

RLWC 2017

Sir Peter Leitch Club Newsletter

15th November 2017

#196

Two games in NZ this weekend:

Kiwis v Fiji - This Saturday - 7.30pm - Westpac Stadium, Wellington

Tonga v Lebanon - This Saturday - 5.00pm - Christchurch Stadium



KIWIS v TONGA



David Fusitua scores for Tonga.



Haka stand off.



Martin Taupau in action.



Roger Tuivasa-Sheck scores for the Kiwis.

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz



Women's Rugby League World Cup

*By Jenny Pope
Former Jillaroo*

Kiwi Ferns Training. Photos courtesy NZRL

THIS THURSDAY another Rugby League World Cup tournament is kicking off in Cronulla, NSW Australia. 6 Nations are going head to head. It will be a physical and athletic display of Women putting their bodies on the line. Australia will be looking at defending their title for the first time. New Zealand will be looking at getting revenge as their strangle hold on Women's League is slipping. The Australian girls have got the better of them since their World Cup win four years ago in England.

As a former player, never reaching a world cup but did play for Queensland and represented the Australian Jillaroos in a couple of outings, I have some idea of what these girls are going through. Although the support they are receiving is 10 times more than what the players before them received, it is no where in comparison to the men. I take my hat off to all the Women that are representing their countries on Thursday who probably all have full time jobs and some are mothers which in itself is challenging, on top of that they have been attending camps, will have nutrition plans to follow and a training programme, that some are having to do on their own to make sure they are in physical peak for this gruelling three-week tournament.

Looking at the Jillaroos, there are a few players I have had the pleasure and not so much pleasure in playing with and against them. Renee Kunst, the hardest second rower you will find. Her determined hit ups and bruising defence makes her a wrecking ball on the left-hand side, her fellow Captain Steph Hancock who I mostly played against, and I can tell you she has power, speed and a physical presence that will take some stopping if she can run straight. Ali Briggingshaw has had to force her way back into the starting line up after a pretty serious leg injury, she is also competing in the boxing circles in Queensland. These three women will

insure Australia won't be shy in going forward, and will take some stopping. However, the Kiwi Ferns are physical, big side who will be gelling as a unit and working out some team plays to stop these Jillaroos. Their half combination is strong and they have fast units out wide. On top of that their forwards know how to hit and their opposition know they have been hit.

Like all Rugby League fans, I am so happy these games are going to be televised, these women are athletes and push themselves just as much as the men but with little or no financial help and during the week they work normal jobs and look after their families. But come Thursday they will be Rugby League players in their own right, and it's about time that the NRL are recognising them. I hoping that some girls will watch these games in New Zealand and seek out a team to play in next year. It is the most rewarding sport. I am trying to get a school girls competition running on the West Coast, (where I started my playing career). I encourage anyone to get involved in your area. I know Christchurch and Wellington competitions are struggling for numbers.

Australia on the other hand have set up academies and have a strong school girl's competition in Brisbane area, along with a premier and premier B grade teams in the seniors.

Kiwi Ferns will be playing Canada first up and it will be a good game to settle their nerves and get their combinations working together. Please check your local guide for game times it will be a great 80minutes of really good Rugby League, and as the boys do battle to try in stay in the world cup. I know the girls will be there on final day, hopefully holding the cup and doing their country proud. I for one am truly excited!!! GO THE FERNS!



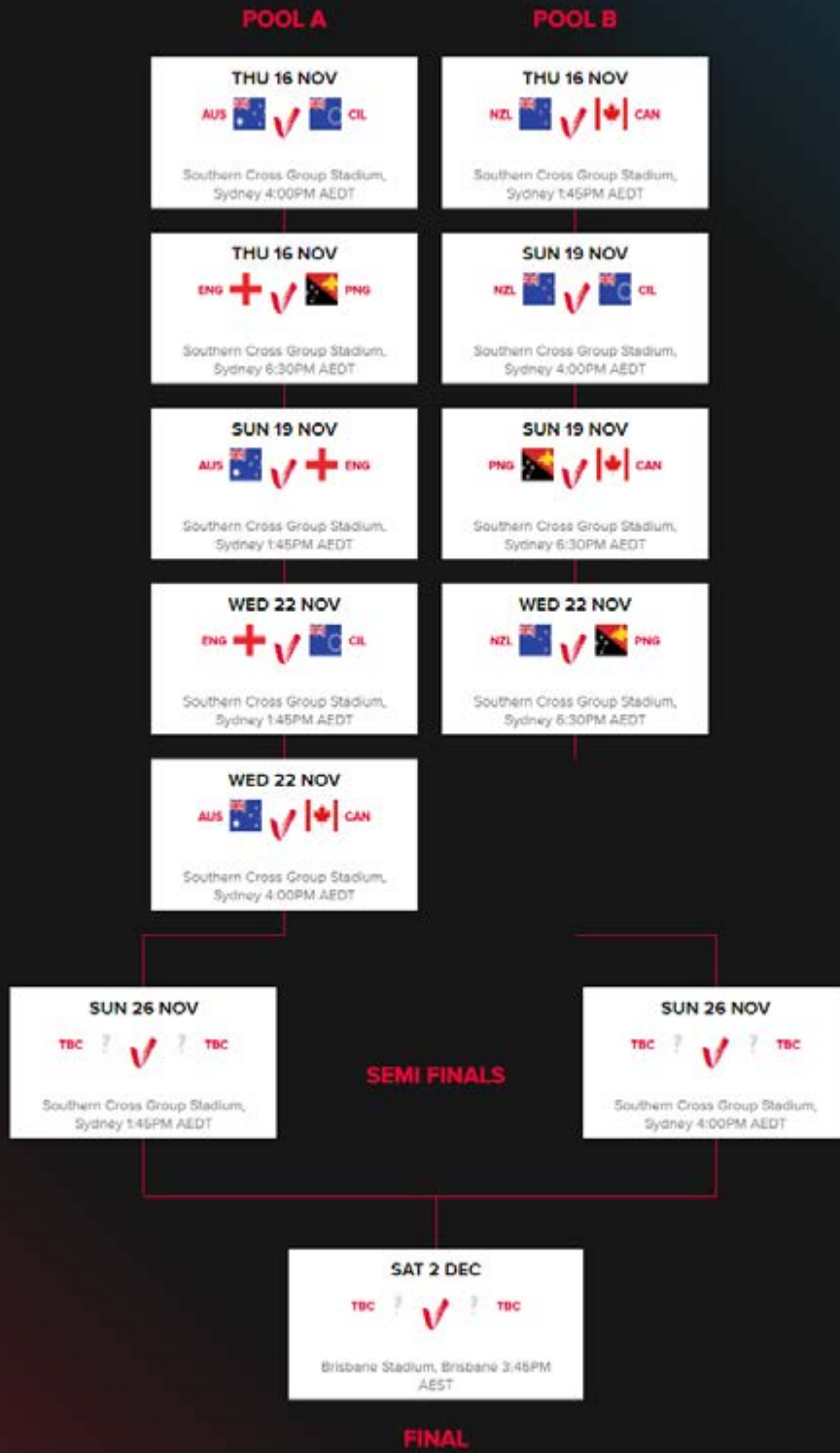
Kiwi Ferns Training



World Cup Captains



WOMEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP DRAW



WOMEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP DRAW



We Might Have Lost But That Was Fun!

By David Kemeys

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



I AM ABSOLUTELY gutted to read that police made 53 arrests in Otahuhu after celebrations went haywire after Tonga's Rugby League World Cup win over the Kiwis on Saturday.

I say this because I travelled to Hamilton for the match and I can say hand on heart it was the most fun by some distance I have ever had at a league game.

The Tongan fans were awesome.

They made the trip down a nightmare for sure, causing traffic snarl-ups, but the flags were flying and the spirits were high and it was some sight as Auckland must have pretty much emptied of its Tongan contingent.

The ground was a sea of red, I have never seen anything like it at a league game before.

I know plenty will say State of Origin takes the cake, but frankly I ahve been and it was not as good as it is cracked up to be.

The atmosphere can be quite nasty in fact.

Nothing could be further from the truth about the Tongan fans.

They were all smiles before the game, and had even bigger ones after it, and fair play to them, why wouldn't they?

The impromptu street parade of hooting, tooting and singing Tongans drew loads of Hamilton folk to their gates, armed with cellphones, desperate to capture the sheer joy of the fans.

Several commented to me that they had never seen anything like it.

Not once did I encounter anything other than pleasantness, and many Tongan fans put a consoling hand on my poor Kiwis shoulder.

When I lied that I was born in Nuku'alofa and muttered a 'malo', they cracked up and continued on their way, dancing and waving to the thousands of red-cla fellow supporters.

It was absolutely amazing and I loved it.

My wife, who is not known for her forgiving streak,

was capturing video and sending it all over the world to friends and relatives.

Driving back we got stuck in a long line of traffic and at one point someone came up the inside, only to be immediately snapped by a cop. He pulled them over for this frankly dangerous and "high-spirited" move, and even my wife was delighted when the policeman just told them to behave themselves and drive more considerately.

Policing at it s best and most sensible.

So how gutting was it to read about what happened in Otahuhu, though I am also reliably informed that many of those arrested are about as interested in league as I am in ballet.

But letting off fireworks near a gas station is pretty bloody stupid, and holding up an ambulance is unforgivable.

Desperately disappointing, because I am going to tell you that I am starting a Palagi for Tonga movement in time for the semi-final at Mt Smart. Do whatever you have to get your hands on a ticket, turn up, put your arm around a Tongan fan, wave the flag, and buckle in for the ride. It is an experience well worth having.

If only there was that much commitment, passion and support for the Warriors.

I am A league Tipping Genius

The quarter-finals are upon us and I am not one of those people who hates saying "I told you so". They are exactly as I predicted.

Australia v Samoa: The relentless Aussie march will go on without anyone breaking a sweat in Green and Gold. As fabulous as Tonga have been, Samoa has been dismal, managing only a draw with Scotland, but that was enough to send them through. If Aussie get out of second gear I will be amazed.

Tonga v Lebanon: Jason Taumalolo and his men in red will be too good for a plucky Lebanon at AMI Stadium in Christchurch, which will set it up nicely for all those who want more of the fabulous experience of getting along to support Tonga. They will get a semi-final at Mt Smart and the place will be rocking.

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New Zealand v Fiji: Expect a backlash as the Kiwis bounce back at Westpac Stadium in Wellington on Saturday. It broke my heart to tip against them when they faced Tonga, but that is just the price you pay for being a smart-arse. Massive upset, I don't think so. Having said they will win, this one is the banana skin game of the round because Fiji have potency in all areas of the game.

England v Papua New Guinea: The poor old Kumuls will have to play away from their home patch for the first time, and it will be a step too far. Wayne Bennett's side, despite being written off as a load of old has-beens, have been methodical and their professionalism will see them through. If you could wish for an upset, this is where you'd want it because the Kumuls are a ton of fun to watch.

That will see a semi-final line-up of Tonga v England, where another first tier scalp will hang off the belts of the Tongan juggernaut, and the Kiwis will shock everyone and set up a rematch with Tonga for the right to be called the best in the world.

At least that is what I said from day one, and here's hoping.

Get Off Kidwell's Back

Utterly predicably, there have been calls in the wake of the Tonga loss for the head of coach David Kidwell to be provided on a plate.

Rubbish.

Let's swap horses in the middle of the race shall we?

It is no secret I have defended Kidwell often, and I will continue to do so. His side lost to Tonga.

Shit happens.

And Tonga deserved it.

They were better on the day, and absolutely surprised me, because with a handsome halftime lead, and the wind at our backs, I thought the Kiwis would sail home.

Kidwell himself denies the pressure is rising, which means he has massive shoulders if nothing else.

Losing 28-22 in Hamilton makes us the first of the big three nations to ever lose to a second-tier side.

I would not bet against someone else joining that list really soon – in a fortnight at Mt Smart in fact,

because it looks like Tonga are on course to face England in a semi-final there, and it will be one hell of a match.

But our loss was undoubtedly the biggest upset in the international game, though I am not quite sure why, when you consider Tonga's side.

We all moan about the state of the international game, then a decent side like Tonga beats us and we don't have the common decency to say: Well done, you deserved it, and by the way, it is a terrific result for the future of the game on the world stage.

For us long-suffering Kiwis fans, a semi against Australia in Brisbane looms, assuming we can go past Fiji in Wellington on Saturday.

Winger Only Injury Concern

Dallin Watene-Zelezniak is the only injury concern ahead of New Zealand's quarterfinal against Fiji. The winger suffered a knee injury, but it is not thought to be too serious.

However, Dean Whare has returned to Australia after the death of his uncle, but was scheduled to rejoin the Kiwis' on Tuesday.

Focus On Fiji

Losing to Tonga was not in the script, and a possible semi with Australia looms, but first things first – Fiji, who have looked pretty bloody good.

"We are on a different path, and Fiji's in our way at the moment, so our focus is them," coach David Kidwell said.

Fiji have been excellent, they can clearly score from anywhere, and they have two fine wingers to play with.

Throw in Jarryd Hayne, and it is a case of singing "who ate all the pies", or sitting back and being amazed at what he can do.

"We've got commitment, and we know there are a couple of things to improve on," Kidwell said.

"If we fix those little things it will hold us in good stead for the rest of the tournament."

Tonga Boss Eyes The Big Prize

Any surprises Tonga coach Kristian Woolf believes his side could actually win the Rugby League World Cup trophy?

Not much point having a coach who doesn't believe I wouldn't have thought, but on the other side of that argument are France, Lebanon, Ireland, Wales etc, who all have coaches, and I don't think for one moment any of them believed their sides were capable.

That aside, on the performance of the men from the Kingdom of Tonga, he has every right to believe.

Not that long ago it would have been unthinkable, but the defections have provided an impressive roster, and Woolf is putting it to good use.

"I'm not going to sit here and say no but Australia's a different beast. They've won so many internationals because of the way they play. We've got to worry about Lebanon next, then about what happens after that."

England await at Mt Smart, and a ticket to that will be gold.

There is zero reason the boys in red should not be confident, especially coming back from a 16-2 half-time deficit, and coping some tough ref's calls too.

Five tries, against the Kiwis is going to breed even more belief.

"We were really tough mentally in that second half,

and we played to our strengths, we were willing to stay in the grind. These blokes have made a lot of people proud since the day they got together. They're all here for a pittance, but they're here to do something special and they believe."

Taumalolo Fronts – Better Late Than Never

They had to close the comments on the story online about Jason Taumalolo at last apologising for the way he treated the Kiwis camp. The big fellah apparently finally apologised to David Kidwell for the way his defection played out. You can dress it any way you like, but for me, it left a sour taste.

"He was pretty good to talk to," Taumalolo said of his conversation with the Kiwis coach.

"He said how happy he was for me to represent my country of heritage, and he said 'good luck', and that was about it."

"I could've handled it a lot better," he said.

You think?

Apparently he was too hung over from his Mad Monday to be handling a telephone. But he did reveal he supported the decision to kick out Jesse Bromwich and Kevin Proctor.

"I don't take drugs, and I don't condone it either, so I stand by his decision."

Good luck to the Kiwi Ferns who are starting their Rugby League World Cup campaign this Thursday!

Their first game is against Canada at Southern Cross Stadium in Cronulla, Sydney.



NEW ZEALAND
RUGBY LEAGUE™

**Good luck
Kiwis!**

This Kiwis play Fiji this
Saturday at 7.30 in
Wellington!



NEW ZEALAND
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By Shane Hurdell
Hawke's Bay Today
Sports Reporter

Tonga Deserved It... Simple As That!

Photo: www.photosport.nz

WAY TO go Tonga! With Saturday's 28-22 win against the Kiwis in their Group B Rugby League World Cup clash in Hamilton on Saturday

Tonga confirmed what many had tipped prior to the start of the tournament. The Kristian Wolf-coached Tongans are serious contenders for a berth in the December 2 final in Brisbane.

My son reminded me a couple of times during our drive from Napier to Hamilton for the match this was going to be Tonga's day. Upon our arrival in Hamilton it didn't take long to sense the belief within the Tongan supporters.

They owned the city as a result of their massive turnout. As we wandered to our seats in the Wel Networks Stand I asked a couple of long-serving Red Badge security officers if I would be right in stating Tongan supporters dominated 85 per cent of the crowd. They said I was spot on.

There is no doubt that support proved inspirational to the Tongans. But what impressed me the most about 2016 Dally M Player of the Year and the most damaging forward in the code, Jason Taumalolo, and his teammates was their composure.

Despite trailing 16-2 at halftime there was no panic in the Tongan camp. They kept to their structures and systems including leaving Taumalolo off for the first eight minutes of the second spell, capitalised on several Kiwis errors, fought their way back and secured the win and the easier path to Brisbane.

Taumalolo, David Fusitu'a, Manu Ma'u and Sio Siua Taukeiaho would not have turned their backs on the Kiwis if they didn't believe they could do better with Tonga. Saturday's victory proved they made the right choice.

All of the Tongan forwards deserve praise for the manner in which they improved their performances in the second half after being contained in the first spell. Centre-winger Fusitu'a with his hattrick and standoff Tui-moala Lolohea were outstanding in the second half.

While the Kiwis third quarter was disgraceful and their error count too high during the second half their chances of playing Tonga in the December 2 final shouldn't be discounted. They have enough talent.

They just have to reduce their errors and play with more composure than they did against the Tongans. They also need to maintain the necessary intensity levels for 80 minutes.

Veteran secondrower Simon Mannering was again inspirational for the Kiwis. There was one set when he made three consecutive tackles.

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Substitute forward Nelson Asofa-Solomona again impressed. Should the Kiwis beat Fiji in their quarterfinal in Wellington on Saturday and upset the Kangaroos in their likely November 24 semifinal in Brisbane it would make one hell of a story.

It's definitely possible. Yes the Kiwis need to improve their play but just as important is the need for Kiwis supporters to turn out in force and get behind captain Adam Blair and his his troops.

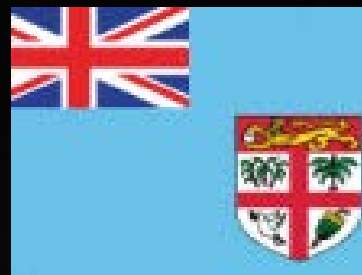
This weekend's clash at the Cake Tin will be the Kiwis last game of the tournament on New Zealand soil. Kiwis fans shouldn't let Fijian supporters dominate the stands like they let the Tongans in Hamilton.

It would be nice to see tournament organisers have the tackle count on the big screens at match venues too. Apart from this downfall which should not have been repeated after week one it was a memorable day at Waikato Stadium.



The Togan fans came out in the 1000s to support their boys!

KIWIS VS FIJI



**THIS SATURDAY 18 NOV 7.30PM
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IT WAS good to see several young players doing well last weekend. These included Cameron Munster (Australia) and David Fusitu'a (Tonga), who are both 23, plus New Zealanders Dallin Watene-Zelezniak 22 and Nelson Asofa-Solomona 21. I am aware that these men are already well established players but they have long and successful careers still to come. Munster has enjoyed a remarkable last four months. He made his State of Origin debut for Queensland in their series winning game three match on 12 July, won a Grand Final and now has two Tests and four tries behind him for Australia. Born in Rockhampton, Munster is very much a part of Storm Coach, Craig Bellamy's future plans.

David Fusitu'a's three tries paved the way for Tonga's history making 28-22 win over New Zealand. A versatile player, who can handle centre, wing or fullback, Fusitu'a has great hands, as his 47th minute try showed. Watene-Zelezniak looked at home from the start of the game at Hamilton. Like all good wingers he is not afraid to help his forwards out with sharp bursts from dummy half, while he is also a good finisher when the ball is spun out wide. At 2 metres in height and 115 kgs, Asofa-Solomona's size makes him stand out, but he is much more than a big, grinding forward. He is set for a big season next year. Other young and unheralded players that have also done well in the World Cup pool matches, but the previous four grabbed my attention over the past weekend.

And now to the Quarter Finals. Darwin will be hot and humid on Friday night when Australia play Samoa. As it is now the wet season in the tropics, there is also a chance of some rain. Darwin Stadium, Marrara Oval or TIO Stadium, as the venue is known, holds around 12,500 people. In June, when the Parramatta Eels played the Cowboys in Darwin, the attendance was just short of 12,000.

Tonga meet Lebanon on Saturday at Christchurch's Rugby League Park or Addington Showgrounds. This venue can hold around 18,000 and when New Zealand thrashed Scotland there on 4 November, 12,130 fans watched on. Christchurch is 5,300 kms south east of Darwin so the weather will be very different. But while it will be colder in the South Island, the sky should be clear for the game.

After Christchurch, the focus will be on Wellington where the Kiwis take on Fiji in what should be an entertaining clash. Local fans will be comfortable in this modern 34,500 capacity venue. How will the Hayne plane perform and will the Fijian forwards be able to match their opposition pack? With many good players on both sides, there is plenty of interest in this game. The weather should be ok in New Zealand's capital for this match.

The last quarter final is at the Melbourne Rectangular Stadium, which was previously known as AAMI Stadium. It holds just over 30,000. When Australia defeated England on 27 October in the opening match of this World Cup, the attendance was 22,274. At the time of writing the forecast was for a fine day in Melbourne with the temperature reaching 24 degrees. This is warm but not as bad as it could be. England and their supporters will not want hot and humid weather but such conditions would suit the Papua/New Guinea side.

World Cup Chairman, Dr. George Peponis OAM, is very pleased with the World Cup so far. On Saturday he attended the Australia-Lebanon game in Sydney, then early the next day, he hopped on a plane and flew to Perth for the double header. The previous week he had been to Port Moresby for the Kumuls clash with Ireland.

"I really enjoyed my time in Port Moresby," he said. "It was a pleasure to be at Oil Search National Football Stadium for the game. The facilities are good while the local fans were fantastic. Our game is doing really well in Papua/New Guinea."

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The win over Lebanon was one of many good results in Australian sport last weekend. The Socceroos were in Honduras for the away leg of their two game series to decide if they win a place in the next soccer world cup. The nil all draw set things up for tonight (15 November) in Sydney when the two teams play their second match. A win for Australia will give them a place in Russia next year. Over in Cardiff on Saturday evening the Wallabies beat Wales 29-21. This was the Australians 13th successive Test win over the Welshmen. At North Sydney Oval, the Australian women's cricket team played the England women in a 4-day Test match. The game was completed on Sunday and finished in a draw. The Test highlight was the 213 not out from 374 balls by Australian, Ellyse Perry. She turned 27 eight days before her innings, on 3 November and celebrated by belting 26 fours and a six. Her Test average is now 61.7, which is the third highest woman of all time. Perry has also represented Australia in World Cup Soccer. She married 33-Test Wallaby, Matt Toomua, who is also 27, in 2015. The Women's Ashes is not decided by five Tests as happens in men's cricket. The girls play three, fifty over one day games, a lone Test and three Twenty/20 matches. It is then decided on a points system. After winning two of the 50 over games and drawing the Test, Australia have six points at the moment to England's four. To retain the Ashes, the Aussies need to win just one of the three Twenty/20 games. While on the subject of womens sport, I will be at Shark Park this Thursday (16 November) for the triple header which opens the Womens World Cup. New Zealand play Canada, Australia meet the Cook Islands and England take on Papua/New Guinea

Tonga's Happy Red Squad

By Will 'Ilolahia

The Kingdom of Tonga has a population of only 106,000 with an additional 200,000 plus living globally yet still ranks as the smallest nation to participate in #rlwc2017. Named the "Friendly Islanders" by Captain Cook in 1776, what the world is witnessing of Mate Ma'a Tonga's (MMT) fanbase is exactly that, Friendly, Loving and Happy people

When MMT (ranked 11th) beat Toa Samoa (9th), a 2 mile convoy of Red Squad automobiles cruised up and down the freeways in Utah, USA. Facebook pages throughout the globe had pictures of celebrations throughout the world

When MMT beat Rugby League world's No.2 team the Kiwis, a Funeral service in Hawaii stopped its proceedings so people could watch the game. Although there was no loud cheers or noisy applause 'Friendly islander' smiles were seen all around.

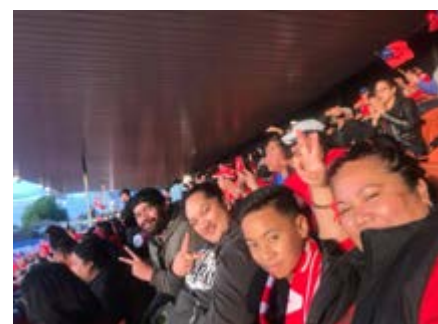
The streets in, not only in the Kingdom's capital Nuku'alofa (City of Love) but outer islands in Neiafu Vava'u, Pangai Ha'apai saw thousands jumping for joy as also in Australia's Brisbane, Sydney suburbs and off course NZ.

But it's not just Tongans, In Norway regular tourist to Tonga, Peggy Matheson watched the game on TV, while Chilean tourist Martuki Etahi del Mundo flew down from Tonga to watch MMT in Hamilton.

11-year-old, part Tongan, Maori and Samoan boy Kiah Sio (pictured at MMT/Toa Samoa game) sums up why Tongan fans are so enthusiastic. "There is a lot of love here and I'm proud to be a Tongan"

Will was co-founder of Tonga National Rugby League in 1986, hired by the 1988 IRLF to help set up local RL club competition in the Kingdom and promoted the world's largest RL tournament at the time, 10 nations 1990 Pacific Cup. He also was founding editor of League News and Liiki News.

Presently RLWC Pacific Community Ambassador and part responsible for largest crowds in RLWC to date.





By John Coffey

Tonga's Theatre Of Dreams

Tonga's William Hopoate scores a try.
Photo www.photosport.nz

THE RINGING of a few cow bells next winter might excite some of the locals but it will be a long time before the echoes of Tonga's World Cup rugby league triumphs fade away from Waikato Stadium. The playing field where Tonga proved its Pacific supremacy over Toa Samoa and then turned the tournament draw on its head at New Zealand's expense will long be a cherished Theatre of Dreams for the Mate Ma'a and their fabulous fans. Many have described beating the Kiwis as Tonga's finest sporting feat.

It would have been an unforgettable occasion even if the Kiwis had kicked on from their halftime lead of 16-2. The atmosphere before and during the game to that point had exceeded in intensity any other recent Test match at home or overseas. That Tonga should come back to win 28-22 propelled it way beyond that. I stopped counting the Tests I have written about when I reached 100 back in 2002 but I would struggle to recall half a dozen which could be ranked above this one for sheer drama.

New Zealand actually performed outstandingly well to resist Tonga's early attacks and reply with three fine tries as they continued their attractive "Kiwi style" footy. It was exhilarating stuff as the back three, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Dallin Watene-Zelezniak and Jordan Rapana finished off the industrious deeds of a forward pack led by Martin Taupau and Joseph Tapine. Only one previous Tongan team had seriously challenged the Kiwis and that was at faraway Warrington in England during the 1995 World Cup.

The situations were similar. Warrington's old Wilderspool ground was much smaller than Waikato Stadium but it was packed that night 22 years ago as the fans adopted Duane Mann and his Tongans as their own. This time south Auckland emptied out as Tongans travelled to Hamilton in convoys to show New Zealanders what supporting a team is all about. Their players responded after halftime, dominating possession and producing a thrilling brand of football that bettered what the Kiwis themselves had shown in the first half.

When Tonga went ahead 24-16 after 66 minutes I cast my mind back to Warrington, when a comparatively new coach, Frank Endacott, wondered whether his Kiwis tenure would be all too brief. He needed a hero, and found one, as the Kiwis roared back to score 13 points in the last seven minutes to escape with a 25-24 win. Endacott's man of the hour was captain and fullback Matthew Ridge, who converted two tries from near the sidelines and chipped over a close-range field goal in the face of an onrushing George Mann.

At 16-24 current Kiwis coach David Kidwell also desperately needed a hero. He found hope when Tuivasa-Sheck crossed for his second try and it became 22-24 with seven minutes left. To me this was "Johnson time" but Shaun could not deliver in the manner he had against England at the 2013 World Cup. Johnson twice muffed half chances, by throwing a weak pass to turn over possession and by failing to hold a Nelson Asofa-Solomona off-load. Moments later David Fusitu'a completed his try-scoring treble and Tonga was home.

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Statistics don't tell the whole story. After all, New Zealand made six of the nine line breaks in the game yet scored four tries and conceded five. In the second half only Asofa-Solomona made any significant run metres among the Kiwis forwards. Of starting prop Jared Waerea-Hargreaves' 143 metres, more than 100 were registered before the break. Tonga took control in midfield through Jason Taumalolo, Sio Siua Taukeiaho and Andrew Fifita. Halfbacks Ata Hingano and Tui Lolohea grew in stature and Fusitu'a finished off their smart work.

At halftime I was thinking Fusitu'a had slipped to fifth behind (in no particular order) Rapana, Wātene-Zelezniak, Peta Hiku and Jason Nightingale. What Fusitu'a did in the second spell overturned that and should convince the Warriors once and for all that he is a specialist wing, not a fullback, not a centre, but a man to be given the ball with the try-line in sight. Young Hingano, too, did his chances of regular first-grade selection no harm at all. He has matured week by week during this tournament.

There is no doubt the players most missed by the Kiwis were forwards Jesse Bromwich and Tohu Harris, who were in the Melbourne Storm NRL Grand Final pack which harnessed Taumalolo as much as any team can. Kevin Proctor would have been handy too. But the Kiwis have no time for pondering all that as they prepare for a quarter-final against the Fijian Bati at Wellington on Saturday (7.30pm) and, hopefully, a semi-final against Australia at Brisbane a week later.

The victorious Tongans were mobbed by hundreds of fans at Christchurch airport after flying in from Hamilton. This Saturday (5pm) the Mate Ma'a play a quarter-final against Lebanon. Win that and the Tonga road-show moves on to Mount Smart for a semi-final on November 25. It will likely be against England, presenting a wonderful opportunity to take on another of the so-called "big three" nations. The other quarter-finals are between Australia and Samoa at Darwin on Friday night and England and Papua New Guinea at Melbourne on Sunday (6pm).



Next Week's Semis

Friday Night 24Th Brisbane Kiwis V ? 9pm (NZ)
Saturday 25Th Mt Smart Stadium Tonga V ? 6pm (NZ)

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SEMI FINAL 1 Fri 24 Nov, 7.30pm	SEMI FINAL 2 Sat 25 Nov, 6pm	FINAL Sat 2 Dec, 7.30pm

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Fun activities for the family

FREE ENTRY

**Good luck to the All Blacks playing
against Scotland this Sunday!**





By John Coffey

Ireland - The Best Of The Rest

Photo NRL Photos

IRELAND'S UNHERALDED rugby league players were among those from six nations who went home from the World Cup this week, disappointed not to have qualified for the quarter-finals. But the Wolfhounds can take much satisfaction that they upset the play-offs claims of the more highly rated Italy, went close to upsetting Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby and comfortably accounted for Wales to be clearly the second-best British nation after England.

It was particularly painful because Ireland won two games and narrowly lost the other, while Samoa went through to the last eight on points differentials after one draw and no wins. But it was clear from the start the Irish were in a much easier pool and only the winner of that pool would survive. Samoa had to withstand batterings by New Zealand and Tonga before holding off a surprisingly spirited challenge from Scotland in their 14-14 draw last weekend.

The Irish fielded no NRL stars nor did they have any players from the stronger Super League clubs. Ireland has never won the European championship and has not qualified for a Four Nations tournament. Sheffield Eagles coach Mark Aston, who has been in charge of Ireland for the last six years, and Wakefield Trinity fullback Scott Grix and halfback Liam Finn, both 33, were able leaders and they had plenty of enthusiastic team-mates.

Rugby league does not feature highly on the Irish sporting scene. They have their unique Gaelic football, as well as soccer. Rugby union is played at the more "English" schools. Rugby league was only introduced in 1989 and did not even have a development officer until 1995. There are no professional clubs, though slow and steady progress has been made at student and amateur levels.

Papua New Guinea was an overwhelming favourite to graduate to the quarter-finals from Pool C because of its home advantages, and that indeed happened. But not before Ireland threatened to buck the odds when trailing just 6-8 very late in their tense showdown. Two minutes from fulltime a handling error, a speculator kick and a fortuitous bounce gave the Kumuls their match-winning try and a capacity crowd celebrated in relief.

The Irish had already upset Italy 36-12 in Cairns. The Italian squad included a sizeable number of seasoned NRL players led by NSW State of Origin fullback James Tedesco and forwards Nathan Brown, Paul Vaughan, Daniel Alvaro and Mark Minichiello, but failed to live up to expectations. After their defeat by Ireland, they easily accounted for United States 46-0 before collapsing to a 38-10 loss to Fiji.

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Injuries to inside backs Jack Johns and Terry Campese proved costly. Johns (son of Matty, nephew of Andrew) broke an arm on debut and Campese was sidelined from the first two games because of a calf strain. Campese recovered sufficiently to make a farewell appearance at his old stamping ground, Canberra Stadium, and unveiled some of his familiar skills as Fiji was held to 12-10 after an hour. But a damaged ankle forced Campese off, Fijian wing Suliasi Vunivalu raced off for three tries in eight minutes and the score blew out to 38-10.

In contrast to Ireland's double success, neither Scotland nor Wales won a game though the Scots eventually came close. Stripped of the three NRL backs who shared in the shock draw with the Kiwis last year, the Scots were thrown into a pool with New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga. It seemed their campaign had collapsed after the 74-6 loss to the Kiwis in Christchurch, yet they shared the honours 14-14 with Samoa in Cairns for the second most famous draw in their history.

Wales lacked the physical presence to front up against PNG and Fiji and Ireland was too proficient for the Dragons. Rugby league in Wales has suffered since rugby union went professional – which meant the 15-a-side mob could change from “boot money” to legitimate payments -- but had reached the semi-finals of the 1995 and 2000 World Cups. It has been downhill since then, losing all of their pool games at home in 2013 and again this time.

Sadly, France, the nation which promoted, hosted and almost won the inaugural World Cup in 1954, is now deep down among the minnows. France was lumped in with Australia and England in Pool A, so needed to beat Lebanon first-up to advance past pool play. Robbie Farah's Cedars were too good, 29-18, and the French had nothing to gain but experience from their testing assignments against the Kangaroos and Lions.

No-one expected the United States to emulate its 2013 quarter-final qualification as coach Brian McDermott resisted the temptation to troll through the professional competitions for eligible players and instead relied heavily on the fledgling USA league. Heavy losses to Fiji, Italy and PNG were inevitable and hopefully have not caused long-term damage. McDermott was fostering the local game in the lead-up to America staging the 2025 World Cup.





Stage Set For Enthralling Finals Series

RUGBY LEAGUE World Cup 2017 Chief Executive Andrew Hill declared the stage is set for an enthralling finals series after three weeks of pool matches which have captured the imagination of millions of fans around the globe and showcased the development of the international game.

Hill has congratulated the eight teams who have progressed through to the quarter-finals, including host nations Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, first time finalists Lebanon, powerhouse England and Tonga, Samoa and Fiji.

He also acknowledged the performance of the Pacific nations, with Tonga, Fiji and PNG joining Australia as undefeated winners of their pools, and said their success confirmed RLWC2017 was the most competitive of the 15 World Cups played since 1954.

“The Rugby League World Cup has showed the cultural significance of each team,” Hill said.

“Across all three host countries, we have seen passionate fans turn out to support their country and likewise we want to thank each team for spending time in their visiting host cities to deliver clinics, visit schools and meet the fans.

“At the start of the Tournament our mission was to inspire the communities to celebrate Rugby League and to entertain the world. With some of the highlights seen across New Zealand, PNG and Australia, we are certainly on track to deliver on that promise.

“The exciting finish to the pool stages has set the stage for hotly contested finals series. All countries delivered quality Rugby League competition over the past three weeks and I want to thank Ireland, Wales, France, Scotland, Italy and USA for their participation in the event.”

Close to 500,000 fans watched the Tonga upset New Zealand 28-22 in a thriller at Waikato Stadium on Saturday, while the Australia-Lebanon match on the same night reached 2.2 million viewers and was the highest ranking non-news program for the day.

In Australia, across the Seven Network, the tournament has attracted 5.5 million viewers so far, with 8.4 millions streaming minutes over the first three rounds. And the Australia-England opener was the fifth most watched Rugby League match of the year after the three State of Origin games and the NRL Grand Final.

The tournament has already featured four sell-out games with more than 236,000 fans attending matches at nine different venues across three countries, proving the decision to take the RLWC2017 to New Zealand and Papua New Guinea a worthwhile strategy.

In Australia, across capital cities and regional cities, fans have turned out to support all nations. This Friday night Australia will play in the Northern Territory for the first time when they take on Samoa at Darwin Stadium.

While this week farewells six nations, Hill also welcomed the six nations competing in the Women’s Rugby League World Cup - Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Canada and England - starting this Thursday in Sydney.

Continued on next page...

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The Women's Rugby League World Cup is being staged as a stand-alone event for the first time and the final will be played at Brisbane Stadium on the same day as the decider of the men's tournament.

Quarter-finals

Friday, 17 November at Darwin Stadium

Australia v Samoa (winner advances to semi-final at Brisbane Stadium, 24 November)

Saturday, 18 November at Wellington Regional Stadium

New Zealand v Fiji (winner advances to semi-final at Brisbane Stadium, 24 November)

Saturday, 18 November at Christchurch Stadium

Tonga v Lebanon (winner advances to semi-final at Mt Smart Stadium, 25 November)

Sunday, 19 November at Melbourne Rectangular Stadium

England v Papua New Guinea (winner advances to semi-final at Mt Smart Stadium, 25 November)



Kiwis Team v Fiji

WELLINGTON'S DANNY Levi will make his first start in the Kiwis, named at Hooker for Saturdays Rugby League World Cup Quarter Final match against Fiji in Wellington. Levi earns a promotion from the bench where he's started all three Tests since making his debut against Samoa in round one of the 2017 Rugby League World Cup.

Te Maire Martin has also been promoted to the starting line-up, partnering Shaun Johnson in the halves, which sees Kodi Nikorima set to play more of a utility type role in jersey 17.

Adam Blair will again skipper the side in jersey 13, while 3 other Wellington boys, Jordan Rapana (Wing) Joseph Tapine (Lock) and Nelson Asofa-Solomona (Interchange) will also get their chance to play in front of their home fans.

Team: Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Dallin Watene-Zelezniak, Dean Whare, Brad Takairangi, Jordan Rapana, Te Maire Martin, Shaun Johnson, Martin Taupau, Danny Levi, Jared Waerea-Hargreaves, Simon Mannering, Joseph Tapine, Adam Blair, Nelson Asofa-Solomona, Russell Packer, Isaac Liu, Kodi Nikorima, Kenny Bromwich, Jason Nightingale, Peta Hiku, Addin Fonua-Blake,



**Check out this article I wrote for Stuff about the
Kiwis v Tonga game:**

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/sport/98810033/mad-butcher-despite-the-loss-im-grateful-for-once-in-a-lifetime-experience>



Samoa Stars Return For Quarter-Final

TOA SAMOA captain Frank Pritchard and halfback Ben Roberts will return for Friday night's Rugby League World Cup quarter-final against Australia in Darwin, while lock Leeson Ah Mau has been recalled to the starting line-up.

Pritchard and Roberts did not play in last Saturday's 14-14 draw against Scotland, which earned Samoa a play-off berth due to a superior for-and-against than the Bravehearts.

Papua New Guinea coach Michael Marum has also named star five-eighth Ase Boas for Sunday's quarter-final showdown with England in Melbourne after resting the Queensland Cup player of the year from last weekend's 64-0 defeat of USA.

Lachlan Lam makes way for Boas, despite scoring two tries in his Test debut for the Kumuls.

In other quarter-final team news, Tonga strike centre Michael Jennings has been chosen for Saturday's match against Lebanon in Christchurch after missing last Saturday's epic 28-22 win over New Zealand with a hamstring injury.

Cedars coach Brad Fittler has only named 20 players due to injury, including Chris Saab, who is on an extended bench, after being forced from the field with concussion in last Saturday night's 34-0 loss to Australia.

The match was Saab's first of the tournament after he was knocked out in the warm-up for the opening clash with France and failed to recover in time for Lebanon's next game against England.

Fiji coach Michael Potter has named an unchanged side for the quarter-final against New Zealand in Wellington on Saturday night.

Australia v Samoa

Darwin Stadium, Friday 7.05pm

(local)

Referee: Phil Bentham

Touch Judges: Chris Sutton, Belinda Sleeman

Video Referee: Ashley Klein

16 Reagan CAMPBELL-GIL-

LARD

17 Tyson FRIZELL

18 Felise KAUFUSI

19 Cameron MUNSTER

20 James MALONEY

21 Ben HUNT

15 Bunty AFOA

16 Suaia MATAGI

17 Joseph PAULO ©

18 Zane MUSGROVE

19 Frank WINTERSTEIN

20 Pita GODINET

21 Ken MAUMALO

Australia

1 Billy SLATER

2 Dane GAGAI

3 William CHAMBERS

4 Joshua DUGAN

5 Valentine HOLMES

6 Michael MORGAN

7 Cooper CRONK

8 Aaron WOODS

9 Cameron SMITH (c)

10 David KLEMMER

11 Boyd CORDNER

12 Matthew GILLETTT

13 Joshua MCGUIRE 14

15 Jordan MCLEAN

Samoa

1 Young TONUMAIPEA

2 Matthew WRIGHT

3 Ricky LEUTELE

4 Joseph LEILUA

5 3 Timoteo LAFAI

6 Jarome LUAI

7 Ben RONERTS

8 Junior PAULO

9 Jazz TEVAGA

10 Herman ESE'ESE

11 Joshua PAPALII

12 Frank PRITCHARD

13 Leeson AH MAU

14 Fa'amanu BROWN

Tonga v Lebanon

Christchurch Stadium, Saturday

5.05pm (local)

Referee: Gerard Sutton

Touch Judges: Robert Hicks, Dave Munro

Video Referee: Ashley Klein

Tonga

1 William HOPOATE

2 Daniel TUPOU

3 Michael JENNINGS

4 Konrad HURRELL

Continued on next page...

- 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 Tevita PANGAI JNR
- 17 Ben MURDOCH-MASILA
- 18 Ukuma TAAI
- 19 Joe OFAHENGAUE
- 20 Mahe FONUA
- 21 Samisoni LANGII

Lebanon

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

New Zealand v Fiji

Wellington Regional Stadium,
Saturday 7.35pm (local)

Referee: Matt Cecchin

Touch Judges: Chris Kendall, Michael Wise

Video Referee: Bernard Sutton

New Zealand

- 1 Roger TUIVASA-SHECK
- 2 Dallin WATENE-ZELEZNIAK
- 3 Dean WHARE

- 4 Bradley TAKAIRANGI
- 5 Jordan RAPANA
- 6 Te Maire MARTIN
- 7 Shaun JOHNSON
- 8 Martin TAUPAU
- 9 Danny LEVI
- 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 Kodi NIKORIMA
- 18 Kenny BROMWICH
- 19 Jason NIGHTINGALE
- 20 Peta HIKU
- 21 Addin FONUA-BLAKE

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 SOKOBALAVU

England v Papua New Guinea

Melbourne Rectangular Stadium,
Sunday 4.05pm (local)

Referee: James Child

Touch Judges: Mark Craven, Chris Butler

Video Referee: Steve Chiddy

England

- 1 Gareth WIDDOP
- 2 Jermaine MCGILLVARY
- 3 Kallum WATKINS
- 4 John BATEMAN
- 5 Ryan HALL
- 6 Kevin Brown
- 7 Luke GALE
- 8 Chris HILL
- 9 Josh HODGSON
- 10 James GRAHAM
- 11 Sam BURGESS
- 12 Elliott WHITEHEAD
- 13 Sean O'LOUGHLIN (c)
- 14 Alex WALMSLEY
- 15 Thomas BURGESS
- 16 Ben CURRIE
- 17 James ROBY
- 18 Chris HEIGHINGTON
- 19 Mark PERCIVAL
- 20 Stefan RATCHFORD
- 21 George WILLIAMS

Papua New Guinea

- 1 David MEAD (c)
- 2 Justin OLAM
- 3 Kato OTTIO
- 4 Nene MACDONALD
- 5 Garry LO
- 6 Ase BOAS
- 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 Stanton ALBERT
- 17 Rod Griffin
- 18 Enock MAKI
- 19 Wartovo PUARA
- 20 Thompson TETEHE
- 21 Lachlan LAM



TONGA

VS



LEBANON

**THIS SATURDAY 18 NOV 5.00PM
CHRISTCHURCH STADIUM**

**COME ON CHRISTCHURCH
SPORTS FANS GET BEHIND THE
RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP!**



WWW.TICKETEK.CO.NZ

Melbourne To Host Leeds In World Club Challenge

NRL PREMIERS Melbourne Storm will host Super League Premier's Leeds Rhinos in the 2018 World Club Challenge to determine the world's best rugby league team.

The clash, to be held on Friday 16 February at AAMI Park at 8pm, will be only the third time the World Club Challenge has been played in Australia; with Brisbane and Sydney the other cities to have hosted the showcase event.

Melbourne Storm and Leeds Rhinos have already met in three World Club Challenge deciders; 2008, 2010 and 2013, with Storm victorious in 2010 and 2013 when the match was played at Headingley Carnegie Stadium.

This will mark the first-time Leeds have played for the World Club Challenge outside the UK, looking to claim their fourth world title with their last coming in 2014 against Manly Warringah Sea Eagles. This will be Storm's fifth appearance on the world stage, having claimed victories in 2000, 2010 and 2013.

NRL Head of Strategy David Silverton was pleased for fans that the event was finally locked in to the rugby league calendar.

"It's important for the growth of both the NRL and international game that major events like this go ahead each year, so we're glad to have ensured this important match takes place in what is a shortened pre-season post the Rugby League World Cup," Mr Silverton said.

"To have the match take place on home soil for the first time in four years is an added bonus for Australian rugby league fans too.

"A special thank you must go to all those involved from the Super League, Melbourne Storm, Leeds Rhinos and Channel Nine for joining forces and committing to make this showpiece event happen."

In making today's announcement at AAMI Park, Minister for Sport, Tourism and Major Events, John Eren said the match would provide a great opportunity for interstate and international visitors to experience some of what Melbourne has to offer in one weekend.

"The World Club Challenge is right at home in the sporting capital. We can't wait to get behind our Storm and help make them the world's best rugby

league team.

"It's yet another coup for the sports capital that will bring more visitors to Victoria – boosting businesses and supporting local jobs."

Melbourne Storm CEO Dave Donaghy said the Club was thrilled to be hosting the World Club Challenge on home soil.

"There's no better venue or city to host a game that decides the world's best rugby league team than AAMI Park and Melbourne – Australia's sporting capital.

"It will be fantastic to see rugby league take centre stage again at AAMI Park, having hosted record Storm crowds and the Rugby League World Cup in 2017.

"I know our Storm members and fans as well as the sports enthusiast will come out to support their Premiership winning team and to see some of the world's best players take the field.

"Our football department is looking forward to the challenge of being back playing for the World Club Challenge trophy and testing themselves against the current Super League Premiers."

It was also announced this morning the match will be broadcast live on Nine in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

Nine's Director of Sport, Tom Malone, said; "We're really excited about this match – the two best rugby league teams in the world squaring up against each other for the title of champions. Wide World of Sports will be the best place to catch all the action – live and free and in HD."

Tickets are on-sale to Storm and Leeds members today at ticketek.com.au with public on-sale to follow at 10am Tuesday 21 November

World Club Challenge - Friday 16 February 2018

Melbourne Storm v Leeds Rhinos - 8pm, AAMI Park



THIS FRIDAY - DON'T MISS IT!

**TACKLING
THE
TOUGH JOBS**



**PIRTEK
&
NZRL
ROADSHOW**

WHEN:

**FRIDAY
17TH of
NOVEMBER
9AM-4PM**

WHERE:

**Egmont
A&P
Showgrounds
Hawera**

Pirtek Taranaki and New Zealand Rugby League are coming to the Hawera A&P Show! On Friday we will be there with plenty of exciting give aways and fun competitions for you to take part in.

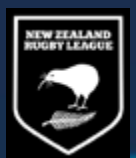
With the Rugby League World Cup in full swing we are excited to announce that from 11am-3pm we have not one, but 2 Kiwi legends joining us!

David Faiumu & Lesley Vanikolo



League fans can show off your player knowledge and participate for a chance to **WIN** flights, accommodation and tickets for 2 to the semi-final of the Rugby League World Cup in Auckland. We also have some double passes for RLWC games for some lucky winners.

SEE YOU THERE!





WHAT A great game to be at! Especially for the Tongans to make history! Unlucky for the kiwis, but we are still in the race! We have to beat the best to be the best!

Thank you so much peter! Attached is a picture of my mate Gav and I supporting the kiwis!

Benson Hayward

G'day Sir Peter

I know you love a fan story.

I took my sons to the Kiwi Scotland game in Chch.

As we got out of the car to walk in, a lady parked next to us asked if we knew where the ticket booth was. It was her first time to AMI Stadium and she didn't have a ticket. We said we would help her find it.

We walked and talked and she introduced herself as Rose, and explained that she had been umming and ahh-ing about going to the game. But no one wanted to go with her.

She had been at home looking after the grand kids and had finally made a decision at 1pm, when her daughter picked up the kids, that she would go to the game by herself.

So Rose jumped in her Ford ranger and drove the 3 hours from Runanga (10 min north of Greymouth) to Christchurch. Arriving 20 mins before kick off.

We found the ticket booth and Rose went to the game. (Picture attached)

After the game we were walking out and we bumped into Rose again. We chatted and discussed what she was doing next.

Rose said even though it was a beautiful nor west day in Chch, which meant it was pissing down on the west coast, it had been a long day and she just wanted to get home.

So less than 2 ½ hours in Christchurch, she jumped in the Ranger and drove the 3 hours home.

Now that's a true Kiwi's rugby League Fan.

Cheers Des





Afternoon Peter,

THANKS FOR the tickets to the game on Saturday, what a fantastic atmosphere it was and only a shame about the result. Tonga had an extra 3 guys on the field with that crowd behind them!!! As below, I took my daughter Kaya to the game and she thoroughly enjoyed it. Tails up for Fiji this weekend in Wellington!!!

Thanks again and much appreciated!

Dwayne Harding



Hey Sir Peter/Sir butcher

JUST A huge, huge thanks for the tickets I won in your recent comp. Kiwis v Tonga, I'm just a tad excited!! Go the kiwis and go the mighty warrior's.....

Cheers and beers Jack Stantiall



Good morning Sir Peter,

Thanks so much for the excellent tickets to the Kiwis v Tonga game.

What a match and the atmosphere was absolutely electric, just a pity the Kiwis couldn't come away with the win.

A couple of pics for you, 1 from the game and 1 from Federation Square in Melbourne, the week leading up to the start of the World Cup.

They had all the teams playing in the cup, these Figures were over 3 meters high and weighed 400kgs, massive and an awesome sight to see in Melbourne, were you hardly see or hear anything about Rugby League.

Once again Sir Peter, an awesome day had by mum and myself.

Thank you so much. Kind Regards, Mark and Dale Rayner



Kia ora Sir Peter

THANKS SO much for sending a Warriors Pack prize to my sister Margaret Tepania. I entered all my whanau so we could win for our father Douglas Tepania who is dying of cancer at our whanau home on Mahia Road Manurewa.

As promised here's his photo with the prizes, he was so happy.

Many thanks

Kelly Tepania



Greetings Sir Peter,

ISHARED THE tickets to the Tonga vs Kiwis with my good friend and Police colleague Craig Berquist who scored this(attached) great shot of us enjoying the Tongan celebrations after the game. Craig had never experienced 'at stadium' International League so was amazed to see that game and all its fury.. Wow well done Tonga - I still hold high hopes for the kiwis who have the cattle to get past Fiji and Australia so come on boys and good luck!

Thanks heaps for the tickets sorry we couldn't get to you to say hi, we were on our way before being invited in to the City Council lounge by our mates there for coffee, quickly getting back to our seats after seeing the come back begin haha..

Take care good Sir, Paul Tierney



Bloody awesome mate.

THANK YOU for the call last night. Both my boys play league as we love the game.

As we say in our house we, don't play kick and clap (rugby) we play run and smash (Rugby League)

And I always watch the WARRIORS over any rugby game even the all black.

Love my league, love the people, love the game.

As I had already brought tickets for my whole family (photo attached) and a couple of extra's, I am giving these 2 awesome tickets you have kindly given to me to my sister and brother inlaw from Whitianga who helped started up rugby league there and are called the Mercury Bay Boars League Club and had great help from a Lady Nickie Tane who won the a award at the NZRL awards last year for her involvement in Rugby League. So good karma to good people.

Once again thank you very much.

Regards, Ray Edwards



WELL THE intensity of the game/clash/battle and all the hype that was built up leading into this torrent tussle earned the praises from all and the atmosphere was so electrical and deafening it will be spoken of for many years to come. The crowd was outstanding, vocal and passionate from both sides and us kiwi supporters were out numbered 3 to 1 in my calculations but felt like 1,000 to 1. With great weather it made for a great spectacle and both teams did not let us down on that note.

I want to thank Matt Roiall from Sports Safari in Hamilton, a past player for Tonga as they have all the world cup gear and anything involving rugby league you can think of and if he don't have it could probably get it. I visited him with my younger brother, Aaron Jolley (on the right) the Waikato Rugby League Captain as we both get our league gear from Matt and the team at Sports Safari, Hamilton.

Look forward to hearing the banter Matt, I will be back again soon for the new Warrior gear for the next season. Matt did pick Tonga by 6 so spot on there buddy.

Matt has over 30 years experience in sports retail, represented Tonga in Rugby League, played in 6 Pacific Cups during 1988 - 2002 (more than any other player in cup history), previously spent 5 years as a personal trainer and currently involved in Rugby League Masters. Sports Safari is owned and operated by Mathew Roiall and Kerryn Goodyer. The store opened on 9th October 2004 on State Highway 1 in Ngaruawahia. We began as a footwear clearance store offering big named brands at affordable prices, with an emphasis on rugby league product.

Over the years, the store has changed dramatically moving away from clearance footwear and apparel, progressing more into Rugby League and Rugby official merchandise, apparel and accessories. In October 2012, we made the move into Te Rapa, Hamilton, where we are currently situated.

A great big massive thank you goes to you Mr Sir Peter Leitch aka (the mad man, as we have nick named you in our house) for the opportunity to win the great tickets that you give away to people out of your own pocket to the best game of rugby league I have ever been too. Shame on the end result but Rugby League won the day.

MANA AND RESPECT TO YOU SIR PETER
YOU'RE A BLOODY LEGEND MATE

Regards,

Raymond Edwards

Hukanui Rugby League Sports Club



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



Facebook



Instagram



Twitter



#CommittedToTheGame

**BE THE
DIFFERENCE**



By Miles Davis



World Cup Play Off

Winston Reid the Rock. Photo www.photosport.nz

A FIFA WORLD Cup qualifier is a sporting experience like no other on the New Zealand sporting landscape. The intensity, noise and passion from the crowd, the palpable tension of the players involved. It also attracts far more than its usual attention from the media which so often treats football as a second class citizen.

Obviously the prize of a place at the World's premier sporting occasion, the FIFA World Cup (the Olympics has more sports but does not attract the same passion and devotion), adds spice to the mix. The home leg of the tie against Bahrain in 2009 was a sporting event that had almost the whole country focused on it, even more than a Rugby World Cup Final. One reason could be that with an unparalleled history of success, New Zealand expects great things from the All Blacks. In fact the main feeling I gathered from AB fans after the 2011 World Cup win was relief rather than exultation. When it comes to the All Whites the expectations are far lower so the prospect of a positive result creates far more excitement.

Whilst New Zealand's success at the 2010 FIFA World Cup has raised expectations there was still an air of the under-dog pervading the country. The All Whites ranked at 122 in the world were taking on Peru who were ranked 10th (this places them above the likes of Italy, England and the Netherlands).

As game day arrived Wellington turned on a cracker of a day and was pumping with 10's of thousands coming from out of town to bolster the local footballing fraternity. Its compact nature makes Wellington the perfect city for games such as this. The most noticeable thing on the streets was the heavy presence of Peruvian fans. There must have been at least 3,000 of them and they were out early to make the most of their trip.

Over 37,000 fans crammed themselves into the Cakatin and as they waited for team line-ups to be announced there was a rumour swirling that the All Whites premier striker, Chris Wood, was carrying an injury and may not start. The rumour turned out to be true. This was a huge blow to the home side's hopes as Wood adds something to the side that others can't. He is strong and mobile with good skills. He also has an ability to find space and when given a chance is without doubt the best finisher in the All White squad. There are those that argued Wood's absence merely balanced out Peru's inability to play their talismanic striker, and skipper, Paolo Guerrero (suspended due to a failed drugs test) but the reality is that Peru is far better equipped to replace him than New Zealand is to replace Wood.

The game kicked off with the All Whites looking nervous and frequently turning over possession. Fortunately the Peruvians looked rather rusty and did not make the most of their opportunities. As the game progressed the All Whites began to get more of the ball and by half-time looked reasonably comfortable with the score locked at 0-0.

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The 2nd half was a better one for the All Whites although the front two of Kosta Barbarouses and Marco Rojas were struggling to impose themselves on the Peruvian defence and were too easily knocked off the ball. In defence Winston Reid was a rock and put in a skipper's performance that Ryan Nelsen would have been proud of (although he looked weary by the final whistle).

The crowd got excited as they saw Chris Wood warming up and the biggest cheer of the day emanated as he finally took the field. His impact on the game was immediate with a free-kick beating the wall and causing problems for the Peruvian keeper (although the kick had to be retaken due to some argy bargy in the wall which ended up with Michael Boxall getting booked). Wood had no trouble with the physical nature of the Peruvian back four, bumping them off with ease, and was a constant threat for the short period of time he was on the park.

The final score of 0-0 would have been viewed as a positive result by both sides. Peru will be happy to be going back to Lima on level terms and will fancy themselves to finish the job. The All Whites would obviously have preferred to have taken a lead to the cauldron of Estadio Nacional de Lima but have given themselves a puncher's chance with 90 minutes between them and another World Cup odyssey. For them to hold the 10th ranked team in the world to a draw was a more than meritorious effort.

For New Zealand to make it to Russia next year Chris Wood has to start. He has all the attributes to play the lone-striker role and is likely to convert a chance that comes his way. His physical nature and skill will be a concern for the Peruvian defence and keep them honest for the 90 minutes. There will also need to be another monster effort from Winston Reid.

If we are honest Peru are hot favourites and should progress but the great thing about football is that it is a game that can provide upsets on a reasonably regular basis. Let's all keep dreaming and skive off work on Thursday at 3.15pm to watch another amazing piece of New Zealand sporting history.



Peruvians take over Civic Square

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



Facebook



Instagram



Twitter

Congratulations to the All Whites on the draw and remaining on track for your World Cup campaign.



Reader Mail



Hi Peter,

Thought you would like this pic of Ollie 9, Alfie 6 with their Grandad Brian. All looking forward to supporting the mighty Vodafone Warriors in 2018!



Our mate Tony from Sentra print Went down to Hamilton and was proud to wear his Kiwi shirt.

Hello Peter

WELL WHAT a great weekend in Hamilton (Sadly not the result we would have liked). Peter, my brother Russ, his wife Trac and nephews Caleb and Kieran were seated amongst a fantastic Tongan fan base and just a few of us Kiwi's, was very heart warming.

Peter and I were on the flight back to Christchurch (Flying our Kiwi colours, naturally) with the Tongan Team, they were told to stay seated until everyone else was off. A few civilians were first off and after wishing the Team well for the rest of the tour Peter and I got off. We were almost at the arrival gate when there were cheers, clapping and then 200-300 Tongan supporters broke into song, we looked behind us, BUT!! the Tongan Team were still on the plane, to our amazement they were cheering for Us two Kiwi's, there was a lot of laughing, handshaking and high fiving as we entered and they made a path through for us. WOW!!!! it moved me to tears Peter, I will never forget it.

Anyway I hope you also had a nice time in Hamilton and are managing a rest between events.

Peter and I are off to Wellington on Saturday, if we don't bump into you, enjoy

GO THE KIWI'S !!!!!!!

Take Care

Rosa & Peter - Timaru

CAPITAL FIGHT NIGHT



**NZPBA
CRUISERWEIGHT
TITLE FIGHT**

HUTT VALLEY
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WELLINGTON CITY
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CLINT FOAI

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INDIAN CULTURAL CENTRE
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SIALAI RHOADES VS MARIA HUNT

MIRKO STANOVIC VS TIM BLINKHORNE

MONTY HAENGA VS JEREMY HOLLIS

ELLIOT SHARP VS CHRIS OWEN

JADE MURRAY VS ANNA COLLIE

DAVE VS QUINCY TUPUFIA

VERITY GEMMELL VS HAILE JAMES-KARPA

TIM MANLEY VS TAIKATO PA

JOHNNY GATU VS DAMIAN BENTIN

FOR TICKETING INFORMATION HEAD TO WWW.TICKETBOOTH.CO.NZ SEARCH 'CAPITAL FIGHT NIGHT'

CONTACT PROMOTER CRAIG THOMSON 021 717014 / CRAIG@CTPBOXING.COM

27th AOTEAROA MĀORI SPORTS AWARDS 2017 ANNOUNCES FINALISTS & RECIPIENTS

11 Individual Maori World Champions and 47 Maori in World Champion Teams head the list of recipients & finalists who will vie for top honours at the 2017 Aotearoa Māori Sports Awards this December.

The 27th Black –Tie awards ceremony will be hosted by Te Tohu Taakaro o Aotearoa Charitable Trust at the Vodafone Events Centre, Manukau on Saturday 2 December from 5.00 pm.

In 1991, the late Albie Pryor (*Ngāti Awa*) established the prestigious event to promote and encourage Māori in the pursuit of sporting excellence.

“Albie’s legacy lives on as the awards event acknowledges champions from Administrators, Disabled, Umpire/Referees, Teams, Coaches, Scholarship recipients, Junior and Senior individuals, and Albie’s own supreme award – ‘Rongomaraeroa’ – Māori Sportsperson of the Year.

The 2017 Māori Sports Awards recipients and finalists are:

INDIVIDUAL MAORI WORLD CHAMPIONS

SAM SUTTON (*Ngāti Tūwharetoa*) EXTREME WHITEWATER KAYAKING

John KIRKPATRICK (*Ngāti Porou*) SHEARING

Joel HENARE (*Ngāti Porou*) WOOLHANDLING

SAM GAZE (*Te Ahiawa*) MOUNTAIN BIKING

Lisa CARRINGTON MNZM (*Ngāti Porou, Te*

Aitanga-ā-Māhaki) CANOE RACING

Shannon McILROY (*Ngāti Porou*) LAWN BOWLS

Teneka HYNDMAN (*Ngāti Tūwharetoa*) NATURAL

BODYBUILDING

Natasha CRANMER (*Tainui*) WEIGHTLIFTING

Mihi NEMANI (*Ngāpuhi*) WEIGHTLIFTING

Jason WYNYARD MNZM (*Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāpuhi*)
WOODCHOPPING

Marama Te Manewa ELKINGTON (*Ngāti Toa Rangatira*)

WAKA AMA

MAORI IN WORLD CHAMPION TEAMS

Black Ferns, 2017 World Rugby Champions

Aleisha NELSON (*Ngāti Wai, Ngāpuhi*)

Aroha SAVAGE (*Te Whanau-ā-Apānui*)

Charmaine McMENAMIN (*Ngāti Porou*)

Eloise BLACKWELL (*Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Wai*)

Lesley KETU (*Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Maniapoto*)

Sarah GOSS (*Ngāti Kahungunu*), Te Kura

NGATA-AERENGAMATE (*Ngāti Porou*)

Carla HOHEPA (*Tainui, Ngāti Kahungunu*)

Chelsea ALLEY (*Ngāti Maru*)

Kristina SUE (*Ngāti Maniapoto, Tainui*)

Portia WOODMAN (*Ngāpuhi*)

Renee WICKLIFFE (*Hauraki*)

Selica WINIATA (*Ngāti Raukawa*)

Stacey WAAKA (*Ngāi Tūhoe*)

Victoria SUBRITZKY-NAFATALI (*Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Kuri, Ngāpuhi*)

Black Ferns Sevens, 2016/17 World Series Champions

Sarah GOSS (*Ngāti Kahungunu*)

Terina TE TAMAKI (*Te Arawa, Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto*)

Gayle BROUGHTON (*Ngāuahine, Ngāti Ruanui*)

Katarina WHATA-SIMPKINS (*Te Arawa*)

Portia WOODMAN (*Ngāpuhi*)

Renee WICKLIFFE (*Hauraki*)

Stacey WAAKA (*Ngāi Tūhoe*),

Tyla NATHAN-WONG (*Ngāpuhi*)

Shakira BAKER (*Ngāti Kahungunu*)

Ruby TUI (*Ngāi Tahu*)



www.maorisportsawards.co.nz



2017 Trillian Trust Māori Sports Awards

Te Tohu Taakaro o Aotearoa Charitable Trust

2017 National Māori Sports Awards
Vodafone Events Centre - Manukau
Saturday 2 December 2017

NZ U/20s, 2017 World Rugby Champions

Isaia WALKER-LEAWERE (*Ngāti Porou*)
Pouri RAKETE-STONES (*Ngāpuhi*)
Tiaan FALCON (*Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu*)
Orbyn LEGER (*Te Raraw*)
Tamati TUA (*Ngātikaitangata, Ngāti Hine*)
Kemara HAUITI-PARAPARA (*Ngāi Tai, Ngāti Porou*)
Ereatara ENARI (*Rongowhakaata, Te Aitanga ā Māhaki*)

NZ Black Sox, World Softball Champions

Nathan NUKUNUKU (*Ngāti Porou*)
Brad RONA (*Te Atiawa*)
Ben ENOKA (*Ngāpuhi*)
Campbell ENOKA (*Ngāpuhi*)
Thomas ENOKA (*Ngāpuhi*)
Zane van LIESHOUT (*Tainui, Te Arawa*)

NZ U/21 Netball World Youth Cup Winners

Monica FALKNER (*Ngāi Tūhoe, Whakatōhea*)
Kelly JURY (*Ngāti Kahungunu*)
Tiana METUARAU (*Ngāti Porou*)
Kimiora POI (*Ngāti Porou*)
Mila REUELU-BUCHANAN (*Ngāti Porou*)
Maia WILSON (*Te Wai-o-Hua, Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi*)

NZ Lawn Bowls Team – World Fours Champions

Shannon McLLROY (*Ngāti Porou*)

NZ Shearing Team – World Team Machine Shearing Champions

John KIRKPATRICK (*Ngāti Porou*)

NZ Canoe Racing Team – World K2 500m Champions

Lisa CARRINGTON MNZM (*Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga-ā-Māhaki*)

TE ARATIATIA - MĀORI UMPIRE / REFEREE

Glen JACKSON (*Ngāi Tahu*) RUGBY
Ronald Akuhata KING (*Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Te Rangī*)
SHEARING
Ben O'Keffe (*Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi*) RUGBY

TE MARU Ō TŪMATAUENGA - MĀORI SPORTS COACH

Allan BUNTING (*Tūhourangi*) SEVENS RUGBY
Noeline TAURUA (*Ngāpuhi*) NETBALL
Paul Henare (*Ngāti Kahungunu*) BASKETBALL

MĀUI TIKITIKI-Ā-TARANGA – MĀORI SPORTS ADMINISTRATOR

Joy RIPIA (*Ngāi Tāmanuhiri*) HOCKEY
Geoff KAYE-IVITU (*Ngāti Maniapoto, Te Whānau Apanui, Kuki Airini*) TENNIS
Mavis MULLINS MNZM (*Rāngitane, Te Atihaunui-a-Pāpārangi*)
SHEARING SPORTS

TE TOI HUAREWA - MĀORI SPORTS PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

Holly ROBINSON (*Ngāi Tahu*) PARA ATHLETICS

NGĀ IKA A WHIRO - MĀORI SPORTS TEAM

Aotearoa Māori Netball International Secondary School
Netball Team
NZ Woolhandling Team
Māori All Blacks

TE TAMĀHINE-Ā-PAPATŪANUKU - JUNIOR MĀORI SPORTSWOMEN

Terina TE TAMAKI (*Te Arawa, Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto*)
RUGBY
Latricia LEIGH-TRANSOM (*Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Te Rangī, Te Ati Haunui a Pāpārangi*) SWIMMING
Mya RASMUSSEN (*Ngāti Kahungunu*) SWIMMING

TE TAMA-Ā-RANGINUI - JUNIOR MĀORI SPORTSMAN

Tiaan FALCON (*Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu*) RUGBY
Tiarn COLLINS (*Ngāpuhi*) SNOWBOARDING
Lewis CLAREBURT (*Waikato*) SWIMMING

HINEAHUONE - SENIOR MĀORI SPORTSWOMAN

Suzie BATES (*Ngāi Tahu*) CRICKET
Portia WOODMAN (*Ngāpuhi*) RUGBY
Lisa CARRINGTON MNZM (*Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga-ā-Māhaki*)
CANOE RACING
Sarah GOSS (*Ngāti Kahungunu*) RUGBY SEVENS

TE TAMA-Ā-TANENUIĀRANGI - SENIOR MĀORI SPORTSMAN

Shannon McLLROY (*Ngāti Porou*) LAWN BOWLS
Nathan NUKUNUKU (*Ngāti Porou*) SOFTBALL
Reiko IOANE (*Te Whānau a Apanui, Ngāpuhi*) RUGBY
John KIRKPATRICK (*Ngāti Porou*) MACHINE SHEARING



2018 NRL DRAW

RD	DATE	LOCAL TIME		OPPONENT	VENUE
1	Sat 10 Mar	4:00pm	AT	Rabbitohs	Perth Stadium
2	Sat 17 Mar	5:00pm	VS	Titans	Mt Smart Stadium
3	Sat 24 Mar	3:00pm	AT	Raiders	GIO Stadium
4	Sat 31 Mar	5:30pm	AT	Roosters	Allianz Stadium
5	Sat 07 Apr	7:30pm	VS	Cowboys	Mt Smart Stadium
6	Sat 14 Apr	5:00pm	VS	Broncos	Mt Smart Stadium
7	Fri 20 Apr	8:00pm	VS	Dragons	Mt Smart Stadium
8	Wed 25 Apr	7:00pm	AT	Storm	AAMI Park
9	Sat 05 May	7:30pm	VS	Tigers	Mt Smart Stadium
10	Sat 12 May	5:00pm	VS	Roosters	Mt Smart Stadium
11	Fri 18 May	6:00pm	AT	Eels	ANZ Stadium
12	Sat 26 May	7:30pm	VS	Rabbitohs	Mt Smart Stadium
13	Bye				
14	Sat 09 Jun	5:00pm	AT	Sea Eagles	AMI Stadium
15	Fri 15 Jun	6:00pm	AT	Cowboys	1300SMILES Stadium
State of Origin stand-alone weekend					
16	Fri 29 Jun	8.00pm	VS	Sharks	Mt Smart Stadium
17	Fri 06 Jul	7:50pm	AT	Panthers	Panthers Stadium
18	Sun 15 Jul	2.00pm	AT	Broncos	Suncorp Stadium
19	Sun 22 Jul	4.00pm	VS	Storm	Mt Smart Stadium
20	Sun 29 Jul	2:00pm	AT	Titans	Cbus Super Stadium
21	Sat 04 Aug	3:00pm	AT	Dragons	WIN Stadium
22	Fri 10 Aug	8:00pm	VS	Knights	Mt Smart Stadium
23	Sun 19 Aug	2:00pm	AT	Bulldogs	ANZ Stadium
24	Fri 24 Aug	8:00pm	VS	Panthers	Mt Smart Stadium
25	Fri 31 Aug	8:00pm	VS	Raiders	Mt Smart Stadium





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