



# Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

21<sup>st</sup> February 2018

## Newsletter #205



### Vodafone Warriors Preseason Against Melbourne Storm





# I want to share some of the photos I took while I was in Rotorua with the Vodafone Warriors



Daryl Halligan goal kicking coach (played for the Bulldogs and Kiwis) and John Love Head Physiotherapist



Gerard Beale out in the community meeting some young fans



Good to see my old mate Charlie Raass a true Warriors fan & member



Good to see the 2 assistant coaches of the Vodafone Warriors Andrew McFadden & Stacy Jones



Great to catch these three musketeers in the Kiwis World Cup Jerseys! Cindy, Jack & Andy from Rotorua



Great to catch up with a couple of Melbourne Storm mates Jason Ryles & ex All Black Andrew Blowers



Great to catch up with Carla and Mark from Kawerau



Great to catch up with my old mate, Rick, ex Otahuhu Workermans Club and his granddaughter, Rikki-Lee at the game



Great to have the membership team here at Rotorua



Stephen Kearny meeting some young fans before the game



Very proud of how our players interact with our fans



Karen & Dennis who drove down from Hamilton



# More photos I took in Rotorua



Leivaha Pulu and his Kids Amon-James Carayanidis & Baby Sarai



Lovely to catch up with hard core rugby league people. From the left Memphis, Cherie manger of the Ngongotaha Chiefs rugby league club & Tekowhi. All enjoyed the nines tournament



Naomi, Jayden and Ihaia were stoked with these packs I gave them. Sharing the Warriors love



Now this is dedication. Ricky from the membership team has had this on his calve since 2015



Raymond Brown & Warena Karaka Peni both big fans



Scotty Just brought my book in what a ride mate for me to sign I still have a few copies to sell. Email [pclitch@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pclitch@xtra.co.nz) if you're interested



Just having lunch with the Harvey Norman Community Warriors after a very hard morning working with the local Rotorua Schools



Just met Cliff Curtis a NZ movie star legend who is working on the new avatar movie, flies out tomorrow to Vegas bloody great guy



Zac showing off his not finished Vodafone Warriors tattoo

See more photos from Sir Peter. Click the icons to follow him on:



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# Celebrating John Grant's Australian Rugby League Commission Chairmanship



Australian correspondent Barry Ross with Men of League Foundation CEO Frank Barrett. For more information [www.menofleague.com](http://www.menofleague.com).



Jim Doyle and Laurie Daily (former player and coach of the Kangaroos and the NSW Origin team).



Jim Doyle and Wayne (Junior) Pearce.



Todd Greenberg (NRL CEO) and Peter Bettie (new NRL Chairman).



Reon Edwards (NZRL Chairman), Helen Grant and Mel Maninga (former player and now coach of the Australian Rugby League team).



The man of the moment John Grant and his wife Helen at last night's function to honour him in Sydney.



Laurie Daily and Dawn Fraser (Australian Olympic swimming legend).

Pre-purchased adult tickets to the Vodafone Warriors' first home game against the Titans on March 17 have been reduced to just \$15 with \$5 of that to be donated to the NZ Red Cross' Pacific Disaster Fund for those affected by Cyclone Gita. Tickets go on sale at midday today. To lock in great seats before they sell out, please click on this link and show your support for this worthy cause:

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





# Want-Away Player Gets His Wish

By David Kemeys

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



**I**HAVE HAD plenty to say about the rugby-league tug of love for outstanding prospect Etene Nanai-Seturo.

The Vodafone Warriors were hopping mad the youngster turned out for the New Zealand Sevens and boss Cameron George made it plain more than once the club would not be pushed around, since the youngster had a contract with us.

The barny has been settled, and surprise, surprise – rugby wins.

The Warriors and New Zealand Rugby reached a deal after mediation to resolve the stand-off.

Now I am not going to criticise Etene Nanai-Seturo, he is just a boy.

But I am not that happy that whatever solution was reached, all the details are confidential.

The young fella has been released from all his obligations to us but all the terms and conditions of the release are to be kept confidential.

Apparently New Zealand Rugby and the Warriors had an “amicable” meeting.

We know this to be true because the club released a statement saying so.

What they did say, was that a new set of protocols had been reached about players code-hopping.

NZ Rugby general manager Neil Sorenson said: “We have an enormous amount of respect for each other’s organisations and we wish each other every success in our respective codes.

To which I say: “Bollocks.”

If there was an enormous amount of respect this would not have happened.

So we are left with a player who did not want to be here, gone. Fair enough.

And we are left with a new set of protocols that aren’t worth the paper they are written on because if rugby wants a player, they are going to take him, no matter what the protocols say.

And what do they say?

We don’t know, only that they exist to manage the situation of either code becoming aware a player who is contracted wants to switch, but apparently we are expected to believe that under those protocols the Etene Nanai-Seturo situation would be avoided.

George has welcomed the deal, so he presumably sees merit in it.

He also said, and I have a suspicion it was through gritted teeth, that he looked forward to “continuing to have a productive relationship with New Zealand Rugby”.

Good luck with that.

So both parties had a chin-wag, rugby got what it wanted, and we aren’t allowed to know any more about it.

Not good enough.

## So About This Trial

Yes it was a bunch of people in purple Melbourne jerseys we have never heard, with the real Storm too busy winning the World Club Championship over Leeds.

So what, it was just a trial?

It’s not like we stuck out a star-studded team either.

You can’t really take anything from trials form.

I have seen us be awful in pre-season and have a terrible start to the season.

I have seen us be 50-50 in pre-season and have a terrible start to the season.

I have seen us be really good in pre-season and have a terrible start to the season.

But coach Stephen Kearney gave it a pass mark.

That being so, all we can do is look forward to next week and the hit-out against the Titans.

“The guys worked hard in areas we wanted to be good at so that was a positive,” Kearney said.

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Leaking three tries probably wasn't though.

Nice to see Solomone Kata, David Fusitu'a, Ligi Sao and Lewis Soosemea on the score-sheet all the same.

Generally speaking I thought our defence wasn't bad, though there were a couple of poor reads, and we all know what happens when you do that at NRL level – mostly from watching it season after season.

There were some solid contributions, James Gavet in particular.

But like all pre-season football, the timing was all over the place, and players were interchanged so often you could hardly keep up.

New signing Peta Hiku also had some nice moments, which is encouraging.

Unfortunately the injury curse reared its head, the number one thing you do not want to happen

pre-season, with prop Agnatius Paasi only on for five minutes before leaving the field with a knee injury, and five-eighth Ata Hingano took a head knock that meant he did not return for the second half.

If anyone is remotely interested, the score was Warriors 20 – Whoever the Hell They Were 14.

### **Adelaide Gets Origin**

The State of Origin series, will be played at the Adelaide Oval for the first time in 2020. NRL boss Todd Greenberg said Origin was the game's showpiece and deserved to be showcased to another new market.

“Melbourne embraced State of Origin in 2015 and we expect another special night at the MCG for game one this year,”

So that makes it Melbourne, Perth and now Adelaide in successive years.

Get ready for all the talk about hosting one in Auckland again.

## ***2018 NRL Season Guide is Here!***

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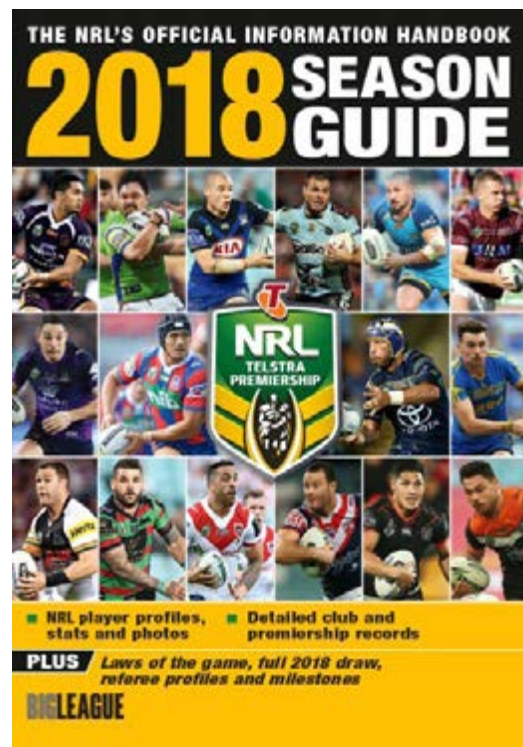
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# Experience named for Sunshine Coast trial

*by Richard Becht*

**M**OST OF the Vodafone Warriors' experienced first graders will be onboard for the second and final NRL trial against the Gold Coast Titans at Sunshine Coast Stadium in Kawana Waters on Saturday (5.00pm kick-off).

Combining for the first time in the halves will be Vodafone Warriors regular Shaun Johnson and new signing Blake Green while the seasoned Adam Blair and Tohu Harris will also be making their club debuts.

The club's other established players coming into the side after missing the Melbourne trial in Rotorua are captain Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, back rower Simon Mannering, hooker Issac Luke and just re-signed prop Sam Lisone.

While Johnson has Green as his newest halves partner, Blair is named to start in the front row teamed up with James Gavet and Sam Cook is again at hooker as he was in the 20-14 win over the Storm last weekend.

Harris, a grand final winner with Melbourne last year, is paired in the second row with fellow new arrival Leivaha Pulu while Bunty Afoa is named at loose forward. Mannering, Lisone and Luke are all listed on a 10-man bench.

Fullback Tuivasa-Sheck apart, the other four outside backs named played in Rotorua – wings David Fusitu'a and Ken Maumalo plus centres Peta Hiku and Solomon Kata.

Seven of the 10 bench players were used against Melbourne – forwards Ligi Sao, Chris Satae and Joseph Vuna, utility Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad, new centre Anthony Gelling, stand-off Ata Hingano and 18-year-old Rotorua-raised Hayze Perham.

Perham impressed when he came on for the second half against Melbourne. He was heavily involved

making 112 metres from 10 runs and making no errors.

The Titans, being guided by new coach Garth Brennan, fielded an under-strength side in a 10-38 loss to Brisbane in their preseason hit-out in Toowoomba last weekend.

The most notable players to line up were Kane Elgey and Dale Copley plus a number of Gold Coast's new signings including former Penrith forwards Bryce Cartwright and Leilani Latu.

## VODAFONE WARRIORS V GOLD COAST TITANS

Sunshine Coast Stadium, Kawana  
Waters

*5.00pm, Saturday, February 24*

### VODAFONE WARRIORS

1 Roger Tuivasa-Sheck  
(c)  
2 David Fusitu'a  
18 Peta Hiku  
4 Solomon Kata  
20 Ken Maumalo  
6 Blake Green  
7 Shaun Johnson  
21 Adam Blair  
9 Sam Cook  
10 James Gavet  
11 Tohu Harris  
12 Leivaha Pulu  
13 Bunty Afoa

### Interchange:

14 Ligi Sao  
15 Chris Satae  
16 Sam Lisone  
17 Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad  
22 Simon Mannering  
23 Joseph Vuna  
25 Anthony Gelling  
28 Hayze Perham  
30 Ata Hingano  
31 Issac Luke







By John Coffey

## The Coaster Is Rolling Again

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

**S**UPPORTING THE Warriors has long been compared to riding a roller coaster. Nothing changed in the days leading up to and including the first 2018 pre-season trial against a team called Melbourne Storm at Rotorua last Saturday. In fact this Storm team was comprised of NRL hopefuls assembled from various parts of Australia's east coast. The real Stormers had been otherwise engaged battering the Super League champion Leeds Rhinos the previous night.

Craig Bellamy, Cameron Smith and company didn't want to travel to England for the World Club Challenge so were granted home ground advantage for their 38-4 victory. Bellamy, Smith and company didn't want to travel to Rotorua either, so sent a mix of development players and others from their Sunshine Coast Falcons and Brisbane Easts Tigers feeder clubs. The mid-strength Warriors line-up was still extended to beat the Neville Nobodies by 20-14.

We did not get to see how halves Shaun Johnson and Blake Green were progressing in their partnership or what shape hooker Issac Luke is in. Nor was there any sighting of captain Roger Tuivasa-Sheck or forward leader Simon Mannering. They will all have a run against Gold Coast Titans on the Sunshine Coast in the second trial this weekend, leading up to the daunting opening premiership clash against South Sydney Rabbitohs in Perth on March 10.

Clearly, title-holder Melbourne has already filled the vacancies caused by the transfers of Cooper Cronk, Tohu Harris and Jordan McLean. Their defence was watertight for the last 76 minutes and we could only marvel at the forward depth spearheaded by Smith, prop Jesse Bromwich and supersub Nelson Asofa-Solomona. It stung when Fox Sport commentator Michael Ennis said Warriors departee Ryan Hoffman "must be happy to be back in purple".

Like the Storm, the Warriors gave up an early try. Unfortunately, the comparisons ended there. Instead of running over the top of their unknown rivals they never exerted permanent control and disappointingly conceded two of the last three tries. It was not encouraging the Warriors were penalised for not playing the ball with their feet – as publicly demanded by the NRL – in both their first and last sets. Being slow learners does not help in this game.

The NRL has unveiled a vastly improved and very informative new website offering a depth of information and opinion. Some of the recent statistics offer no comfort for Warriors fans. The boffins delved back into the 2017 season, one the Warriors would rather forget, and revealed just how much of a hammering they suffered over the last 30 minutes of matches. Poor defence was compounded by a lack of attacking success at the other end of the field.

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Looking ahead, the Warriors clearly face a daunting hurdle in terms of 2018 travelling. They will journey a total of 59,605km, a distance further compounded timewise by needing to clear customs at both ends. That is considerably more than the other outposts, North Queensland (39,905km) and Melbourne (36,828km). Sydney clubs cruise to most games by car, with the Roosters to cover only 10,488km – less than the return distance between Auckland and Perth.

Then there have been all those other confusing stories popping up in the media. (1) We are told the latest potential new owners are a syndicate of Yanks led by a Hawaiian politician. (2) We learn the Warriors no longer have the services of Etene Nanai-Saturo but whether they won or lost their tug of war with the New Zealand Rugby Union is debatable. (3) Assistant coach Andrew McFadden is leaving at season's end. (4) Mt Smart Stadium might soon be renamed.

Richard Fale is the bloke reportedly keen to pay current owner Eric Watson 20 million bucks for the club and claims to be backed by people with considerable NFL experience. Fale is promising "absolute excellence" and quick-time premierships. Are we not warned that if something sounds too good to be true it almost certainly is too good to be true? Wasn't there a supposed Bulgarian billionaire sniffing around years ago? Wonder what happened to him.

I didn't like the ending of the cross-codes dispute over young Nanai-Saturo. In particular, how the club co-signed a statement keeping secret the agreement between the parties. The media interpreted it as a "win" for the NZRU in the "battle" for N-S. But Dale Budge (NZH website) claimed the Warriors won their fight for compensation and to justify their youth contracts were "ironclad". So why didn't the Warriors demand that be included in the press release? After all, it is the winners who write the history.

As for the popular McFadden returning to Canberra, we can only wish him and his family all the best and share his regret the Warriors had so little success while he was variously head or assistant coach. An announcement Mt Smart Stadium is seeking a naming rights sponsor gave the Radio Sport rabble a chance to vent their twisted sense of humour at the club's expense. But the players can do something about that – start winning! Then they can rename Mt Smart the Fortress, or the Killing Fields, and shut the critics up.

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**T**HINGS APPEARED normal for a Rugby League fan in Sydney over the last weekend. There was plenty of league on TV, while the Sunday papers ran several pages about the game. I watched three games, two live and one on the box. The Melbourne Storm was impressive in their 38-4 World Club Challenge win over the Leeds Rhinos at AAMI Stadium in Melbourne. Coach Craig Bellamy would have been happy with the form shown by his 20 year old halfback, Brodie Croft, who is set to replace Cooper Cronk this season. Brodie scored a try and had a hand in three others in a strong all round performance. Born at Dalby, which is around 200 kilometres west of Brisbane, Brodie made his NRL debut at WIN Stadium Wollongong on 18 June 2016. This was during the State of Origin period and St. George/Illawarra beat the Storm 20-10. After playing four top grade games last year, he now has four tries from his five NRL matches. While the score-line appears one sided, Leeds did play some good football and worked hard until the end of the game. What clearly came out of the game was that Bellamy will again have his team as one of the leading contenders for the 2018 Premiership.

I attended Sydney's ANZ Stadium on Saturday night as one of the 18,721 fans for the double header. Weather-wise, it was a great night for football, although probably too hot for the Englishmen. In the first game between St. George/Illawarra and Hull, the Australian crowd soon learned how vocal English supporters can be, I don't know how many Hull fans attended the game but there probably between one and two thousand, mostly dressed in their team's colours and they certainly made their presence felt. This was done in a good way and they were an excellent addition to the occasion. Although the Dragons won 24-18, they certainly did not have things their own way. Hull led 12-10 at halftime and the teams were locked up at 18-all with just three minutes to play before Kurt Mann scored the winning try. St. George/Illawarra struggled against the non-stop Hull. New prop James Graham from the Bulldogs played 25 minutes, while halfback, Ben Hunt from the Broncos, had 72 minutes of playing time. Coach Paul McGregor will want Hunt and his five eighth, Gareth Widdop to have as much playing time together as possible before the season opens on Thursday night 8 March against the Broncos at Sydney's Kogarah Jubilee Oval. The duo were only average against Hull, but this was their first outing together. Fullback, Matt Dufty, was the Dragons star and match statistics reveal he ran for more than 200 metres and made two linebreaks during his 68 minutes on the park. The 22 year old Dufty played seven first grade games in 2017 and if he continues his good form in the remaining trials, seems set to replace Josh Duggan.

In the other game, South Sydney showed they have some real pace in their midfield. The first half was very entertaining with both sides contributing. New Souths coach, Anthony Seibold, sent out a very understrength side for the game with Adam Reynolds, Greg Inglis, Dane Gagai, Sam Burgess, Cody Walker and Angus Crichton watching on. Robbie Farah played at both halfback and hooker, while Damien Cook also played in the hookers position. Wigan kept at Souths until the end and the score was just 12-8 with around five minutes remaining.

There were other trial games over the weekend but I did not see any of these. I read that James Maloney did well in his first game for Penrith in their 30-18 win over the Roosters, that Matt Moylan was hot and cold for the Sharks in their 30-14 win against Manly and that Kieran Foran shone for the Bulldogs in their 16-12 success against the Raiders. At Shark Park, coach Shane Flanagan used Chad Townsend and Moylan as his halves pairing in the first half against Manly and for the second half, his son Kyle Flanagan, 19, paired up with new recruit, Trent Hodkinson. Young Flanagan played well and already he has shown he is a first grade candidate.

I see many NRL clubs have reservations about the proposed New Zealand-England Test match in Denver USA during the stand-alone weekend, 22-24 June. I am all for international Rugby League but I do worry about playing a one off game at Denver's Mile High Stadium. The venue presents many physical and mental challenges to play at such altitude, although in the case of the proposed Test match, there would be no home team advantage, as no players from either side would have run on to the venue. On 26 July 2014, Manchester United defeated Roma 3-2 before a crowd of 54,116 at the venue. But the altitude and the 27,000 kms or more return flights would be genuine concerns for all involved players and their clubs.

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It would be a big ask to have the players take the field for NRL games just a few days after the Test match. I have no idea of what investigations have been done before Denver was mentioned as the venue. Money would obviously be a motive and perhaps the promoters have a reason for wanting Denver. When a State of Origin match was played at Long Beach, Los Angeles in 1987, a crowd of 12,349 was given. On the way home from the first Rugby League World Cup in France during November 1954, poor crowds attended exhibition games between Australia and New Zealand in Los Angeles.

I was interested in the Super League game between Warrington and Widnes last Saturday at Widnes. Former St. George/Illawarra coach from the beginning of 2012 to May 2014, Steve Price, now coaches the Warrington Wolves, while six Test Kiwi, Kristian Anu, plays in the centres with the Widnes Vikings. Born in Auckland, Anu turns 31 in a few weeks. He began his NRL career in 2007 with Parramatta (78 games) and then had two years with the Warriors (21 games). He then moved to France to play with the Catalan Dragons and interrupted his League career to play Rugby Union in 2014/15 with Stade Francais. He signed with Widnes in November last year. Price after leaving St. George/Illawarra was an assistant to Shane Flanagan at the Sharks in the 2016 Premiership win. Warrington won the match 18-10 against Widnes to give Price his first Super League success in three games. Anu scored both Widnes tries and now has three in three games with the Vikings.

## Northern Stars Confirm New Home Playing Venue For 2018 Season

By Troy Han - Netball New Zealand

**T**HE NORTHERN Stars have confirmed they are moving to a new home venue for the 2018 ANZ Premiership season, signing a deal with Pulman Arena in Takanini.

“It is a delight to assist the Stars in bringing their exciting brand of netball to the heart of South Auckland” says Pulman Park developer Bruce Pulman.

“Pulman Arena is there for the community and to be able to have a South Auckland team back in this level of competition is fantastic for our local region.” Pulman says.

The Northern Stars have a talented line up this year including Silver Ferns Kayla Cullen and Grace Kara (nee Rasmussen), Silver Fern and World Youth Cup gold medallist Maia Wilson, fellow NZU21 World Youth Cup team mate Fa’amu Ioane and England Roses captain, Ama Agbeze.

The Stars will play seven home games in the 2018 ANZ Premiership season including a Super Sunday bonanza with all six teams playing at the Arena. A double header will follow on the Monday promising to be an entertaining couple of days of netball.

Both the Northern Stars and their Beko Netball League team the Northern Comets will continue to train at the High Wire Trust facility based in Papakura.

The ANZ Premiership returns on Sunday 6 May with a Super Sunday to be held in Palmerston North.

Stars Club memberships are now on sale now – click here: <https://www.northernstars.co.nz/northern-stars/tickets.html>

Tickets for individual matches for the Northern Stars in the will be on sale early March



*Northern Stars squad members Olivia Coughlan and Kate Burley at their new home playing venue, Pulman Arena*



*By Miles Davis*

## The Originals - Warrior No. 5: Whetu Taewa

Whetu Taewa in action for the Warriors during the rugby league Winfield Cup match against Balmain, 1995. Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

**T**HE WEST Coast has been a breeding ground for many of New Zealand's top rugby league players and one of those was Vodafone Warriors No. 5, Whetu Taewa.

Playing his early rugby league on the West Coast Taewa also played rugby union (many kids on the Coast play multiple sports which helps boost numbers in sparsely populated areas). In 1987 he made the New Zealand Under-17 training squad and also made his debut for West Coast in rugby union. The following season he went one step better and made the Junior Kiwis.

1989 saw him cross the divide and move to Canterbury where he joined the Halswell club. The move was to prove a success as he was picked for that year's Kiwi tour to Great Britain although he didn't play in any of the tests in the 2-1 series loss.

He became a regular in the successful Canterbury representative side that comprised of several future Kiwis and were coached by future Warriors and Kiwi coach, Frank Endacott. In 1990 he was part of the Canterbury side that defeated the touring Great Britain team 18-10. In 1993 the National Provincial Championship held a Final for the first time and Taewa was part of a 36-12 demolition of Auckland in front of a capacity crowd of 10,000 at the Addington Showgrounds.

His form saw him selected for an Auckland Invitation XIII that was to take on the Balmain Tigers, a game that ended in a creditable 16-16 draw. He must have seen something up north he liked as in 1994 he switched allegiances to Counties Manukau after having played 37 games for Canterbury (and 4 for the West Coast).

He was once again selected for the Kiwis for their 1993 tour of Great Britain, this time taking part in all 3 tests from the interchange bench. Sadly it was a fruitless tour with the Kiwis going down 3-0.

In 1995 he was part of the Original Vodafone Warriors and was part of the squad that took part in the World Sevens and also the Tooheys Challenge Cup, scoring a try in their first round loss to the North Sydney Bears.

He took the field in for the first NRL game, against the Brisbane Broncos but was to play just 11 games for the Auckland outfit, scoring just one try – in a 22-25 home loss to the Illawarra Steelers. He was let go at the end of that historic season and signed for the North Queensland Cowboys, making 12 appearances and notching two tries. He also made the New Zealand Maori side that toured PNG that year.

After 2 seasons in the NRL Taewa turned his attentions north, moving to England and joining the Sheffield Eagles. The Eagles finished 7th in the Super League that season and occupied the same position in 1998. They did however have a stellar run in the Challenge Cup. In the quarter-final they travelled to Castleford and secured a 32-22 win. They were then drawn against the Salford Reds (coached by England legend Andy Gregory) with the game to be played at Headingley, Leeds. Taewa scored a try in a close 22-18 win.

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This meant they advanced to the Challenge Cup Final at Wembley where the opposition was the mighty Wigan Warriors. Wigan had topped the Super League table, losing just 2 of their 23 league games, and had beaten Leeds Rhinos in the Grand Final. The Eagles were one of the biggest underdogs in Grand Final history but sprung a huge surprise with a 17-8 win. Taewa was joined in the victorious Eagles side by fellow Kiwi Dave Watson.

After 2 seasons with the Eagles, Taewa dropped down a division from the Super League and joined Northern Ford Premiership side Hull Kingston Rovers. In 2000 he became club captain until retiring in 2002 having made 131 appearances scoring 59 tries. Upon retirement he took up an assistant coaching position but had to leave the club in 2003 to return to New Zealand for personal reasons.

In 2015 the bar in the East Stand of Craven Park underwent a rebrand and became the Captains Bar. Whetu Taewa was the first ex-skipper to be honoured with a plaque in the new bar. He was also given an Honorary Life Membership of the Halswell Club.

In 2010 he was given a chance to have a go driving cars at a speedway by some of his friends and became instantly hooked. In 2014 he was named Production Saloon Competitor of the Year at Speedway New Zealand's Awards. He was also a finalist in the 2017 awards. Domiciled in Cromwell he is a regular on the Central Motor Speedway Circuit of Greymouth, Dunedin and Invercargill.

Taewa noted however that speedway was not the first time he had driven a distinctive vehicle - "I worked for the Mad Butcher for a while and had a [Mitsubishi] Mirage and it had Mad Butcher logos stuck all over it." So perhaps the world of speedway owes a little to the Mad Butcher for one of their top talents.

Good to know that Warrior No. 5 is still tearing up the opposition, albeit on a racetrack rather than a rugby field.

Sheffield Eagles v Wigan 1998 Challenge Cup Final <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFmx6h-Di3Vc&t=90s>



I caught up with Whetu in Cromwell a few weeks ago Where he lives and owns a building company.

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



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# Counting Sleeps

By John Holloway



**Y**O MY bros, just a dozen and a half sleeps and we are kicking off again, I can hear those big hits already. The Butcher is on the prowl and the sausages will soon be sizzling. As previously noted I am currently assembling my high-powered Panel of Celebrity Tipping Punters with a couple of notable new faces in view. Get ready gang the good oil is on its way. While many have a low expectation High-tackle forecasts that the mighty Vodafone Warriors will be serving up some fresh and flavoursome fare for the faithful in 2018. I may be more optimistic than most but when I consider our prospects I am feeling the buzz! Starting with the grunts I see more attitude, mobility and most importantly penetration. Not bad mouthing the recently departed but I like the “in your face” niggles and leadership that Adam Blair offers and the sharper edge that Harris, Pulu and Paasi (crook knee permitting) have to offer. Stir in a fit again Isaac Luke, rock steady Mannering, Gavet on the charge and Afoa, Lisone, Vete ready to step it up a notch. The chances are we just might scare a few mate. Alongside these bigger names I am keen to see the younger forward brigade get a chance, Tevaga, Roache, Papalii, Satae have something to prove and new signings Mania Cherington and a sharp looking Matiu Love-Henry really interest me. I have visions of more go forward on attack and D and as a consequence a better platform for the out the back pretty boys who also have a revamped look with the big gain in my view being Blake Green, a much needed backline general, unspectacular but hardnosed and efficient. Apart from his aggressive defensive attitude I believe the new 6 might be the key link to line-break opportunities for Shotgun Shauney J and Ricochet RogerTVS. When you add-on the incoming experience of NZ bred trio Beale, Hiku and Gelling ex Wigan we can reasonably expect a more fertile environment for dashing David Fusitua, Kata, Ayshford, Klockstad and Maumalo to grow into. Waiting in the wings the excellent Ata Hingano with the next rear-guard generation of Lino, Pauga, Soosemea and Bell who could all get a look in at some stage as fatigue and injury inevitably take toll. Big wraps around up and coming exciting teenager Hayze Perham also but probably another season or so for his dance ticket. All this adds up to a bit of much needed roster depth and a bit of sparky competition in the ranks this season and that's gotta be a good thing. Ok perhaps its not a premiership year just yet and maybe a dash of the old rose tinted glasses in High-Tackles outlook but remember that you read it here first! The trial on the weekend was a bit low key with most of the lead singers not on stage but several of those that were on show looked ready for the real audition. Lev Pulu, Ligi Sao, Satae, Lino and a composed Peta Hiku amongst those putting their hand up. Clearly more will be revealed in next weeks trial v the Gold Coast Titans. All that aside if you need more persuasion to renew that season ticket you cant go past the food-court feasts....the world famous White Lady Burgers, Hot chips n Hot Dogs, the Mussel, Paua or Whitebait Fritters, Bratwurst Sausage, Sani Toasties, cold beer, hot coffee, popcorn and candy floss, mate that's gotta float your boat. So there you have it roll on March, High-Tackle is ready to rock n roll at the Fortress of The Faithful the Penrose Palace of Pleasure and Pain, you better believe it. Yeehaaaa go the Mightyyyy Waaarriorrrs.



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**NON-STOP NETBALL ACTION**

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North Shore Events Centre  
21 - 24 March 2018



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# Stars Headed For Auckland

*By Corey Rosser  
Digital  
Communications  
Officer ARL*

**O**NE-TIME WASHINGTON Redskins NFL wide receiver Silas Redd is among the stars who could take the field in Auckland this month when the Ponsonby Ponies host Queensland heavyweights the Ipswich Jets.

The Ponies will open their 110th season with a pre-season match against the Queensland Cup outfit, who boast a wealth of international sporting talent including Redd, former Australian Rugby Sevens star Sam Caslick and Fiji Bati Rugby League World Cup player Pio Seci.

The match will take place at Mount Smart Stadium #4 on February 24 (12.30pm kick-off).

In recent years Ipswich have become renowned for their revolutionary approach to the game under head coaches Shane and Ben Walker, employing a high-risk and entertaining style rarely seen in the modern game.

The exhibition game will also involve Ponsonby's Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup rivals the Bay Roskill Vikings and SAS Fox Memorial Premiership outfit the Howick Hornets, with the three Auckland sides to share game-time against the Jets, something Ponsonby coach John Mana hoped would benefit the Auckland game as a whole.

"It's definitely a good opportunity to promote Auckland league, and we didn't want it to just be about us," Mana said.

"To have Bay Roskill and Howick involved will be really good.

"The way Ipswich play is really exciting, you don't know what they are going to do at any given moment, so the boys are looking forward to coming up against that."

Formed in 1982, the Jets won their first Queensland Cup title in 2015 and went on to win the State Championship that year with a 28-12 victory over the Newcastle Knights in the curtain-raiser to the NRL Grand Final.



# Vodafone Warriors Supporting Red Cross Pacific Disaster Fund

By Richard Becht



**T**HE VODAFONE Warriors have joined forces with New Zealand Red Cross in launching two initiatives to support the Pacific Disaster Fund in the wake of the Cyclone Gita disaster.

A heavily-discounted \$15.00 adult ticket offer has been unveiled today for the first home game of the 2018 NRL season against Gold Coast at Mount Smart Stadium on Saturday, March 17 (5.00pm kick-off).

The Vodafone Warriors will donate \$5.00 from every ticket sold to the Pacific Disaster Fund. The tickets will be available on a first-come, first-served basis in all areas except the platinum covered and platinum uncovered bays.

In addition, the Vodafone Warriors will combine with Red Cross by holding a bucket collection at the club's first NRL trial against Melbourne at Rotorua International Stadium on Saturday (3.00pm kick-off).

"Our hearts go out to everyone directly affected by Cyclone Gita and also to people in New Zealand who have loved ones who are suffering," said Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George.

"We are a club with strong Pacific links and we want to do what we can to help the island nations which have been impacted.

"Donations to the Pacific Disaster Fund will ensure Red Cross can respond quickly and efficiently to help our Pacific neighbours."

The tickets for the Gold Coast game are available on pre-sale only. The offer expires at 11.59pm on March 16 with tickets then reverting to full price for both pre-purchase and gate sales (Ticketek fees for transactions also apply).

The pre-sale for Vodafone Warriors members begins at 12.00pm tomorrow (Thursday, February 15), running until 12.00pm on Friday (February 16). From then on, the offer will be available to the general public.

- The \$15.00 ticket offer for the Vodafone Warriors v Gold Coast match on March 17 will be available through [www.ticketek.co.nz](http://www.ticketek.co.nz)
- Look out for Pacific Disaster Fund collection buckets when the Vodafone Warriors face Melbourne in this Saturday's trial at Rotorua International Stadium. Please give generously in this time of need for our Pacific neighbours.
- Vodafone Foundation has also launched an initiative to raise funds. If you want to help now, the Vodafone Foundation has set up a text assist number. To make a \$3 donation, text Red Cross 4644.

## MORE ON TROPICAL CYCLONE GITA

- Tropical Cyclone Gita is currently a category five system which has reached Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. It passed over Samoa, Tonga and Fiji causing substantial flooding and damage to homes. Assessments are ongoing. Vector-borne diseases, such as dengue fever, have been identified as a major risk due to the amount of water collecting after the cyclone.
- Red Cross is distributing relief supplies such as shelter tools, tarpaulins and hygiene kits, and providing assistance to affected communities in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji.
- New Zealand Red Cross is advising anyone wishing to help to donate to the Pacific Disaster Fund with 100% of the money donated to this appeal going towards supporting communities in the Pacific affected by the disaster.



# Run for a Reason

By Sir Peter Leitch

**D**O YOU know I'm an Ambassador for Diabetes NZ Auckland?

I realise you wouldn't think it to look at me but I have diabetes. And there's the rub, if you will excuse the meat reference. It's not obvious when people have it and people can have it or be on their way to having it without even realising. In fact, it's estimated that one in four Aucklanders have diabetes or pre-diabetes. Nearly 100,000 are living with diabetes in Auckland and 20 more get diagnosed each day. There is a good chance that a mate could be at risk of getting it or someone you know might be silently living with it. It's a chronic condition and can lead to heart disease, stroke, amputations, blindness and kidney failure. It's not been called the silent assassin for nothing.

Fortunately the small team at Diabetes NZ Auckland is dedicated to spreading awareness of this to all Aucklanders. Some ethnicities, Indian, Pacific and Maori, have a higher risk through their genes. But poverty and obesity are also strong causes of anyone developing Type 2 diabetes. Diabetes NZ Auckland provides awareness, testing, healthy eating courses and supportive events for children and youth.

To fundraise – because they get no government funding – we are putting in a team for Round the Bays this 4th March, reducing the entry fee to only \$12 if you join Team Diabetes. I want you to give it a go and get your friends or family to sponsor you. It doesn't matter if you run, jog or walk, I'd just love to see as many people as possible coming along to support a cause that is close to my heart. You can get this \$12 deal by registering through their website [www.diabetesauckland.org.nz](http://www.diabetesauckland.org.nz). Be quick though because it's limited. If you can't make it on the day every dollar of donations will help support the people of Auckland.

My Warriors have won their first trial game against the Melbourne Storm and will be continuing to train and build towards their first round game of the season in Perth on the 10th March. Make Round the Bays your challenge. I will be there in the Diabetes Auckland hospitality tent at the end turning the sausages. Raise \$50 and get a free t-shirt. Join Team Diabetes and enjoy a barbecue with me, the Mad Butcher. (Vegetarian options supplied).

***"It doesn't matter if you run, jog or walk"***

*"Did you realise that I am an Ambassador for Diabetes NZ - Auckland? They are putting in a team for Round the Bays on Sunday 4 March.*

***Join their team for \$12 and raise some funds for them.***

*I won't be running but you'll see me at the end for the BBQ!"*

Check out  
***[diabetesauckland.org.nz](http://diabetesauckland.org.nz)***



## Rugby League In Inter-War New Zealand

**A**UCKLAND-BASED HISTORIAN Ryan Bodman is currently writing a history of rugby league in New Zealand and he will present some of the findings of his research at a Heritage Talk on 7th March 2018, hosted by the Auckland City Libraries.

'In New Zealand, as elsewhere, rugby league faced hostility from rugby union administrators and their allies. As a result, league was forced to the margins of society where it developed close associations with numerous marginalised communities, including working-class New Zealanders, Kiingitanga Māori and Irish Catholics', Bodman explains.

'These communities embraced rugby league as an expression of community identity, cultural pride and collective defiance against rugby's ongoing antagonism and my talk will explore this aspect of league's social and cultural history in New Zealand in the years between World War One and World War Two.'

The free talk will be held at Auckland City Library's Whare Wānanga, on level 2 of the Central City Library, between 12pm and 1pm on Wednesday 7th March. All are welcome and for more information, see the following link: <https://www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/pages/event.aspx?eventid=1628>

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Pre-purchased adult tickets to the Vodafone Warriors' first home game against the Titans on March 17 have been reduced to just \$15 with \$5 of that to be donated to the NZ Red Cross' Pacific Disaster Fund for those affected by Cyclone Gita. Tickets go on sale at midday today. To lock in great seats before they sell out, please click on this link and show your support for this worthy cause: <http://bit.ly/2ByFWPS>



**HELP US RAISE MONEY FOR THE  
RED CROSS PACIFIC DISASTER FUND**



**Want to support Tonga?  
Text 'Red Cross' to  
4644 to donate \$3  
to the Red Cross  
Pacific Disaster Fund.**





*By Richard Becht*

## Sam Lisone Signed Until 2020

**F**RONT ROWER Sam Lisone has signed a new two-year contract to keep him at the Vodafone Warriors until the end of the 2020 NRL season.

Lisone, who turned 24 today, was off-contract at the end of this season but has recommitted to the club in a deal which will extend his Vodafone Warriors career to at least six seasons.

Preparing for his fourth campaign since his debut in 2015, the Toa Samoa international has clocked up 63 appearances so far – he missed just one game in 2017 – leaving him in line to join the club's 100-game club some time during the 2019 campaign.

"We're delighted we've been able to keep Sam here despite interest from other clubs," said Vodafone Warriors general manager football Brian Smith.

"He's another example of a player who has come through our system and has developed into a really important member of our NRL squad. He now has the opportunity to step up to the next level and to continue improving his game."

An Otahuhu Leopards junior, Lisone was snared by the Vodafone Warriors after standing out for Tanga-roa College.

"It's awesome knowing I have another two years here," said Lisone.

"I've learned so much at the club over the last few years from the experienced players in the squad and it's been great having Blairy here to help the younger forwards like me. Now it's time to step up and take on more responsibility."

Lisone had a stellar NYC career, finishing it in the

2014 grand final when he played his milestone 50th game in helping the Stacey Jones-coached Vodafone Junior Warriors to the premiership.

By round one of the 2015 season, Lisone was making his NRL debut against Newcastle and went on to play 19 times in his rookie year, following it up with 21 appearances in 2016. In his first two seasons he started just three times but was a starting forward in seven matches last year including each of the last six games.

### SAM LISONE

- Date of birth: February 19, 1994
- Birthplace: Auckland, NZ
- Junior Club: Otahuhu Leopards
- Position: Prop
- Height: 184cm
- Weight: 106kg
- Rep Honours: 4 Tests Samoa (2015-2017)
- Previous Clubs: Nil
- NRL Debut: v Newcastle, Hunter Stadium, 07/03/2015 (Rd 1)
- Vodafone Warriors No: 196
- NRL Career: 63 appearances (2015-2017)
- NYC Career: 50 appearances (2013-2014)
- NYC Points: 60 (15 tries)

# LAST CALL



**Steps on the Green**  
CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

**Entries  
close  
23rd Feb**

## Time is ticking for you to join us on The Green

Just over two weeks to go until our annual Steps on the Green Charity Golf Day. There are limited spaces left so now is the time to get your team entry in before registrations close on 23 February!

Join Monty and the Team at the Titirangi Golf Club for a round of golf with a NZ celebrity as your fourth player, food and drink while on course, spot prizes, great raffles, a sit down dinner at the end of the day and our annual golf day auction.

## When and where...

Friday 2 March, 2018 at The Titirangi Golf Club, 11 Links Road, New Lynn

- 11.00am Registration
- 12.30pm Shot gun start
- 5.30pm Reception, Awards and Auction

## Enter your Team...

- 3 players plus mystery celebrity 4th player
- Includes: Celebrity guest player, snacks and drinks (beer, wine or non-alcoholic) while playing on course and a sit down dinner in the clubrooms at the end of the day.

Entries close 23 February, 2018. Spaces are strictly limited.

Secure your place now and we'll see you on the green!

**Register online**

**Find out more**

**Download registration**

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

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