody good across the park actually, although, let's face it, the opposition was not up to much.

The Kiwis scored an unanswered 28 points in the first half, then cut loose in the second.

Johnson's 22 points, added to his 14-point haul in the 38-8 victory over Samoa, gives him an impressive 36 for the tournament.

The stats tell it all really, and they are what you would expect when one side is so dominant, the Kiwis with 196 runs against Scotland's 84; 2079 metres to 636; 31 offloads to six. One-way traffic.

The win leaves New Zealand set to take on Tonga on Saturday night in what will be one of the matches of the tournament.

And what a show Tonga and Samoa put on in Hamilton, the fans really showing what is supposed to happen when you turn out to support your side.

Fantastic.

Tonga booked a place in the quarter-finals for the first time with their 32-18 win, and of course whoever wins the game this weekend will top the pool, and avoid Australia in the semis.

I actually thought the football did not match the crowd support actually.

Sure it was intense, but Tonga found points easy after a couple of pretty ordinary efforts from Samoan defenders.

Centre Michael Jennings got a double in the first half and despite Samoa being brave, you never really thought they would get back into it.

Ata Hingano was pretty smart, which should please Vodafone Warriors fans, whereas Samoan winger Ken Maumalo, another Warrior, was awful.

Ultimately it is all to play for in Hamilton, and the Kiwis can expect to feel like the away team, because all those Tongan fans will be back, making their voices heard.

Snooze time

I looked forward to watching England, fully expecting Wayne Bennett's side to hammer Lebanon.

Bennett will be happy with the 29-10 result, but in truth, they looked dreadful.

Lebanon pushed them, and they must be left wondering what might have been after some pretty iffy decisions against them too.

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England led 22-6 at the break, but by then I was ready to give up on it actually, and apart from a bizarre incident that saw Robbie Farrah accuse Jermaine McGillvary, who was placed on report, of biting, you didn't miss anything if you didn't see it.

Still, a first win for England, and they were certainly dominant.

Didn't Watch It, Knew What Would Happen

Australia smashed France heaps to bugger-all. Didn't care, Didn't watch.

Italy smashed the USA by the score, again without me bothering to waste 80 minutes of my life.

But I did enjoy PNG.

A late try pretty much guaranteed the Kumuls will progress to the knockout stages for the first time since 2000, cementing a 14-6 win over a plucky Ireland.

Fiji will be there too, smashing Wales 72-6.

Fiji, Tonga, PNG, pretty good all round efforts from the Pacific sides. Only Samoa yet to fire a shot, but they have Scotland to come, and will win that one comfortably.

New Deal For Roache

Vodafone Warriors hooker Nathaniel Roache will remain at the club until 2020 after signing a two-year contract extension.

The 21-year-old, 2016 rookie of the year, has made 20 first-grade appearances for us since making his debut at the start of the 2016 season.

"Nate is a big part of our plans," Warriors head coach Stephen Kearney said.

Coaching Changes Announced

Our chief executive Cameron George has announced coaching changes focused on improving our development of young players.

Current recruitment and development supremo Tony Iro will take over as head coach of the club's Intrust Super Cup side in 2018, while 2017's ISP coach Ricky Henry and his assistant Jerome Ropati will team up with the under-20s in the New South Wales competition.

Iro will give up his recruitment duties to focus on the ISP side as well as our development requirements. He'll also be involved with the NRL side.

"These moves give us an extensive coaching structure right through our three teams," George says.

Green Deal Still Rumoured

Still plenty of talk around the traps that the Warriors have a three-year deal pending for Manly five-eighth Blake Green. As far as I know the 31-year-old still has no release from his Sea Eagles contract. Seems to me it all depends on how the dominoes fall after Cooper Cronk's move to the Roosters, and you'd have to wonder what it might mean for Ata Hingano too. His management have been none too pleased with the thought of the No 6 arriving at Mt Smart, and what that would mean for the Tongan international.

Sale Deal Plods Along

The Auckland Rugby League's move to acquire the Warriors is inching closer – apparently.

The ARL wants a majority share in the club through the Carlaw Park Heritage Trust, and an asking price is said to have been agreed with current owner Eric Watson.

The ARL has a big accounting firm doing an appraisal of assets, liabilities and accounts - the final step before a sale can be negotiated.

The ARL has also formed a sub-committee to conduct an audit of the football element of the club.

The ARL wants a 55 percent shareholding, with three corporate partners taking 15 percent each.

Welcome home Agnatius

I am far from broken-hearted that forward Agnatius Paasi is coming home on a two-year contract.

Part of our 2011 NYC premiership winning side, Paasi rejoins after 54 appearances for the Titans over the last three seasons.

He's the third former player to confirm his return, the big forward joining utility back Peta Hiku and back rower Matiu Love-Henry.

He is available after being released on compassionate grounds so his family could return home.

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Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George says the club is excited to add him to the roster. “He’s another aggressive forward, just the type Stephen Kearney) is after.”

Paasi is the seventh signing for 2018, behind his team-mate Leivaha Pulu, Tohu Harris (Melbourne), Gerard Beale (Cronulla), Adam Blair (Brisbane), and Hiku and Love-Henry.

After his NRL debut for us in 2014 Paasi linked up with the Titans from 2015-2017, playing 18 times in his first season and all 25 in 2016, before injury restricted him to 11 games this year.

Pete will be happy because Agnatius is a Mangere East Hawks junior.

Storm Headed To Rotorua

The Vodafone Warriors and 2017 premiers Melbourne headline a two-day ‘Festival of Rugby League’ with a trial in Rotorua in February.

The Rotorua Lakes Council and the Warriors have jointly announced the trial for Rotorua International Stadium on Saturday, February 17 at 3pm.

It will cap a programme that includes a regional nines tournament.

Through the Harvey Norman Community Warriors programme, we will also have a strong presence ahead of game day.

“Having a trial in Rotorua is a great fit for the club as well as our members and fans,” Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George said.

[CLICK HERE for tickets.](#)

Show Your Support for the Kiwis! Add a frame to your Facebook profile picture!

<http://bit.ly/2lZOXv2>

Rugby League World Cup Fans Warned To Buy Tickets From Official Outlet

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/league/98614257/rugby-league-world-cup-fans-warned-to-buy-tickets-from-official-outlet>

Visit my Facebook page to watch interviews with Simon Mannering, James Bell and many more!

<https://www.facebook.com/sirpeterleitch/>



Waikato Stadium - This Saturday
Gates open at 3pm - Kick-off 5pm

**PREPARE FOR THE CLASH WITH A CELEBRATION
OF THE ISLANDS AT GARDEN PLACE FROM
11.30AM – 3.30PM. THERE WILL BE
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STALLS, CHILDREN'S
ACTIVITIES AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCES.**

**TICKETS to the game start at just
\$20 for an adult and \$45 for a family**

Purchase from www.ticketek.co.nz / phone
08008042538 / visit www.rlwc2017.com

Tickets can also be purchased and collected from the
Hamilton i-SITE if you don't want to get them online.



**For all information on the games and what is happening
in Hamilton visit www.hamiltonhostcity.co.nz**



IT'S ALL ON

...THE BIG SCREEN
AT SKYCITY THEATRE

QUARTER FINAL 1
Fri 17 Nov, 10.30pm

SEMI FINAL 1
Fri 24 Nov, 10pm

QUARTER FINALS 2&3
Sat 18 Nov, 5pm

SEMI FINAL 2
Sat 25 Nov, 6pm

QUARTER FINAL 4
Sun 19 Nov, 6pm

FINAL
Sat 2 Dec, 10pm

FREE ENTRY **PLUS** **HALF TIME INTERVIEWS | LIVE MUSIC | PRIZES | ALL AGES WELCOME**
Meet the semi-final teams at SKYCITY.
Tuesday 21 November, 4-7pm.


SKYCITY
AUCKLAND



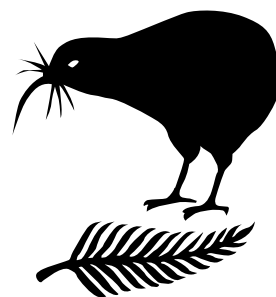
A great view of the ground from the lounge I hosted on Saturday.



Former kiwi Ray Baxendale played 39 games for kiwis, Reon Edwards chairman of NZRL (played all his rugby league in Canterbury), ex kiwi Tony Coll played 65 games for kiwis and played in 3 RLWCs, Me, Frank Endacott ex kiwis coach took the kiwis to 2 RLWCs, ex kiwi Michael O'Donnell played 28 games for kiwis.



I brought these 2 guys up to the lounge to get this photo after the game.



**NEW ZEALAND
RUGBY LEAGUE™**

Photos courtesy of CMGSPORT

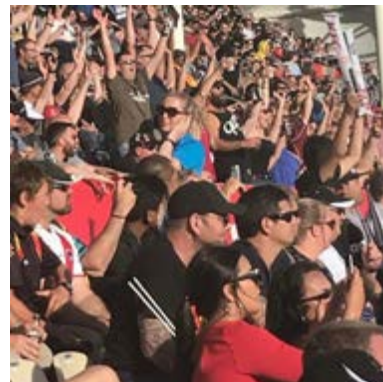
In Christchurch for the Kiwis Game



Dexter chatting to ex All Black Richard Loe.



Great to catch up with this young guy Seth Wilson from Hokitika. Staunch Warriors & Kiwis fan!!.



Mexican waves have started the crowd is going wild.



My mate Dexter with kiwi player Joseph Tapine after the game.



Rosa & Peter from Timaru with RLWC2017 Community ambassador and ex kiwi Gary Clark.



The awesome crowd on the day.



The Rolleston Warriors supporting the Kiwis on Saturday. They were at the game bright and early.



Tynui Ruri the youngest Warriors supporter I have met in Christchurch.



Sam was very happy to get a Manu Vatuvei poster a Vodafone Warriors scarf membership for supporting the Kiwis



I made this Vodafone Warriors fan day I met her at the Christchurch RSA on Friday night. Told her to ring me in the morning and she was at our doorstep at 8 o'clock in the morning to get the Manu poster & Vodafone warriors hat and a Vodafone warriors members scarf pack. One happy fan!

Southern Zone Year 7 & 8 Tournament



Great to catch up with the west coast teams from Hokitika & Greymouth at the schools tournament at Hayley Park.



Hornby high school year 7 & 8 rugby league team for tournament at Harley park.



Linwood College Year 7 & 8 playing in the tournament.



Southern Zone Year 7&8 Rugby League Tournament

THANKS TO the Mad Butcher & Vodafone Warriors. These players of the days from each team of the Southern Zone Year 7 & 8 Rugby League Tournament received a Vodafone warriors scarf pack each

Thanks again for the prizes, kids really appreciated it.

Nick Le Commercial Development Officer

Match Officials Kiwis v Tonga

Date: This Saturday **Venue:** Hamilton **Kick Off:** 5Pm Local

Referee: Gerard Sutton **Video Referee:** Steve Chiddy **Touch Judges:** Chris Butler, Mark Craven

Jersey Colour: Yellow **Standby:** Matt Cecchin

Good luck to the All Black playing France this Sunday!

Good luck to the All Whites playing Peru this Saturday!



By John Coffey

Kiwis Star On And Off The Field

Nelson Asofa-Solomona of the Kiwis eludes Ben Kavanagh of Scotland. Photo www.photosport.nz

DAVID KIDWELL'S Kiwis were double winners in Christchurch. Sure, they demolished Scotland in what was always going to be a one-sided World Cup match provided the Kiwis cut down their previous week's error rate – which they did admirably in scoring 14 tries – but they were also big winners off the playing field during the week leading up to the game. The enduring reminder of their visit is a huge mural of Kidwell painted on a building wall in the city centre.

During the 74-6 hammering of the Scots Shaun Johnson (now on 175 points) overtook Matthew Ridge (168) as New Zealand's most prolific Test scorer. Jason Nightingale touched down twice to join Nigel Vagana on 19 tries, equal second on the all-time list behind Manu Vatuvei (22). The 74 points were the equal second most scored in a Test by the Kiwis in their 358-Test, 110-year history, bettered only by the 84-10 victory over Cook Islands at Reading in England during the 2000 World Cup.

On the night they arrived in town the Kiwis hosted former Canterbury Bulls forward Kevin Te Hau, his wife and two children at a team dinner. Six years ago the Te Hau family had won a competition to meet the Kiwis before their scheduled Anzac Test, only for the city's second major earthquake to wreck Lancaster Park and force the game to be transferred to the Gold Coast. It was an outstanding gesture, proving rugby league does not forget obligations to its own people.

Throughout their visit the Kiwis were very visible to their fans, including some hoeing and shovelling at the Christchurch Adventure Park, severely damaged by the Port Hills fires. An open training session at Linfield Park attracted hundreds of spectators; 1954 Kiwis World Cup forward John Bond, who turns 86 next month, was applauded by his 2017 counterparts; Kidwell's old Hornby Panthers club held a meet and greet for their juniors; and the Kiwis coaching staff invited local coaches for breakfast.

But I'm not sure if Christchurch reciprocated in kind, based on the attendance of 12,130. The weather was fine and warm all week and the match well publicised in The Press newspaper. Probably not so much on local radio, though, where the sole sports staffer makes no secret of his disrespect for the concept of international rugby league. At least it exceeded the 9000 at the recent provincial rugby union final. But the stadium has a capacity of about 17,000 and was full when the Warriors played Penrith last year.

When the Kiwis were last in Christchurch, during the 2006 Tri-Nations, their game against Great Britain drew a crowd of 17,005 to Lancaster Park. I appreciate that British team would have been a greater drawcard than Scotland. In this World Cup, the Kiwis-Samoa opener at Mount Smart had an attendance of 17,857 – though a very sizeable proportion of them were waving blue flags – and 18,156 enthusiastic fans provided a stunning backdrop at Waikato Stadium for Saturday's memorable clash between Samoa and Tonga.

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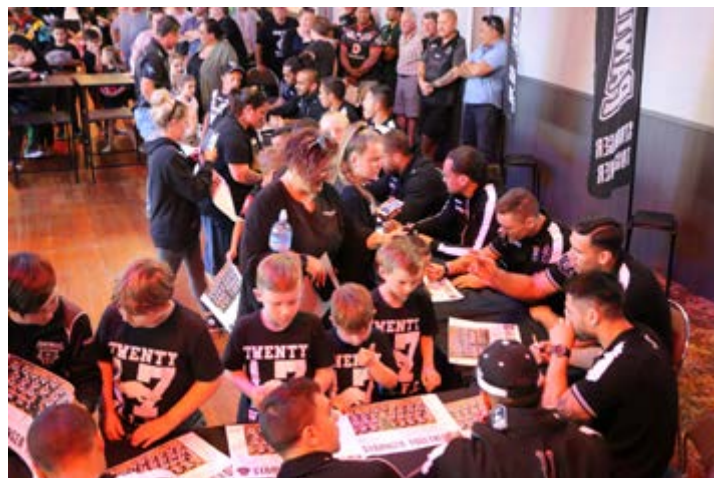
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While there were no counter attractions in Christchurch last Saturday, apart from summer sports club competitions, there have been plenty of other options to spend one's surplus dollars. Ticket sales were also open for the World Cup quarter-final on November 18, for the Manly home match against the Warriors next June, and for the 2018 Crusaders rugby union season. It was also announced in midweek that Neil Diamond would be performing at the same stadium in March, and he does not come cheap.

That the Kiwis had not played on New Zealand soil for three years, or in Christchurch for 11 years, suggests sports fans have lost their connection to them. In a past era players graduated from club football through their provincial teams to the Kiwis and supporters could follow their every step. Kodi Nikorima, who lived in Christchurch as a youngster, is the only current Kiwi with any ties to the South Island, and he did not play on Saturday. Kidwell's new-look Kiwis are still in the process of winning back the public.

The November 18 quarter-final in Christchurch will pit Fiji against the loser between the Kiwis and Tonga. With such high profile Fijian backs as Jarryd Hayne and Suliasi Vunivalu up against the star-studded Tongan or Kiwis teams, it should draw a big crowd. Because there are much larger Tongan communities in the north one would think a Fiji-Kiwis showdown to draw a larger number. But we don't want that do we? We want the Kiwis to beat Tonga so they go on to meet Lebanon in the Wellington quarter-final. Don't we?

Footnote: Why did Robbie Farah and his Lebanon team have to play England in Sydney with an English referee, Ben Thaler, and an English video referee, Phil Bentham? On the same day Henry Perenara, the only New Zealand-born referee on the panel, was flown to Christchurch for the Kiwis-Scotland game. Surely a swap would have given a clearer impression that all referees are indeed neutral. Every 50/50 decision, including a dodgy try-scoring video call, went against an increasingly frustrated Lebanon until England was out of reach.



Top left: David Kidwell (left) brings his team home to Hornby clubrooms

Top right: Young Hornby Panthers collecting autographs from their Kiwis heroes

Bottom left: Martin Taupau and Jason Nightingale signing autographs at Hornby Panthers club





Kiwis Visit Hornby Panthers

By Brent Tomlinson

THE HORNBY Panther were to originally host the Kiwis during their time in CHCH, however upgrades by the CCC were not quite ready and the Kiwi's had to train elsewhere.

Any disappointment was quickly forgotten with the entire squad making time in their busy schedule to visit the club on Wednesday night.

The night began with quick tour of the clubrooms and a brief history of it and the Kiwis it has fostered.

The players were also introduced to the club new youth education centre. Hornby spoke to the Kiwis about the clubs "Panther - Stronger Together" programme, what it means and it how it works in with The NRL state of programme. The programme aims to educate members about suicide prevention, drug and alcohol issues, and includes club's has a mentoring programme "Panthers Cubs" where senior premier players are directly involved with their junior teams.

A group of volunteer had spent months revamped the changing facilities in anticipation of the Kiwi trainings, and the kiwis appreciated the effort despite not being able to use them.

With the serious stuff out of the way it was time to have some fun - Wow what a night !

Hundreds of fan young and old showed up to meet their Kiwi hero's in person, signings and selfies were definitely the order of the day ! Every fan was given a free Kiwi team poster to collect player signatures and they were certainly put to use.

The night finished with a huge group photo and the singing of the club song - Thank you David and the Kiwis !

We love the Jersey ! and what it stands for !



Mate Ma'a Tonga And Toa Samoa Combine To Produce Rugby League Night For The Ages

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

The crowd was 18,156, but sounded like five times that.

TONGA MAY have beaten Samoa, but the result almost paled into insignificance on one of the great nights for rugby league last Saturday.

Over 18000 fans packed into Waikato Stadium and produced scenes likely never seen before in New Zealand.

"If this wasn't the best atmosphere at a league match in New Zealand this century, then it must have been close," Michael Burgess of New Zealand wrote following the match.

All of the players combined for a pre-match prayer as a sign of unity, before both teams brought the crowd to a fever pitch when they simultaneously performed their pre-match challenges.

"The special, spine-tingling atmosphere raised the roof and such raw emotion could be likened only to the kind of support demonstrated by football fans in Europe and South America, but this was uniquely beautiful in its own right," Fairfax's Joe Pearson wrote.

The great thing is that there will be similar scenes at this weekend's clash between the Kiwis and Mate Ma'a Tonga.

Tickets are still available for the match that kicks off at 5pm on Saturday night at Waikato Stadium, so make sure you don't miss out on what will be an incredible occasion. Tickets from rlwc2017.com



The combined prayer was a show of unity between the Pacific rivals.

It was a sea of red as Mate Ma'a Tonga fans sing and danced the night away



IT IS interesting to analyse the backgrounds of the 14 World Cup coaches. Most Rugby League people are well aware of the achievements of the big three - Mal Meninga AM, Wayne Bennett AM and David Kidwell. Each of these men are established on the coaching scene and also have successful playing backgrounds. Now 57, Meninga has played 46 Tests, is the only player to have made four Kangaroo tours to England and France and as Queensland coach, he won nine State of Origin series. Elder statesman, Wayne Bennett, 67, toured New Zealand with the 1971 Australian team and has coached seven Grand Final winning teams. These were 1992, 1993, 1997 (Super League), 1998, 2000 and 2006 with the Broncos, plus 2010 with St. George/Illawarra. David Kidwell, 40, played 25 Tests for New Zealand and then began his coaching career in 2010 with South Sydney as the under 20 coach, guiding this side to the minor premiership and Grand Final. Lebanon's Brad Fittler, 45, should probably be included with the big three as he played 40 Tests for Australia, 336 first grade games with Penrith then the Roosters and was a member of two Grand Final winning teams. He took over as the Roosters coach in late 2007 and continued in 2008 and 2009. He currently coaches age teams for the NSW RL and is tipped to become NSW State of Origin coach next season.

Wales' coach, John Kear, 62, is in charge of his third international side at this world Cup, after France in 1997 and England in 2000. In what many regard as one of the greatest upsets in Rugby League history, he coached the Sheffield Eagles to their 1998 Challenge Cup Final win. On 2 May 1998, before more than 60,000 fans at Wembley Stadium, the unheralded Eagles defeated John Monie's Wigan 17-8. To prove this was no fluke, Kear repeated the dose in 2005 with Hull. Before 74,213 at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium on 27 August 2005, Hull took the Cup with a 25-24 win over 4 to 1 favourites, Leeds. Kear played over 100 games for the Castleford club and has been on the coaching scene for more than 20 years.

Tongan coach Kristian Woolf, 42, will be in the spotlight as the World Cup progresses because of the big names in his team. With players such as Andrew Fifita, Jason Taumalolo, Michael Jennings, Manu Vatuvei, Konrad Hurrell, Sam Moa and Solomone Kata on his roster, expectations are high. From Mt. Isa, Woolf played with Brisbane Souths in the mid 1990s and began coaching with Townsville Brothers in 2002. He has also worked with the Cowboys and the Broncos, while he was appointed to the Tongan position in 2015.

Brian McDermott, 47, who coaches the USA, is well known in England. He played four Tests for Great Britain, one for England and 251 matches for Bradford. He began coaching as an assistant at Huddersfield in 2003 and became Head Coach of Harlequins in 2006. He has been with Leeds since 2011 and has enjoyed plenty of success with the Rhinos.

Samoa's man is 51 year old Matt Parish, the son of Don Parish who played three Tests for Australia in the early 1960s. Matt Parish played 55 top grade games with Balmain from 1988 and was Head Coach of English club, Salford for a short time in 2011. He has also worked at the Cowboys and with the NSW State of Origin team.

Michael Potter, 54, takes care of Fiji. He had a good playing career, winning Premierships with Canterbury in 1984 and 1985, playing one State of Origin game in 1984 and winning two Dally M player of the year awards in 1984 and 1991. He began coaching as an assistant at Bradford in 1996 and since then has been Head Coach at the Catalans Dragons, St. Helens, Bradford and the Wests Tigers.

Italy's Cameron Ciraldo, 33, played 94 first grade matches with Cronulla, Newcastle and Penrith. He has played seven games for Italy, including all three at the 2013 World Cup. He took up coaching in 2014 as an assistant with the Penrith under 20 side. The next year he was appointed Head Coach of the Penrith under 20s and he took them to the minor premiership and the Grand Final win. This year he is working as an assistant coach to Anthony Griffin with the Panthers NRL team.

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Ireland's Mark Aston, 50, played one Test as halfback for Great Britain in 1991 against France. He also toured Australia and New Zealand with Britain in 1992 and won the Lance Todd Trophy as Man of the Match in Sheffield Eagles 1998 Challenge Cup victory over Wigan. He is currently Chief Executive and Head Coach of the Sheffield club.

Steve McCormack, 46, looks after the boys in kilts. He has been coaching Scotland since 2004 after beginning his coaching career with Salford in 2001. Over the years, he has worked at Whitehaven, Widnes, Hull KR, Barrow and Swinton.

Aurelien Cologni, 39, is France's Head Coach. He has played 23 matches for France as a backrower and finished his playing career as captain/coach of Lezignan in 2011. Since then he has working as non playing coach of Lezignan and was given the position of French coach in September last year.

The last but not least of the 14 coaches is Papua/New Guinea's 43 year old, Michael Marum. As a hooker he played four Tests for his country in 2000 and 2001, including the 2000 World Cup. He has coached the PNG Hunters in the Queensland Intrust Super Cup since 2014 and took them to this year's Premiership.

This Saturday offers plenty of attractive TV for Australian sports fans. Around 8,30am Sydney time live from Honduras in Central America, Australia play the first of their two matches to decide if they will qualify for the next Soccer World Cup, beginning in Russia next June. Next up is one of the games of the current Rugby League World Cup when New Zealand take on Hamilton at Hamilton. Australia meet Lebanon in Sydney after this game. Finally late at night, or early Sunday morning Sydney time, the Wallabies play Wales at Cardiff.

CRL and Brannigans Event



Canterbury Rugby League Board Members Andrew McCormick & Llew Timpson (Chair) at Brannigans Scotland Function.



Kieran Moran (Hull), Ex All Black Richard Loe, David Scott (Batley Bulldogs) at the Brannigans and CRL event in Christchurch.



Steve Martin (Southern Zone General Manager), Nick Le Comte (Development Officer) and Paul Lawrence (Sponsorship and Marketing Manager).



Vodafone Warriors player James Bell with his Scotland coach Steve McCormack who also works at Wigan. You can see a interview I did with them both on my facebook page

Just caught up with Andrew and Kane Bentley who are born in Auckland and living in France for the last 25 years. They played for France but now playing for Scotland. 2 lovely people.





By John Coffey

Tonga's Rich Rugby League History

Tongan fans during the Rugby League Rugby World Cup 2017 Pool B match - Samoa v Tonga played at Waikato Stadium.
Photo www.photosport.nz

MANY OUTSTANDING Tongan players have graced rugby league in New Zealand, particularly Auckland, for more than 60 years. Tough and talented Kiwis utility back Bill Sorensen, who was of Tongan and Scandinavian heritage, started it all during the 1950s. The lineage was then carried on by Bill's brother and fellow Kiwis back Dave, son Bill junior, and nephews Dane and Kurt Sorensen, who were among the world's most respected forwards of the 1980s.

But the player who most typified Tonga's emergence from producing skilful individuals to a full international team was Stephen Jeffrey (Dick) Uluave, a wing from the rugby league outpost of Manawatu. Born in Tonga in 1954, Uluave came to New Zealand in 1972 and starred for Central in inter-districts competitions before playing two Tests against Great Britain in 1979. Dashing Dick continued to represent New Zealand Maori until the British toured again in 1984.

In 1986 the Pacific Cup was revived and expanded, with Tonga fielding a team in its own right. Dick Uluave, then 32, finally got to represent his country of birth. Tonga made an auspicious debut by beating Western Samoa 34-16 and then headed off Tokelau 26-22. But New Zealand Maori was too experienced in a 27-18 win and Western Samoa gained revenge through a 46-4 semi-final victory. Alongside Uluave were brothers George and Warren Mann and St George (Sydney) forward John Fifita.

By 1992 Tonga was good enough to not only reach the Pacific Cup final but take on Western Samoa in one of the greatest ever games at Carlaw Park. The Samoans eventually prevailed by 18-14 after two punishing periods of extra time. Two years later Tonga made up for that heartbreak by beating Fiji 34-11 in the Pacific Cup final at Suva. Coached by former Kiwis forward Graham Mattson, that Tongan team included Australian-based backs Jim Dymock, John Hopoate and Albert Fulivai.

The 1994 Pacific Cup triumph provided a perfect stepping stone for Tonga's World Cup debut a year later. And what a debut it was! The Kiwis were mighty lucky to escape with a 25-24 victory at Warrington after desperately scoring two converted tries and a field goal in the last seven minutes. Former Kiwis fullback Mike McClennan was coach. Hooker Duane Mann, who had also captained the Kiwis, provided the on-field inspiration as Tonga only just failed to cause the biggest World Cup upset of all time.

That match has a proud place in World Cup folklore. Duane Mann had also played 100 consecutive games for Warrington and the capacity crowd adopted his Tongans on the night. A formidable pack also included cousin George Mann, powerful Solomon Haumono and a youthful Awen Gутtenbeil, while Bradford and Hull hero Tevita Vaikona had star quality in the backs. Tonga went on to draw 28-28 with Papua New Guinea in another thriller at Hull.

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Tonga had mixed fortunes in the next two World Cups. South Africa was thrashed 66-18 in Paris in the opening match of 2000 but Tonga was eliminated after losses to France and Papua New Guinea. Eight years later Tonga beat Ireland 22-20 at Parramatta before Samoa prevailed 20-12 at Penrith. Tonga then belted Scotland 48-0 at Rockhampton to finish seventh. In 2013 Tonga only just failed to reach the quarter-finals after a costly 26-24 loss to Scotland at Workington prior to wins over Italy at Halifax and Cook Islands at Leigh.

New Zealand has enjoyed three high-scoring wins over Tonga since that pulsating night in Warrington 22 years ago. All were warm-ups for the Kiwis against less experienced Tongan teams. It was 74-0 at 1999 and 56-8 in 2008, both at Mount Smart, and 40-24 at Rotorua in 2009. Interestingly, 20-year-old centre Michael Jennings played in that 2008 match, along with captain Awen Guttenbeil, a 1995 veteran who was back representing Tonga after a distinguished 10-Test career for the Kiwis.

None of the previous games had anything like the build up to this Saturday's clash with the Kiwis at Waikato Stadium. Jason Taumalolo's dramatic rejection of the Kiwis and embracing of Tonga only hours before the teams were named plus the defections of several other recent Kiwis and Andrew Fifita's withdrawal from the Kangaroos immediately marked this confrontation as one of the most important in pool play.

Nothing has changed that perception over the first two rounds as the Kiwis and Tongans have both comfortably beaten Samoa and Scotland. There is plenty at stake in addition to bragging rights between clubmates during pre-season training. The winner is expected to advance to a quarter-final against Lebanon at Wellington, while the loser is probably fated to engage in another bruising encounter against Fiji at Christchurch.

KIWIS V TONGA DOUBLE PASS WINNERS

Competition Winners - NZ v Tonga RLWC2017 Tickets

Drawn this morning:

- Note we have given away 12 double passes

Ray Edwards - Hamilton
Lorna Warrington - Manurewa
Benson Hayward - Green Bay,
Glenn Patterson - Mangere
Ian Carpenter - Red Beach
Steve Clancy - Tauranga
Jack Stantiall - Marton

David Morris - Auckland
Colina Hoyer - Tauranga
Fiona Passi - Mangere East
Mark Rayner - Tauranga
Paul Tierney - Hamilton



Spotted this in Christchurch... Fantastic!

Was great to be greeted by this as I walked out the Christchurch airport terminal. Anyone arriving in Christchurch would know the Rugby League World Cup is on!





By Miles Davis

Clive Sullivan

Clive Sullivan with the World Cup

THE RUGBY League World Cup has been the showcase for many a rugby league legend or character and the 1972 edition provided the platform for one such individual – Clive Sullivan.

The story of Clive Sullivan reads like a movie script. Born to the only black family in the district of Y Sblot (Splott in English) on the outskirts of Cardiff, Sullivan had trouble in his early teens with weak knees, feet and shoulders which required multiple operations. It was initially feared that he may not be able to walk let alone play any sport.

In 1961 he left school and worked for a while as a motor mechanic before joining the army, based at Catterick in North Yorkshire, to train as a radio operator. Once qualified, he volunteered to become a paratrooper, gaining his wings and joining 216 Parachute Signals Squadron at Farnborough, Hampshire. He saw active service with his unit in Nicosia, Cyprus in January 1964 and was subsequently attached to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force and was awarded the United Nations Medal for his service.

Picked for a rugby union inter-company game (apparently purely on the basis that he was Welsh) he was reluctant as he feared they would discover he was suffering from his ailments and may invalid him out of the army. He had a plan to play poorly and never be picked again but couldn't help himself when the opportunity arose and scored a spectacular try leaving the defence in his wake.

Buoyed by his success he took full advantage of rugby opportunities the army offered him and soon got himself a trial at Bradford Northern in 1961. He was not successful but a touch judge at the game had a word with him and arranged a trial with Hull FC. He was an instant hit, scoring 3 tries in the trial match and signing a professional contract the following day.

He spent the next 13 years with Hull playing 352 games and scoring a record 250 tries (still a record today) although his first 3 seasons were restricted by army duties and injury. In 1962 he returned from an army trip overweight and his knees gave way leading to 3 operations that season. The following year he nearly lost his life in a serious car crash but typical of the Sullivan fighting spirit he was back playing for Hull 3 months later.

In 1967 he scored 28 tries in 28 games and also made his debut for Great Britain, scoring 2 tries against France. In 1968 he notched 7 tries against Doncaster which is also a club record.

In 1974 he shocked the Hull rugby community by moving to rivals Hull Kingston Rovers where in 6 seasons he managed 118 tries in 213 games (the only player to score over 100 tries for both Hull clubs). 1980 saw him face his old club in the all-Hull Challenge Cup Final at Wembley (I can remember London being full of 95,000 Northerners wearing red and white and black and white scarves). Sullivan and Hull K.R. prevailed 10-5 securing the club's sole Challenge Cup victory in 6 final appearances.

Continued on next page...

In 1982 he returned to Hull and at the age of 39 was part of the Hull side that won the Challenge Cup Final against Widnes. He missed out on the first game at Wembley which ended in a 14-14 draw but was included in side for the replay due to Kiwi Dane O'Hara being injured (or suspended as some rumours have it). Hull won the replay 18-9.

Apart from a short period coaching at Doncaster, Sullivan remained at Hull till he hung his boots up in 1985 at the age of 42.

Sullivan played in 3 World Cups, 1968 and 1972 for Great Britain and in 1975 for Wales. In 1968 he scored a try against Australia and bagged a hat-trick against New Zealand but it was the 1972 tournament, held in France, that saw Sullivan excel and make history. He was appointed captain of the Great Britain side becoming the first black player to captain any British sporting side.

Sullivan was in imperious form scoring tries in all 4 of Great Britain's games at the tournament. First up was a clash against Australia which Great Britain won 27-21. Next up was a 13-4 win over the hosts in Grenoble. The last round-robin game was against the Kiwis and it turned out to be a bad day at the office for the Land of the Long White Cloud as Great Britain romped home 53-12.

Tournament results set up a final between Great Britain and Australia held at Lyon's Stade de Gerland. Sullivan kept up his scoring record with a length of the field try to keep Great Britain in the game and Mike Stephenson (Stevo from the Pommy league commentary team. A man who captained Dewsbury to their only championship in 1973 before joining Penrith in the NRL for a then record fee of \$39,000) scored in the 73rd minute to level the scores. At full-time the scores were tied at 10-10 and despite 20 minutes of extra-time there was no further scoring so Great Britain were awarded the title due to their superior record in the round-robin games.

It was a triumphant moment in Sullivan's international career in which he scored 13 tries in 17 appearances for Great Britain and 12 tries in 19 appearances for Wales. But rather than bask in the glory it was straight back to reality for Sullivan who returned to work at an aircraft factory in Brough (he had always worked as well as playing league). He thrilled his workmates by taking in the trophy for them to have a look at. His financial reward for winning the

World Cup was a paltry 50 pounds.

Shortly after his retirement from rugby league in 1985 he was diagnosed with liver cancer and tragically died 6 months later at the age of 42.

Sullivan had broken down racial barriers during his life and was an inspiration to many black youngsters who followed his example and made a mark in rugby league. He also left a mark on the humble folk of Hull. As his wife Rosalyn said after his death "Everyone was so fascinated by Clive that they wanted to touch his hair, my mum being the first. ... He was always very comfortable with his colour. He always said to me that it was an asset because it made him stand out. He very quickly identified with the people of Hull. They'd had tough lives, especially the fishermen, and, coming from a humble background himself, he understood that. He was loved by everyone in Hull, which was a great tribute to him because there's such fierce rivalry between the two rugby clubs"

He was awarded an MBE for his services to rugby league and after his death the main approach from the Humber Bridge into the city was renamed Clive Sullivan Way. Hull FC and Hull Kingston Rover play for the Clive Sullivan Trophy when they meet.

I remember him scoring spectacular tries and being the last Briton to hold up the Rugby League World Cup. A true legend.

1968 World Cup Great Britain v Australia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QMPuabB-LU>

Clive Sullivan's length of the field try v Australia in 1972 World Cup Final

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

Rugby League World Cup Final 1972

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6QneX1iBrI>

1980 Challenge Cup Final Hull FC v Hull Kingston Rovers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gbp4KS8Gtvc>



Clive Sullivan on the run.



Kiwi Fern's Nita Maynard. Kiwi Ferns v NZ Maori Women, 04 Nov 2017. Photo www.photosport.nz



By John Coffey

Six Teams In Women World Cup

THE KIWI Ferns will attempt to regain the Women's Rugby League World Cup when their six-team tournament starts at Southern Cross Group Stadium, home of the Cronulla Sharks, next week. They should comfortably account for Canada, Papua New Guinea and Cook Islands in their preliminary games, advancing to a likely semi-final against England on November 26. The women's final will be played alongside that of the men, at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane, on December 2.

New Zealand totally dominated the first three women's World Cups in 2000, 2003 and 2008. In the first final they overwhelmed Great Britain 26-4 at Warrington. In 2003 the Kiwi Ferns hammered New Zealand Maori 58-0 in the final at Auckland, while Australia was swept aside 34-0 in the decider at Brisbane in 2008. But the Jillaroos struck back to win the 2013 final 22-12 at Leeds, inflicting the Kiwi Ferns' only loss in four World Cup tournaments.

The Australians are entitled to favouritism this time, and not just because they will have home ground advantage. They enjoyed a three-nil whitewash in the Auckland Nines and held the upper hand in the Anzac Test at Canberra in May. Women's rugby league has been given much more prominence and resources by the NRL, with club competitions under way, more emphasis on inter-state rivalry and promotion of individual Jillaroos players on television shows.

Rugby league in Australia has aligned itself with touch football, which explains how it can claim to have 180,000 women players. But Australian women are embracing the football codes in big numbers. They won the 2016 Rio Olympic Sevens gold medal and Aussie Rules also has a thriving competition. Jillaroos captain Ruan Sims – sister of NRL players Ashton, Korbin and Tariq – is one of seven players backing up from their 2013 World Cup victory.

However, that pales in comparison to Kiwi Ferns captain Laura Mariu, who is preparing for her fifth World Cup and seeking her fourth victory. New coach Tony Benson, who has fashioned a proud record in men's rugby league in New Zealand and Britain, has benefitted from being able to select Australian-based players for the first time. It was a rare advantage for Benson to stage a World Cup trial instead of having to select his squad on form shown at provincial level.

England is the third established nation in the tournament. The Lionesses should not lack team-work with 10 players from the champion Bradford club, seven from St Helens and five from Featherstone Rovers. The sole "outsider" is Castleford's Katie Hepworth. Captain Andrea Dobson has represented England since she was 16 and has played in three World Cups, as has hooker and vice-captain Lois Forsell. England beat France twice earlier this year.

Continued on next page...

Unlike the men's event, competing nations appear to have been selected rather than having to qualify in their regions. Previous tournaments have included other Pacific islands such as Nieu, Samoa, Tonga and Tokelau, but Cook Islands is the lone inclusion this time. France and Russia competed in 2008 and France again in 2013 when it was outclassed by the big three.

Kiwis centre Brad Takairangi will be taking more than a passing interest in how the Cooks perform. His sister, Kiana, is a member of their squad. But the Cooks have the misfortune to be in the same pool as Australia and England and have drawn New Zealand as their cross-over opponent.

The Canada Ravens are a surprise inclusion, considering all of their players have been drawn from Sevens (i.e. rugby union). Mandy Marchak, for example, can count three rugby union World Cups and two Sevens World Cups on her playing record. Illawarra club Corrimal travelled to Canada earlier this year to provide the Ravens with valuable practice, while the Toronto Wolfpack have raised rugby league awareness in their country.

Papua New Guinea's Orchids complete the women's draw, and no-one needs to explain the enthusiasm for rugby league in their homeland after watching the Kumuls' World Cup matches over the last two weekends. But the women's game was only introduced there in 2014 and PNG lost to the Jillaroos 42-4 at Port Moresby in September. You can bet that the biggest cheer of that game was Maima Wei's try for the Orchids in the 66th minute.

Two teams advance from each pool to the semi-finals. Australia and England should be too strong for Cook Islands in Pool A, while Canada and PNG will compete to join New Zealand as a semi-finalist from Pool B. The Rugby League International Federation has created a new perpetual trophy for the women, the design being similar to the Paul Barriere Trophy that the men compete for.

The draw (all games to be telecast on Sky Sport) is:

Pool matches at Cronulla (NZ times) – November 16, New Zealand v Canada 3.45pm, Australia v Cook Islands 6pm, England v PNG 8.30pm. November 19: Australia v England 3.45pm, New Zealand v Cook Islands 6pm, PNG v Canada 8.30pm. November 22: England v Cook Islands 3.45pm, Australia v Canada 6pm, New Zealand v PNG 8.30pm.

Semi-finals at Cronulla (NZ times) – Pool B winner v Pool A runner-up 3.45pm, Pool A winner v Pool B runner-up 6pm. Final at Brisbane (NZ time) – December 2, 5.45pm.



An update on Bill Whitehead (rugby league bill) he is in Elmswood retirement village in Christchurch you can phone him on 033599984. He is doing ok in fact I thought he was looking great and still as sharp as a butchers knife.



I love the passion of the Tongan fans. Spotted this guy yesterday driving around Auckland.



**1st Tour National Representative
1986**

v N.Z. ARMED FORCES Won 78 - 4

v SAMOA Won 34 - 16

v TOKELAU Won 26 - 22

v NEW ZEALAND MAORI Lost 23 - 18 (Play off)

v SAMOA Lost 4 - 46 (Major semi)



Players from Top Left Back Row: **George Mann Leka** (Vava'u), **Will Ilolahia** (Kolomu'a) KOMITI, **Simon Riggs** (Mu'a) KOMITI, **Sione Tou** (Tongatapu), **Don Mann** (Vava'u) CO-COACH, **Greg Beer** (Fasi moe Afi) KOMITI, **George Mann Lahi** (Vava'u) CHAIRMAN, **Sipi Riggs** (Mu'a) KOMITI, **John Fifita** (St George NRL, Ma'ufanga), **Dick 'Uluave** (Mu'a, 'Eua) VICE KAPITENI
Middle Row: **Ma'ake Roiall** (Fasi moe Afi), **Sikalu Katoa** (Mu'a), **Poyer Finau** (Mu'a), **Russell Inu** (Fasi moe Afi), **Peni Latu** (Kolofu'ou), **Hala Fihl** (Tongatapu)
Front Row: **Lui Riggs** (Mu'a), **Duane Mann** (Vava'u), **Warren Mann** (Vava'u), **Beni Riggs** (Mu'a), **Wyndom Lulumai** (Tongatapu), **Otto Schaumkel** (Niulei, Vava'u)
Absent: **Ray Williams** (Fiji) COACH, **Mick Curren** (Kolofu'ou) KAPITENI, **Neil Muller** (Nukunuku) KOMITI, **Dave Schaumkel** (Niulei, Vava'u), **Robert Fonua** (Kolomotua), **Pita Campbell** (Fasi moe Afi), **Alimoni Liava'a** (Hihifo)

1986 Mate Ma'a Tonga

By Don Mann Jnr

THE SURGE of support and pride behind the Tongan Rugby League team 'Mate Ma'a Tonga' and the galvanising of the Tongan community holds a special place in the hearts of a group of families that were instrumental in establishing rugby league in Tonga and the National team.

The Pacific Cup of 1986, held in Rarotonga, was the catalyst for the inaugural Tongan National Team. The driving force was founding Chairman, the late George Mann snr supported by brothers Simon and Sipi Riggs, Greg Beer, Neil Muller and a young Will Ilolahia. George snr's younger brother Don Mann snr (Kiwi international 1970-74) was co-coach. Don snr recruited his former Kiwi teammate Ray Williams of the Richmond Rovers Rugby League club to be head coach.

The 1986 team brought together players of Tongan heritage from the New Zealand, Australian and UK competitions. High profile players of that time included team captain Mick Curran (Mt Albert Lions), former Kiwi and inaugural Tongan vice-captain Dick Uluave (Manawatu) and John Fifita (St George Dragons, Sydney). Players that went on to have a distinguished international and professional career included cousins Duane Mann (Warrington, NZ Warriors, Kiwis) and George Mann jnr (Newcastle Knights, St Helens, Leeds, Warrington, Widnes, Kiwis). Players that turned out every weekend in their club colours in front of thousands at Carlaw Park during the mid-80s Fox Memorial era formed the heart and soul of the team.

A quirk of that era was that until the original team was formed, players of Polynesian heritage were considered Maori and therefore selected for the NZ Maori team even though they had no Maori whakapapa. Fortunately, that type of thinking belongs in the past.

When Mate Ma'a Tonga stride out on the turf of Waikato Stadium in front of thousands of Tongan supporters, spare a thought for those pioneers that laid the foundation for this celebration of Polynesian pride.

My Day With a Knight

By Colin MacKenzie

I WAS THRILLED to receive an invitation from my good friend Sir Peter Leitch to attend the Kiwis vs Scotland WRLC match in Christchurch as his guest, but was apprehensive as I hadn't seen a rugby league test live since my stroke in 1996. I also hadn't been to AMI Stadium since it was the Addington Showgrounds! But as the result of a meeting with Pete Maddock from VBase I was met outside the ground by VBase host Andrew Stechman with a wheelchair which transported me to and from the corporate suites, a journey which would've been beyond my limited mobility!

Sir Peter, as always, was a tremendous host. The company in the corporate box was great and the staff made sure we wanted for nothing. I'd like to thank all involved, including Pete Maddock from VBase, VBase host Andrew Stechman, my fellow guests for making me so welcome and Sir Peter Leitch for what was a perfect day for an avid rugby league supporter.

Some things I've long wanted to say. I first met Peter Leitch on the hill at Leichardt Stadium in 1982 as I finished my first overseas rugby league assignment for RNZ Sports.

He nearly caused a riot in a grandstand when we were doing a live RNZ Sports commentary on the Kiwis vs Hull match in 1989. Pete was one of the first to my bedside when I had the stroke and has remained in regular contact and I've been the recipient of much generosity from him through the years.

Perhaps it's apt that Peter Leitch, who first managed to get me to a game, a Kiwi trial in Christchurch, after my illness all those years ago has now also been instrumental in getting me to my first rugby league test in 21 years. Many thanks Sir Peter Leitch, there when it matters!

Hi Sir Peter,

JUST A special note to thank ever so much for inviting myself, and wife Jeanette, along with Ray & Donna Baxendale, Mike O'Donnell & partner Cathy to the VIP Lounge at AMI Stadium last Sat. nite at the Kiwis v Scotland World Cup fixture, I can assure you that this was an special privilege to all of us and a tremendous thank you to yourself for making contact with us to be able to attend the VIP lounge.

I can pass this on from the lot of us and the time we had in catching up with fellow Rugby League friends, player's, along with ex and current administrators of the game is outstanding and something I treasure very much, once again I want to pass my thanks and deep appreciation to yourself for the kind invitation and going out of your way to extend the invitation. I will catch you in Wgtn in two weeks time.

Kind Regards

Tony Coll - Kiwi No. 503



Congratulations Lakakana Nanayakkara you have this consolation prize coming. You're our first ever competition entry from Germany! It's on the way buddy



Reader Mail



Duke IN
QUEENSTOWN
IS BEHIND THE
KIWIS.



I love it when people put some effort into our giveaways. Raymond from Hamilton has won a special prize of 2 tickets to Saturdays game.



Hi Peter, Thanks so again for the shirts for U6 Te Atatu Roosters team , the boys loved them! Emma Boyd.



Another happy winner from our Vodafone Warriors draw thank you.



Hi Sir Peter!

HARRY ASKED me to share a couple of his rugby photos with you. So here they are!
#number7 #futurewarrior

Becka Pratt (Living in the UK)

HHEY BUTCH! Just wanted to say thank you for all the support you have given me over the past week. You were the first person to come up and visit me at the hospital and for that I love ya buddy!... I'm moving around a lot easier now and will be flying back to Australia on Thursday to be with my family. Thanks again butch!! See you soon

Gerard Beale



**The chosen charity for RLWC2017 in NZ is League 4 Life.
Read more about them below...**

League 4 Life Foundation

**Empowering, equipping and encouraging the rugby league community
affected by injury, illness and disability**

About Us

Established in 2011, the League 4 Life Foundation raises funds and provides opportunities for the people in the rugby league community when they need it most.

Mission

To provide assistance to rugby league players who sustain serious, permanent and/or life changing injuries in the sport of rugby league.

To offer assistance to ALL participants of Rugby League and members of their families who encounter genuine hardship.

Apply

The League 4 Life foundation awards grants exclusively to individuals, projects or organisations in the Rugby League Community in New Zealand.

Visit: <http://nzrl.co.nz/league-4-life/applications/>
for information on how to apply and the grant application criteria.

Contact

For general questions or enquiries relating to the application process, please email admin@nzrl.co.nz.

Below are the trustee and contact details:

Scott MacKay (Chairman)	scott@rfc.nz
Sara Jane Erika	sarajanecreative@gmail.com
Bill McEntee	billmcentee2@gmail.com
Sam Ackerman	sam.ackerman@icloud.com
Tawera Nikau	Murray Eade

Parton

Sir Peter Leitch "Mad Butcher"



L4L tent that will be in Hamilton on
Saturday night.



By Richard Becht

Vodafone Warriors Boost Coaching Staff

VODAFONE WARRIORS CEO Cameron George has today announced coaching changes focused on significantly improving the club's development of young players for the NRL.

He said the moves followed the end-of-season review which had highlighted the need to better prepare players for first grade as they progressed through the Vodafone Warriors' Intrust Super Premiership and under-20 teams.

"A stronger focus on the development of our younger players is critical to the success of our NRL side," said Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George.

"While we've made some ground it's clear players coming through our system aren't well enough equipped to make the jump to the NRL. We need to be a lot better."

Current recruitment and development Tony Iro, who has extensive coaching experience at international, NRL and NYC levels, will take over as head coach of the club's ISP side in 2018 while this season's ISP coach Ricky Henry and his assistant Jerome Ropati will team up with the under-20 side in the new-look New South Wales competition (replacing the NYC).

"Tony has been relieved of his recruitment duties to focus on his ISP role as well as our development requirements while he'll also be involved with the NRL side," he said.

"He has a level of coaching experience and expertise which will be of huge benefit to our ISP players. As a long-time international and NRL player he has a real understanding of what it takes to make it in first grade.

"Ricky and Jerome did a fantastic job together with

the ISP team this year and they can use that to significantly lift our standards in our under-20 team.

"These moves now give us a really extensive coaching structure right through our three teams."

George added he expected to confirm two other key appointments soon for a general manager – football and a head of recruitment.

"These are critical roles and we need to ensure we find the most suitable candidates to suit our requirements and meet our values," he said.

Iro has had a long association with the Vodafone Warriors.

After first joining the club in 2005, he was the foundation NYC coach in 2008 and 2009 before becoming Ivan Cleary's assistant coach when he was involved in helping the club to its second NRL grand final appearance in 2011.

Iro was also assistant coach in 2012 and took over as acting head coach for the last two games of that campaign before having a stint as high performance general manager with the New Zealand Rugby League. He returned to the Vodafone Warriors as an assistant coach in 2015 followed by a move into recruitment and development.

Henry, who was one of Stacey Jones' assistant coaches for the 2016 ISP campaign, also has a lengthy history with the Vodafone Warriors stretching back to development roles he held from 2008-2012. He coached the now-defunct Auckland Vulcans in the New South Wales Cup in 2012 before having a term as a Vodafone Warriors NRL assistant coach in 2013-2014.

Vodafone Warriors Members Forum Last Wednesday

ABOUT 200 Vodafone Warriors members gathered for the club's annual members-only forum at Mount Smart Stadium last week.

Running for almost two hours, it was an opportunity for many of the club's longest-serving and most passionate members – and a few younger ones as well – to not only hear about developments and plans first-hand but to ask questions and air their own views on a range of topics.

Held in the Corporate Lounge in the East Stand, the event was put together by the Vodafone Warriors' memberships team and was also attended by many of the club's commercial staff.

Leading proceedings as MC was Vodafone Warriors corporate sales manager Gordon Gibbons while the panel of key club personnel comprised head coach Stephen Kearney and new head of performance Alex Corvo plus CEO Cameron George and fan engagement manager Aaron Lawton.

Gibbons interviewed each about relevant topics before hitting them with questions sent in by members unable to attend the forum as well as taking questions from the floor.

The vast majority the questions and comments were football-flavoured and were directed at Kearney and Corvo.

Once the formal part of the evening was over, Kearney stayed to mingle with the guests. Indeed, he was the last to leave, ensuring he met and spoke to everyone who approached him including two members who had travelled from Nelson. They came to Auckland to see the Kiwis' RLWC2017 match against Toa Samoa and decided to stay on, so they could attend the forum. They revelled in the opportunity to have photos taken with Kearney.

Both the coach and Corvo dealt with many topics of special interest. A package covering some of the key questions and responses will be produced and sent to members.

The Vodafone Warriors really appreciated the effort made by so many members to come along to the event.



Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George & head coach Steve Kearney showing off the new Canterbury training range for 2018.



Richard Becht - media manager, Gordon Gibbons - corporate sales manager. Both were in the Kiwis' management team for the 2008 RLWC.





Kerry and Brent both members for the last 10 years.



Matt Moorehead and Grant McKendry at the Members Forum.



Ranjit Lala & George Stanisich at Members Forum.



Susan Turner - corporate ticketing, Dave Stevens and Neelam Patel - assistant accountant.



Ruben Wiki & Alex Corvo wearing the new 2018 warriors gear. Alex is the Vodafone Warriors new Head of Performance Physical and Football he comes with a great record, Brisbane Broncos 2014-20.



Some of the members at the membership forum.



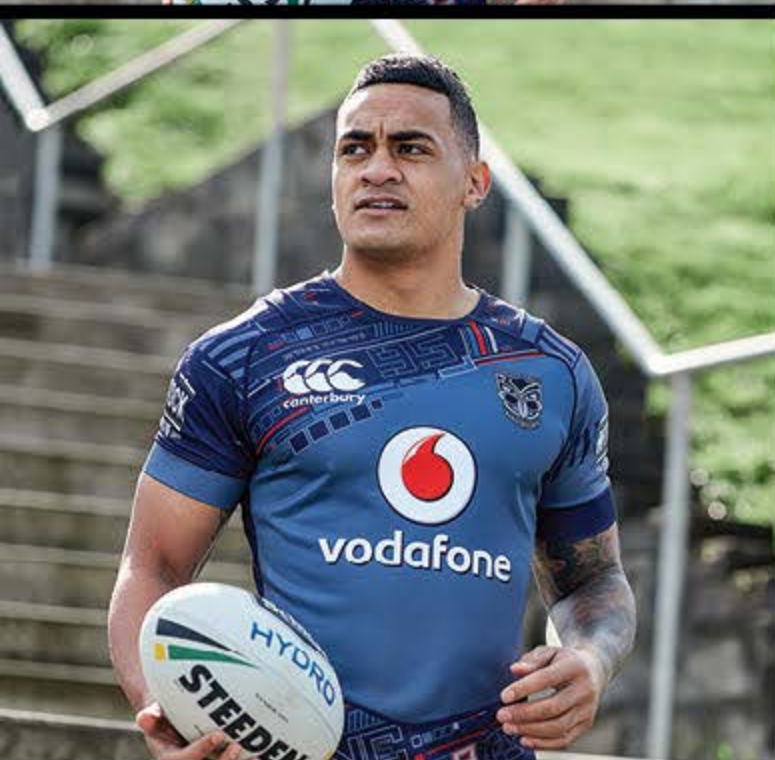
At the Members Forum last Wednesday night at Mt Smart Stadium From the left Howard Everson, Lorna Warrington, Gordon Gibbons, M8, Trevor Warrington, Glenda and Robbie Hurst



VW Staff Jane Dillane - finance, Glenn Critchley - Commercial Manager and Peter Young - photographer.



Some of the staff at the Members Forum Shani - memberships manager, Kate - merchandise manager, Charlotte - memberships coordinator, Jono - sponsorship account manager, Rickey - memberships sales manager, Daisy - events & entertainment manager, Neelam - assistant accountant and Jayne - EA.



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Vodafone Warriors set for Rotorua Storm

By Richard Becht



NEW SIGNING Tohu Harris is in line for an early taste of facing his old team when the Vodafone Warriors and 2017 premiership winner Melbourne headline a two-day 'Festival of Rugby League' with a trial in Rotorua in February next year.

And Ryan Hoffman, who has come full circle by rejoining the Storm for 2018, could take on his ex-Vodafone Warriors side after ending a three-year stint in Auckland.

The Rotorua Lakes Council and the Vodafone Warriors today jointly announced the trial had been confirmed for Rotorua International Stadium on Saturday, February 17 (3.00pm kick-off).

It will cap a programme including a regional nines tournament for the Peter McLeod Cup, a trophy named in honour of the long-serving former general manager for Events and Venues Rotorua, who passed away almost two years ago. McLeod was the driving force behind the bid which resulted in the Auckland Warriors being introduced to the then-Winfield Cup in 1995.

Through their Harvey Norman Community Warriors programme, the Vodafone Warriors will also have a strong presence in the Geyser City leading up to game day when they'll be out and about in the community. The feature of the activity will be a packed schedule of school visits.

"Having a trial in Rotorua is a great fit for the club as well as our members and fans," said Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George.

"It's an ideal chance to take the team to another centre and this time there's the added attraction of having the premiers as our opponents, not to mention the possibility of Tohu (Harris) coming up against his former team-mates.

"We love the opportunity trials outside Auckland provide to meet fans and to connect with communities throughout the country."

It will be the fourth time the Vodafone Warriors have had a trial in Rotorua.

"It's always exciting for us having the Vodafone Warriors in Rotorua," said Crispian Stewart, operations and event development manager, Events and Venues

Rotorua.

"They do a great job getting out and about in the community and once again our local players have the chance to be involved with the staging of the nines tournament for the Peter McLeod Cup. The final will be played before the NRL trial with Peter's daughters presenting the trophy."

In recent years the Vodafone Warriors have played trials in Palmerston North, Hamilton, Whangarei, Dunedin and Nelson.

Their first preseason clash in Rotorua was against the Sydney Roosters in 2010 when they won 26-8. In 2011 they beat Parramatta 24-4 at Rotorua International Stadium and returned in 2015 when they beat Penrith 18-4.

Vodafone Warriors head coach Stephen Kearney and his staff will have an opportunity to use some of the club's new signings on February 17. As well as Harris, they have signed Kiwis Adam Blair, Gerard Beale, Peta Hiku and Harris plus Gold Coast's Leivaha Pulu and Taupo-raised Matiu Love-Henry from Brisbane. Beale faces a lengthy stint on the sideline recovering from a broken leg he suffered in the Kiwis' opening Rugby League World Cup match against Toa Samoa on October 28.

While Cooper Cronk and Harris have finished with the Storm, the Craig Bellamy-coached champion side will go into 2018 still boasting Kangaroos Cameron Smith, Billy Slater, Will Chambers, Jordan McLean, Cameron Munster and Felise Kaufusi, Kiwis Nelson Asofa-Solomona, Kenny Bromwich and Jesse Bromwich, excitement machines Suliasi Vunivalu and Josh Addo-Carr and new signings Hoffman and Sam Kasiano.





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Fri 17 Nov, 10.30pm

SEMI FINAL 1
Fri 24 Nov, 10pm

QUARTER FINALS 2&3
Sat 18 Nov, 5pm

SEMI FINAL 2
Sat 25 Nov, 6pm

QUARTER FINAL 4
Sun 19 Nov, 6pm

FINAL
Sat 2 Dec, 10pm

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Media Release

Campese Set For Canberra Farewell With Italy

ITALY HAVE named Raiders legend Terry Campese to return from a calf injury for what will be his farewell appearance at Canberra Stadium against Fiji in Friday night's must win Rugby League World Cup match.

Campese, who qualifies for the Azzurri through his Italian grandfather Antonio, hasn't played at Canberra Stadium since his final Raiders game three years ago but he didn't get a send-off from fans as his future with the club was not resolved.

After helping Italy to qualify for the World Cup, the former Raiders captain has been targeting Friday night's match in Canberra and Campese captain-coached Queanbeyan Blues this season upon his return from a stint in Super League with Hull KR.

He has been a late withdrawal from Italy's first two World Cup matches against Ireland and USA but is expected to play on Friday night and was named by coach Cameron Ciraldo at five-eighth, enabling James Tedesco to revert to fullback for the must win clash against the unbeaten Fiji.

Dual international Mirco Bergamasco, who played 89 rugby union Tests for Italy before switching codes, has been included in the 21-man squad named on Tuesday.

In other team news:

Samoa coach Matt Parish has made a raft of changes for Saturday's clash with Scotland at Barlow Park in Cairns, which will decide which of the teams advance to the quarter-finals.

Fa'amanu Brown will partner Penrith rookie Jarome Luai in the halves, while Matthew Wright replaces Ken Maumalo on the wing and Frank Winterstein and Buntty Afoa have been named in the starting forward pack in place of Leeson Ah Mau and Frank Pritchard.

Sam Tagataese has been named captain in Pritchard's absence, although he will start from the interchange bench.

Elsewhere, Tonga coach Kristian Woolf has recalled

Konrad Hurrell to the centres in place of Solomone Kata and switched hookers Sione Katoa and Saliva Havili for Saturday's blockbuster clash with New Zealand at Waikato Stadium.

The Kiwis have reverted closely to the team which beat Samoa in the opening round of the tournament, recalling wingers Dallen Watene-Zelezniak and Jordan Rapana, along with five-eighth Kodi Nikorima, at the expense of Jason Nightingale, Peta Hiku and Te Maire Martin, despite the trio scoring eight tries in last weekend's 74-6 route of Scotland in Christchurch.

Lebanon veteran Chris Saab should finally get the chance to play at the World Cup when the Cedars take on Australia at Sydney Football Stadium on Saturday night after being knocked out in the warm-up for the opening game and ruled out of last weekend's match against England due to concussion.

The Kangaroos have reshuffled their team, with Cooper Cronk and James Maloney returning in the halves after missing last Friday night's match against France and Tom Trbojevic and Cameron Munster forming a new look centres pairing.

France have named John Boudebza at hooker after sending Eloi Pelissier home for disciplinary reasons, while Luke Douglas will captain Scotland after Danny Brough was one of three Bravehearts players released from the squad for breaching the code of conduct when deemed by airline staff to be too intoxicated to fly from Christchurch to Cairns with the team last Sunday.

The teams are....

Continued on next page...

**Friday November 10, Fiji v Italy
at Canberra Stadium, 7.40pm
(AEDT)**

FIJI

- 1 Kevin NAIQAMA (c)
- 2 Suliasi VUNIVALU
- 3 Taane MILNE
- 4 Akuila UATE
- 5 Marcelo MONTOYA
- 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 Salesi FAINGAA
- 20 Sitiveni MOCEIDREKE
- 21 Pio SOKOBALAVUA

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
- 10 Daniel ALVARO
- 11 Jayden WALKER
- 12 Mark MINICHIELLO (c)
- 13 Nathan BROWN
- 15 Brendan SANTI
- 16 Shannon WAKEMAN
- 17 Joel RIETHMULLER
- 18 Christophe CALEGARI

- 19 Gavin HISCOX
- 20 Richard LEPORI
- 21 Colin WILKIE
- 22 Mirco BERGAMASCO

**Saturday November 11, New
Zealand v Tonga, Waikato Stadium,
Hamilton, 5.05pm (3.05pm
AEDT)**

NEW ZEALAND

- 1 Roger TUIVASA-SHECK
- 2 Dallin WATENE-ZELEZNIAK
- 3 Dean WHARE
- 4 Bradley TAKAIRANGI
- 5 Jordan RAPANA
- 6 Kodi NIKORIMA
- 7 Shaun JOHNSON
- 8 Martin TAUPAU
- 9 Thomas LEULIAI
- 10 Jared WAEREA-HARGREAVES
- 11 Simon MANNERING
- 12 Joseph TAPINE
- 13 Adam BLAIR (c)
- 14 Nelson ASOFA-SOLOMONA
- 15 Russell PACKER
- 16 Isaac LIU
- 17 Danny LEVI

- 18 Kenny BROMWICH
- 19 Te Maire MARTIN
- 20 Elijah TAYLOR
- 21 Peta HIKU

TONGA

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

- 18 Mahe FONUA
- 19 Manu VATUVEI
- 20 Ukuma TA'AI
- 21 Tevita PANGAI JNR

**Saturday November 11, Samoa v
Scotland, Barlow Park, Cairns,
4.10pm (5.10pm AEDT)**

SAMOA

- 1 Young TONUMAIPEA
- 2 Ricky LEUTELE
- 3 Timoteo LAFAI
- 4 Joseph LEILUA
- 5 Matthew WRIGHT
- 6 Jarome LUAI
- 7 Fa'amanu BROWN
- 8 Junior PAULO
- 9 Jazz TEVAGA
- 10 Herman ESE'ESE
- 11 Joshua PAPALII
- 12 Frank WINTERSTEIN
- 13 Buntty AFOA
- 14 Pita GODINET
- 15 Joseph PAULO
- 16 Leeson AH MAU
- 17 Sam TAGATAESE ©

- 18 Frank PRITCHARD (c)
- 19 Suaia MATAGI
- 20 Ben ROBERTS
- 21 Ken MAUMALO

SCOTLAND

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

- 18 Alex WALKER
- 19 Will OAKS
- 20 David SCOTT
- 21 Keiran MORAN

Saturday, November 11, Australia v Lebanon, Sydney Football Stadium, 8.05pm (AEDT)

AUSTRALIA

- 1 Valentine HOLMES
- 2 Dane GAGAI
- 3 William CHAMBERS
- 4 Cameron MUNSTER
- 5 Josh MANSOUR
- 6 James MALONEY
- 7 Cooper CRONK
- 8 Aaron WOODS
- 9 Cameron SMITH (c)
- 10 David KLEMMER
- 11 Boyd CORDNER
- 12 Matthew GILLET
- 13 Felise KAUFUSI
- 14 Ben HUNT
- 15 Jordan MCLEAN
- 16 Reagan CAMPBELL-GILLARD
- 17 Wade GRAHAM

- 18 Joshua MCGUIRE
- 19 Michael MORGAN
- 20 Joshua DUGAN
- 21 Billy SLATER

LEBANON

- 1 Anthony LAYOUN
- 2 Travis ROBINSON
- 3 James ELIAS 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 Andrew KAZZI

- 18 Jason WEHBE
- 19 Danny BARAKAT
- 20 Elias SUKKAR
- 21 Daniel ABOU-SLEIMAN

Sunday, November 12, PNG v USA, Oil Search National Football Stadium 3.05pm (4.05pm AEDT)

PNG

- 1 David MEAD (c)
- 2 Justin OLAM
- 3 Kato OTTIO
- 4 Nene MACDONALD
- 5 Garry LO
- 6 Lachlan LAM
- 7 Watson BOAS
- 8 Moses MENINGA
- 9 James SEGEYARO
- 10 Luke PAGE
- 11 Rhyse MARTIN
- 12 Willie MINOGA
- 13 Paul AITON
- 14 Kurt BAPTISTE
- 15 Stargroth AMEAN
- 16 Nixon PUTT
- 17 Thompson TETEHE

- 18 Rod GRIFFIN
- 19 Wartovo PUARA
- 20 Enock MAKI
- 21 Ase BOAS

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 Joe EICHNER
- 13 Nicholas NEWLIN
- 14 Sam TOCHTERMAN-TALBOT
- 15 Fotukava MALU
- 16 Martwain JOHNSTON
- 17 Gabriel FARLEY

- 18 Steve HOWARD
- 19 Andrew KNEISLEY
- 20 David ULCH
- 21 Joshua RICE

Sunday, November 12, Wales v Ireland, Perth Rectangular Stadium, 3.35pm (6.35pm AEDT)

WALES

- 1 Elliot KEAR
- 5 Regan GRACE
- 3 Michael CHANNING
- 4 Dalton Grant
- 2 Rhys WILLIAMS
- 6 Courtney DAVIES
- 7 Danny ANSELL
- 8 Craig KOPCZAK (c)
- 9 Matty FOZARD
- 10 Philip JOSEPH
- 11 Rhodri LLOYD
- 12 Joe BURKE
- 13 Morgan KNOWLES
- 14 Steve PARRY
- 15 Gavin BENNION
- 16 Ben EVANS
- 17 Ben MORRIS

- 18 Andrew GAY
- 19 Matthew BARRON
- 20 Christiaan ROETS
- 21 Matt Seamark

IRELAND

- 1 Scott GRIX
- 2 Shannon McDONNELL
- 3 Ed CHAMBERLAIN
- 4 Api PEWHAIRANGI
- 5 Liam KAY
- 6 Joe KEYES
- 7 Liam FINN (c)
- 8 Anthony MULLALY
- 9 Michael MCILLORUM
- 10 Kyle AMOR
- 11 Louie MCCARTHY-SCARSBROOK
- 12 Will HOPE
- 13 Brad SINGLETON
- 14 George KING
- 15 Matty HADDEN
- 16 Joe PHILBIN
- 17 Oliver ROBERTS

- 18 James HASSON
- 19 Tyrone MCCARTHY
- 20 Casey DUNNE
- 21 Jack HIGGINSON

England v France, Sunday 12 November, Perth Rectangular Stadium, 6.05pm (9.05pm AEDT)

ENGLAND

- 1 Gareth WIDDOP
- 2 Stefan RATCHFORD
- 3 Mark Percival
- 4 John BATEMAN
- 5 Jermaine MCGILLVARY
- 6 Kevin Brown
- 7 Luke GALE
- 8 Chris HILL
- 9 James ROBY Josh HODGSON
- 10 James GRAHAM
- 11 Ben CURRIE

- 12 Mike McMEEKAN
- 13 Sean O'LOUGHLIN (c)
- 14 Alex WALMSLEY
- 15 Thomas BURGESS
- 16 Scott TAYLOR
- 17 George WILLIAMS
- 18 Ryan HALL
- 19 Elliott WHITEHEAD
- 20 Chris HEIGHINGTON
- 21 Kallum WATKINS

FRANCE

- 1 Mark KHEIRALLAH
- 2 Fouad YAHA
- 3 Bastien ADER
- 4 Damien CARDACE
- 5 Ilias BERGAL

- 6 Theo FAGES (c)
- 7 Lucas ALBERT
- 8 Antoni MARIA
- 9 John BOUDEBZA
- 10 Julian BOUSQUET
- 11 Benjamin GARCIA
- 12 Benjamin JULLIEN
- 13 Jason BAITIERI
- 14 Romain NAVARRETE
- 15 Thibault MARGALET
- 16 Maxime HEROLD
- 17 Remy MARGINET

- 18 Olivier ARNAUD
- 19 Mickael ROUCH
- 20 Nabil DJALOUT
- 23 Lambert BELMAS

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The Kiwis looking relaxed.



The Kiwis with the Glenora Bears



JOYCE PUTOHE IS LOUD AND PROUD OF OUR KIWIS.



AND SO AM I!

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