



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

28th March 2018

Newsletter #210

Vodafone Warriors Make History and Win Three from Three At the Start of the Season!

Shaun Johnson scores the winning conversion.



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz

Three From Three And An Escape Houdini Would Be Proud Of

By David Kemeys

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



I LOVE THAT old movie The Great Escape, with Steve McQueen zipping around and pissing off Nazis as he avoided their clutches courtesy of a motorcycle he nicked.

But his escape was nothing next to one the Vodafone Warriors pulled off in Canberra.

Funnily enough, at no point did I think we were out of it.

But I did not expect to win it with two field goals.

You would have to be a miserable bastard of the first order not to be pleased with how we are tracking.

Three on the spin – the first time ever we have achieved that as a season start.

I am even get grudging acknowledgement from friends who are not fans.

No matter what way you carve it up, we were wonderful at the death.

It took real grit and courage to hang in there for as long as we did, and I don't think there are too many of us who would not argue teams of old would have folded like one of those paper swans the Japanese are so fond of.

Sadly, I am a miserable bastard of the first order and I was far from happy with our penalty count.

If we do not sort this out, whether or not it is fair – and I am in the camp that believes fair and Warriors seldom go together in the same sentence – we are going to get flogged by someone capable.

Our discipline is again bloody awful.

The whistle went so often against us in the first 10 minutes or so I thought it was Cameron Smith blowing the pea out of his whistle for Melbourne.

So bad was it that we only touched the ball once in the first 12 minutes after conceding six penalties, and having Adam Blair sent to the sin bin.

Not surprisingly, you find yourselves 12-0 down and staring the barrel of a hiding if it keeps up.

Luckily it didn't.

To be fair it is not only us having a grizzle about the number of penalties. It is an issue across the NRL, and I cannot have my cake and eat it too, because I thoroughly agree there needed to be a big clean-up around the ruck, and even more so, around the offside rule.

I have long argued the 10 metres has been a joke for years, and some teams were absolutely expert at milking it for all it was worth.

All you can ask is that referees are consistent. And they are, they all hate us.

That said, we have to do better.

At the moment we are seeing 20 or so penalties in a game, and we all know which end of the count we are likely to be on if that continues.

And despite our wonderful – and unexpected – start, the critics are banging on that it is too early to say if we have really turned a corner. Fair enough, but I still like it a lot more having won three than our more normal starting pattern of having lost three.

The Raiders have yet to win but all three of their losses have now been by two points or less.

I'll accept that Souths, Titans and Raiders is easier than Cowboys, Broncos and Storm, but what I really liked about Saturday's win was that we had no right to get it.

I thought we were better against Souths, I thought we were better against the Titans. We did loads of dumb stuff against the raiders but still found a way to win.

Celebrate it while you can.

Our fitness looks better, though that would not necessarily be that hard.

Our resolve is certainly better, though that would not necessarily be that hard either.

Our composure is a whole heap better. And that one must be hard. To remain cool under pressure when you have been whipping boys since before Sterlo was bald, takes a real change in mindset.

RTS Gets To Smile

Warriors captain Roger Tuivasa-Sheck must be having a hell of a lot better time leading the side this year than he did last, and it seems to be reflected in the way he is playing too.

He was involved in more try-saving tackles on Saturday, ran for plenty of metres, and led his side superbly.

How he must have loved watching halfback Shaun Johnson slot two field goals as the clock ticked down, the first to level the scores and the second to snatch the win without need of golden point time.

I almost felt sorry for the Raiders, but then I didn't.

When Johnson's second field goal looped over it was the first time in the match we had led.

As I said, all those penalties meant we were starved of possession, then Blair was a naughty boy, but our resolve was quite remarkable.

Our defence kept us in.

"This is up there," RTS said, which is a big call when you consider he won a premiership with the Roosters in 2013.

"Everything was against us but the boys dug deep to fight back, that's massive for the team."

You have to say that the addition of experience has been very good for us. Blair (sin-bin or not), Blake Green, Peta Hiku and Tohu Harris, have all been around a long time.

Having that level of experience on the field to call on in a crisis must surely help.

Coach Stephen Kearney was a happy chappy.

"We got smashed in the penalties. But the lads just kept turning up and finding a way to stop them.

I was just so proud of the courage they showed."

On the other hand, Canberra coach Ricky Stuart was not a happy chappy, but since he is a miserable prick all the time, that is hardly surprising.

He was fuming at the obstruction call that saw the bunker disallow a try, and that is understandable given his Raiders would have led 25-6 if it had been green-lighted.

What is less understandable is being grumpy about it, when it was beyond blatant.

I did love his quote though. "I'll get called a whinger and a sook but as a game we have not got a handle on what an obstruction is."

Ricky, you are a whinger and a sook. I don't remember you having anything to say when your winger Nick Cotric got awarded a try despite not getting it over the line, and then with the benefit of two movements.

Take A Bow Issac Luke

Since arriving from the Bunnies Issac Luke has copped his share of criticism, much of it in my humble view, richly deserved.

But the Luke on show at the moment looks nothing like the bloke who crossed the ditch.

Actually that is completely wrong. He looks exactly like the bloke who crossed the ditch.

That's why we got him to do it.

It is no secret Luke had problems, some of them personal and in my opinion none of our damn business, but he was also among the critics, maybe judging himself more harshly than others.

Continued on next page...

But he has been brilliant this year.

Sure it is only three games in, but he is delivering what we signed him to do.

The revival in his form has been spectacular.

So mixed had been his performances that he was dropped from the Kiwis World Cup team, though given how terrible we were, maybe he does not mind that so much now.

He looks fit, he looks involved, he nips out of dummy quicker than a bludger after a free beer, and best of all, he looks like he is enjoying himself again.

Luke reckons the depth we have at hooker has been good for him.

We have Sam Cook – who made way for Jazz Tevaga against the Raiders so he could get more minutes at reserve grade, with Tevaga looking pretty bloody good too; and Nathaniel Roche, though he has been ruled out for the year.

And we have not even mentioned Manaia Cherrington, who is no mug either.

But surely the biggest plus must be the way we are playing, shackles off, unafraid to offload, and a little bit of unstructured play.

That has left Luke in his element, and how he must have laboured under the awful one up style of last season.

“It did feel different that the team wasn't throwing the ball around but we've managed to get back to that free-style play,” Luke said.

Arseholes

The Warriors have been ripped off...and this time it's not dodgy video calls.

Some arsehole has nicked load of their gear.

The club is desperately trying to recover equipment and playing gear stolen from a club van on Sunday night.

Personally I blame Ed Sheeran.

Because his concert was at Mt Smart, the team van loaded with all sorts of gear had to be parked outside a staff member's house on the North Shore.

It got broken into, which is hardly surprising when you consider the amount of crime on North Shore, that hotbed of evil. Would not have happened out south.

Warriors CEO Cameron George is fuming.

“All the playing jerseys from our historic win over the Raiders have been stolen, as has a fair bit of expensive equipment including GPS units and a video drone.

“It's taken the gloss off what was an incredible weekend.”

Hopefully with a load of publicity, the thieves won't be able to flog off the gear.

The police are on the case!

Not what you need with a trip to Sydney to play the Roosters looming.

If you know anything, call the club on 0800 839 839.

Two Interesting Calls May Shape Season

I am glad I did not pay to watch Brisbane play the Tigers, because I would be demanding my money back.

That must be the worst game of footy I have ever seen.

Both sides were absolutely horrible in the first half, and not a lot better in the second.

At halftime both sides had missed 13 tackles, the Tigers were at 12 of 20 sets completed, and the Broncos at 12 of 18, there were no tries, and the score was 2-2 - a penalty each.

Only the fact I spilled my Milo in my lap kept me awake.

The Tigers did eventually score, to lead 6-2, but two more penalties from Brisbane tied it up.

The Broncos snatched a field goal but the Tigers returned the favour and it went to golden point.

I wanted to watch even more of this about as much as I wanted to eat a bucket of cold sick, but having come that far, I stayed with it.

That's when things went really crazy, the ref blowing a penalty for a Tigers offside at marker, as the Brisbane mob missed another field goal attempt.

I don't remember ever seeing that, but the Broncos (and the bookies) got off jail, winning 9-7.

Brad Fittler, Andrew Johns and Phil Gould all blew up about the decision, and you do gotta wonder what was in the whistler's mind?

It was a hell of a moment to award a penalty, especially one even I could have kicked.

Johns said there was no feel for the game, Fittler that it was a really poor decision, and Gould claimed obvious penalties had been ignored for the last 10 minutes, but a gilt-edged game winner then gets given.

All a bit odd.

Which leads me to the another decision, this one during Canterbury v Penrith.

Just minutes in Bulldogs fullback Moses Mbye scored the opening try, but only after the video ref ruled James Maloney wasn't obstructed.

That was a hell of a call because a Canterbury decoy clearly made contact.

Steve Roach was okay with it. Braith Anasta and Warren Smith damned it.

Maloney clearly had no chance to make the tackle.

I'd even have to side with Ricky Stuart on this one. If Mbye's was a try, why was not the Canberra one?

"Every other week that's a penalty," Anasta said. "That's confusing to say the least."

Looking for consistency in the NRL is like looking for a vegetarian at the Mad Butcher's place.

But these decisions have a way of coming back to haunt the game.

Do we want to see defenders diving like soccer players to exaggerate being contacted.

The newsletter team wish the Vodafone Warriors all the best as they set out to break another club record by winning 4 in a row at the start of the season when they take on the Roosters this weekend.





Pack shuffled for clash against Roosters

by Richard Becht

VODAFONE WARRIORS head coach Stephen Kearney has listed veteran Adam Blair at loose forward and named Agnatius Paasi at prop in the line-up for Saturday's fourth-round NRL encounter with the Sydney Roosters at Allianz Stadium (5.30pm kick-off local time; 7.30pm NZT).

With regular interchange prop Sam Lisone suspended this week, 2017 rookie Chris Satae is in line to play his first NRL match of the season and the fourth of his career after being listed in jersey No 16.

Added to the extended bench is prop Albert Vete while the rest of the personnel in the squad remains unchanged. Back rower Simon Mannering hasn't yet been cleared to play as he continues to recover from a shoulder injury he picked up in the trial against Gold Coast.

"Simon's getting closer but remains a week-by-week proposition," said Kearney.

"We lose Sam through suspension which is unfortunate because he has been doing a wonderful job for us off the bench.

"At the same time, it provides an opportunity for Chris, who has been impressive for us in the Intrust Super Premiership."

Satae clocked up 72 minutes in last Saturday's 16-18 ISP loss to Penrith, making 177 metres from 18 carries plus 32 tackles. He also gained 103 metres in the home loss to Canterbury-Bankstown and 185 metres against North Sydney.

Following their dramatic 20-19 success in Canberra last Saturday, the Vodafone Warriors face another tough away assignment this week before returning home for the SKYCITY Auckland Double Header on April 7.

After being stunned 10-8 by Wests Tigers in the

opening round, the Roosters rebounded with convincing wins over the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs (30-12) and Newcastle (38-8) to surge to third on the ladder just behind the Vodafone Warriors.

In putting together a 3-0 start to the season for the first time in the club's history, the second-placed Vodafone Warriors share the distinction with leader St George Illawarra of being the only two unbeaten sides after the first three rounds.

In 38 meetings since 1995, the Vodafone Warriors have a 21-16 winning advantage with one draw.

The Vodafone Warriors have won the last three clashes – 14-13 at Mount Smart Stadium last year, 12-10 at home in 2016 and 32-28 in extra time in Gosford earlier in 2016.

VODAFONE WARRIORS

V

SYDNEY ROOSTERS

Allianz Stadium, Sydney

5.30pm, Saturday, March 31, 2018

VODAFONE WARRIORS

1 Roger Tuivasa-Sheck	Interchange
2 David Fusitu'a	14 Jazz Tevaga
3 Peta Hiku	15 Ligi Sao
4 Solomone Kata	16 Chris Satae
5 Ken Maumalo	17 Bunty Afoa
6 Blake Green	18 Mason Lino
7 Shaun Johnson	20 Anthony Gelling
8 James Gavet	21 Albert Vete
9 Issac Luke	22 Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad
10 Agnatius Paasi	
11 Leivaha Pulu	
12 Tohu Harris	
13 Adam Blair	



By John Coffey

Easter Sunday Or April Fool's Day?

WBO Champion of the World and New Zealand heavyweight boxer Joseph Parker. Photo www.photosport.nz

WHEN THE winner is swathed in world boxing championship belts at Cardiff on Sunday morning will New Zealanders celebrate it as the day our Joseph Parker ascended to the (almost) undisputed heavyweight throne or will it be an April Fool's Day disappointment where the incredible hype was smashed by Anthony Joshua, the pride of Great Britain?

The build-up has taken forever, firstly in persuading Joshua's promoter, Eddie Hearn, that Parker was a worthy opponent and more recently in the long countdown to the actual conflict. But, unless there is an eleventh-hour postponement (not unknown in this particular sport), the whole nation is about to be put out of its misery this weekend.

Joshua is a hot favourite to win, even on our own TAB where, as I write, the big Brit is at \$1.12 and Parker at \$5.50. Both are unbeaten and have plenty to lose. Joshua has won all 20 of his bouts by stoppages; Parker has been taken the distance in six of his 24 bouts. Joshua owns three belts (WBA, IBF and IBO) to Parker's one (WBO).

There is one other (WBC) belt and that is in the possession of Deontay Wilder, an American who has held it since January 2015 and defended it seven times. Wilder has won 39 of his 40 appearances by knock-out. Only former champion Bernard Stiverne has gone all the way with wildman Wilder and for that he was mercilessly punished in a rematch.

Both Joshua and Parker were highly promising amateurs leading up to the London Olympics in 2012. Joshua went on to claim the gold medal, while Parker failed to qualify for the New Zealand team. That was before Parker teamed up with trainer Kevin Barry in Las Vegas and began to learn that professional boxing was a far more complex beast.

Joshua's last defeat was in the 2011 world amateur championship final when beaten 22-21 on points by Magomedrasul Medzhidov, of Azerbaijan. Was it just a coincidence that tournament was held in, you guessed it, Azerbaijan? However, I should mention Medzhidov won his third world amateur title last year so maybe it wasn't a home town decision.

It is not my intention to analyse what might happen in Cardiff on Sunday morning. There will be enough of that in the mainstream media. Too much, in fact. I covered boxing for The Press for many years, going back to when Dion Murphy was filling Canterbury Court to capacity in the 1960s, but there has been overkill on this one. I stopped reading it weeks ago.

But I would be thrilled for Kevin Barry if he trains his first world heavyweight champion at the second attempt. I wrote my first story about Kevin when he won a national intermediate title at 16 or 17 and got to know the family well, especially Kevin Barry senior, as Kevin junior went on to win Olympic and Commonwealth Games medals.

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To me, there can be only one world champion, the so-called “baddest man on earth”. Lennox Lewis was just that when he imperiously palmed off an awestruck David Tua. Despite the claims of Parker and Wilder, Joshua is ranked number one with such reputable sources as Ring magazine and boxrec.com. The latter rates Wilder second and Parker sixth.

Credit must also be given to Parker’s eccentric manager, David Higgins, for catching the eye of promoter Eddie Hearn, although Higgins was pretty hard to ignore. Hearn’s Match Room company controls highly successful United Kingdom sports such as snooker and darts. He apparently now wants to take over English rugby league!

Heavyweight boxing has been sprinkled with shock results since James J Corbett beat John L Sullivan in 1892. No-one expected brash, young Cassius Clay to stop the intimidating Sonny Liston. The greatest boil over of them all was that caused by James “Buster” Douglas over “Iron” Mike Tyson. Only Rocky Marciano retired undefeated.

My favourite upset was James J Braddock’s unanimous points victory over Max Baer in 1935, an inspiring achievement which gave Braddock a permanent place in boxing history as the “Cinderella Man”. Those of us from a later generation were lucky to see Braddock’s story so brilliantly portrayed by actor Russell Crowe in a movie of that name.

Once a highly promising light heavyweight, Braddock fell on hard times in the Depression. He was despised as a washed-up bum battling along with a busted right hand. He had to beg for work on the docks and felt humiliated accepting hand-outs to feed his family. But toiling with one hand on the docks toughened Braddock’s left hand.

At 30, he was given a comeback chance to be a stepping stone for boxers on the way up. He surprisingly beat them and came to the attention of Baer’s handlers. They saw Braddock as an easy payday and the bookies dismissed him as a 10 to one no-hoper. But Braddock still had a firm chin and that steely left fist. An over-confident Baer never knew what hit him.

Joseph Parker is only at half those odds. He has never needed to have his favoured hand rebuilt (only his elbows apparently). Nor has Parker laboured on the wharf or queued outside a soup kitchen. Then again, it is unlikely Joshua will be as lax in his preparation as Baer was. Upsets do happen, but they are upsets because they do not happen often.



A promotional poster for a boxing match between Joshua and Parker. The background is dark with a red throne in the center. On the left is a portrait of Joshua, and on the right is a portrait of Parker wearing a championship belt. The text is as follows:

matchroom boxing
DUCO EVENTS

JOSHUA V PARKER

LIVE SUN 1 APR - UNDERCARD FROM 5AM
MAIN EVENT NOT BEFORE 8:30AM - \$49.99
NOT AVAILABLE ON FAN PASS APP FOR SAMSUNG SMART TVS

FAN PASS
PAY-PER-VIEW



By Miles Davis

Joseph Parker v Anthony Joshua

Photo www.photosport.nz

WIN LOSE or draw in Cardiff this weekend Joseph Parker will make significant New Zealand sporting history. Although often mired in controversy, boxing's World Heavyweight title is still one of the most prestigious and sought after titles in world sport.

It is 121 years since New Zealand has laid claim to that crown when a Timaru blacksmith, Bob Fitzsimmons, won the title. Born in Cornwall as the youngest of 12, Fitzsimmons moved to New Zealand when he was ten. Educated at Timaru Main School he joined his father and brother in learning the blacksmith's art. His work at the forge developed his upper body strength which was in stark contrast to his more spindly legs (he used to wear cotton tights to disguise them during bouts). That strength helped him become one of the hardest punchers in boxing history – he is ranked at No. 8 in Ring Magazine's 100 greatest punchers of all time.

In 1880 he won a boxing tournament in Timaru, knocking out 4 opponents in one night and again won that tournament the following year. In 1883 he moved to Australia to become a professional boxer and had several bouts with mixed success. In 1890 he travelled to the United States and won 3 bouts before being accepted as a challenger for the World Middleweight title in 1891. His opponent was the dashing 'Nonpareil' Jack Dempsey (not to be confused with heavyweight Jack Dempsey aka the Manassa Mauler who was from a later era). Although an underdog, Fitzsimmons knocked Dempsey out in the 13th round to claim his first world title.

In 1897 and although extremely light for a heavyweight (at 75kg he is still the lightest heavyweight champion ever, almost 40kg lighter than Joseph Parker) he got a crack at the then undisputed champion Jim Corbett in Carson City, Nevada. Despite being on the end of some tough punishment and getting knocked down in the 6th round, Fitzsimmons battled on and knocked Corbett out in the 14th round. The fight was filmed and was the longest film ever released at the time (there is a shortened version linked below but you can find the whole bout on Youtube). He lost the title in his very next bout against Jim Jeffries but in 1903 won the World Light Heavyweight title, becoming the first boxer to win World titles in 3 different weight divisions.

The next Kiwi to get close to the heavyweight crown was Gisborne's own Tom Heeney who in 1928 fought Gene Tunney for the title at Yankee Stadium in New York. Although putting in a gritty performance he was stopped in the 11th round in what proved to be Tunney's last fight.

Fast forward to 2000 when David Tua got a crack at the title against Lennox Lewis. This fight has naturally drawn comparisons to the upcoming Parker/Joshua bout and although undoubtedly similar I think there are some key differences. Tua had more experience than Parker has when he got his opportunity, including beating the likes of highly rated John Ruiz and Hasim Rahman who was to secure an upset win over Lennox Lewis. Lewis was also far more advanced in his career than Joshua and at the time undoubtedly a classier boxer.

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Tua was outclassed in a 12 round bout that resulted in a unanimous decision in favour of Lewis but I personally think that the criticism he received after the fight was unfair. Many said that Tua should have been more aggressive but my perspective is that he realised early on in the fight that Lewis was in a different class and had a devastating jab (with a reach advantage of a whopping 14 inches). To have stood a chance critics reasoned that Tua should have taken more risks to get inside and try and land a winning punch. To have done so would have most likely resulted in Tua getting knocked out. I believe he took the only option available to him – try and last the distance and land a knockout blow late in the fight. In my view he maintained his dignity by taking a one of the world's best ever heavyweight boxers the distance.

18 years later New Zealand once again has the chance to stand atop the boxing world. In my mind, although he is still a big underdog, Parker has a better chance of success than Tua did. As I outlined above, Joshua is not yet the calibre of Lewis and has vulnerabilities. Vladimir Klitschko showed that Joshua can be hurt when he knocked him down in their bout. A younger Klitschko may well have finished him off. To do that however Parker is going to have to get inside as he (as with Tua) has a shorter reach than his opponent and Joshua has been working hard on his jab to keep him at a distance. I felt that against Hughie Fury, Parker struggled to get inside and inflict some pain although Joshua is not likely to run away like Fury did for most of the fight. One advantage Parker does have is that his last 3 fights have gone the distance whereas Joshua has yet to go the full 12 rounds so is untested over the duration. It would however pay not to ignore the impact of the 80,000 crowd. British boxing crowds are fanatical and you can guarantee full on support for Joshua before and during the fight. It is easy to dismiss the effect of the audience but it will be unlike anything Parker has faced before and could well have an impact.

The bout also has a special place in the affections of the Mad Butcher Group who have been in Joseph Parker's corner since 2013. They had naming rights for several bouts whilst Parker is now a brand ambassador and they continue to be in his corner as he bids to claim the World Heavyweight crown. They also manage and sponsor Parker's brother John in his professional career.

March 31st 2018 is building up to be one of New Zealand's greatest ever sporting moments and should Parker be victorious it will undoubtedly go down as one of Aotearoa's finest sporting achievements. Whilst my gut tells me that eventually Joshua will have just a little too much for Parker I have been known to be wrong. Let's hope this is one of those occasions.

March 17, 1897 Bob Fitzsimmons v Jim Corbett World Heavyweight Title Fight, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOFdL5VkcQM>

1928 Gene Tunney v Tom Heeney <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPCOxpECsgw>

David Tua v Lennox Lewis https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rklwd_dsIw



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Get weekly specials and recipe inspiration straight to your inbox and you'll also go in the draw to WIN one of eight signed Joseph Parker boxing gloves!



Boxing

By Dave Cameron

AS A frequent visitor to Grant Arkell's Gym at Papatoetoe I was fortunate to meet the two brothers Joseph and John Parker about 2004. They immediately impressed me with their politeness and friendliness. I followed their amateur careers with great interest, and have been a huge fan of Josephs ever since. I took photo's of the boys and they appeared in many publications around the world.

A lot has happened since those early days, and Joseph, as WBO world champion, is on the verge of unifying the four belts and making history.

It is a long time since Tom Heeney from Gisborne fought Gene Tunney from America in the days when there was only one world champion. It was 1928 and Gisborne came to a standstill. Loud speakers were erected all around Gisborne's main street as the farmers from the surrounding areas headed in to town to hear the radio broadcast of the big fight. Tom did not win but he put up a grand display.

The titles were last unified when Lennox Lewis was champion, and many will remember David Tua's game display in 2000, when he faced Lennox.

It would be great to unify the titles again, the IBF-IBO and WBA of Anthony Joshua's and Joseph's WBO.

If Joseph Parker can beat Anthony Joshua, who knows, a bout in New Zealand with Deontay Wilder, the WBC champion at Western Springs Stadium could happen. In the world of boxing anything is a possibility.

Dave Cameron on his boxing obsession: It was my hobby. I just loved writing stuff on boxing and wrestling. Have done stories in the Duco Events programmes. I covered the world. Japanese magazines, French and German mags. Many American mags and New Zealand Sports Digest, and Martial Arts Magazines for many years.

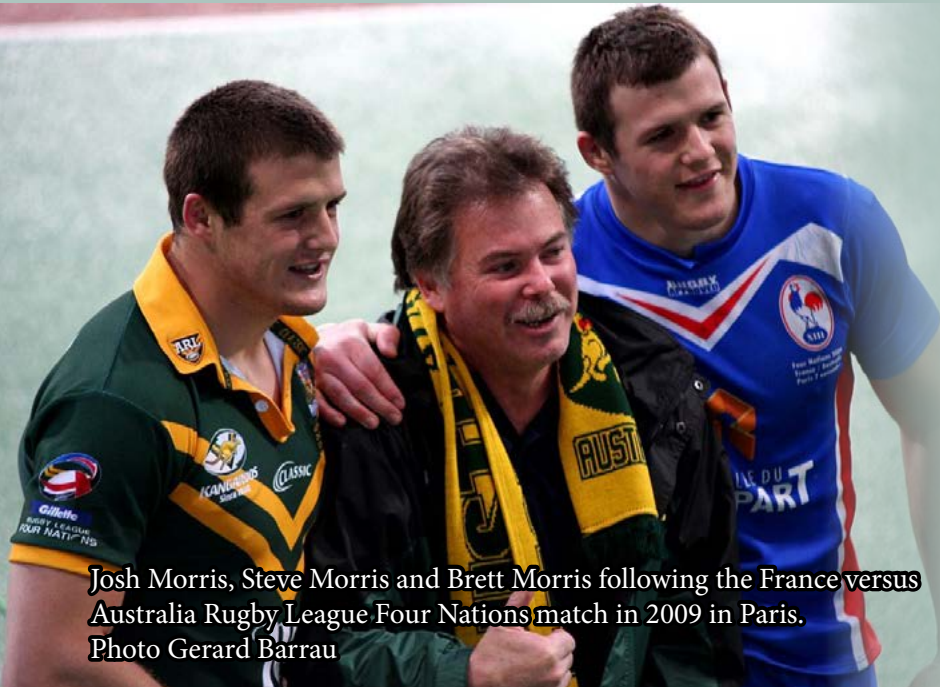
1940's 1950's American Ring Mag. Did New Zealand notes. Was on "Ring" ratings committee in the 1990's.

Did stories in most wrestling and boxing magazines around the world from 1950 to 1990.

Today I am selector on Australian boxing hall of fame based at Melbourne Cricket Ground and a selector on USA wrestling Hall of Fame.

For Your Information. We draw our competition winners by numbering every envelope. We then enter in the number entries at www.random.org and click generate to get a truly random number. We then dive back into our pile of envelopes to find the envelope with the corresponding number. Remeber though, if you're not in you cant win!

NO ADVERTS ARE PAID FOR IN THIS NEWSLETTER



By Barry Ross

Age Doesn't Matter

Josh Morris, Steve Morris and Brett Morris following the France versus Australia Rugby League Four Nations match in 2009 in Paris.
Photo Gerard Barrau

JOSH MORRIS wound back the clock at Sydney's ANZ Stadium on Friday night. Although he is now 31 and playing his 12th season of first grade, he was outstanding in the Bulldogs's 20-18 win over Penrith. Playing in the centres, he took an intercept in the 10th minute and ran about 90 metres to score the second of the Bulldogs four tries. As well as this, he ran for a total of 218 metres and tackled well. It was his 200th first grade game in his 10th season with the Bulldogs after making his top grade debut with St. George/Illawarra against the Titans on 18 March 2007. He now has played a total of 246 first grade matches, scoring 116 tries. Josh's twin brother, Brett, was one of the Bulldogs wingers in the game and he too has had an amazing career. He also played his early football with the Dragons and made his first grade debut the season before Josh, on 7 May 2006 against the Sharks. The Penrith clash was Brett's 217th first grade game and he has 147 top grade tries to his credit. Brett is in his fourth season with the Bulldogs after joining the club in 2015. The brothers have both played Test and Origin football. Brett has scored 18 tries in his 23 Tests, as well as five tries in his 15 Origin games for NSW. Josh has played six Tests (four tries) and 14 State of Origins for NSW (five tries). Their father Steve, now 60, completes an outstanding Rugby League family record. Steve who is teaching Physical Education at Bomaderry High School on the NSW south coast 166 kms south of Sydney, began his career as a halfback and moved on to the wing in 1984. He scored 121 tries in his 247 first grade games with St. George (180 matches) and then the Roosters (67 matches). Steve played one Test for Australia in 1978 against New Zealand and two State of Origin games and three other matches for NSW. That gives the family a total of 30 Tests (22 tries), 31 Origins (10 tries) and 710 first grade games (384 tries).

The 2018 Australian Rules (AFL) competition opened in Melbourne last Thursday night at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, while just a kilometre or so away at AAMI Park, the Storm took on the Cowboys in a replay of last year's Rugby League Grand final. At the MCG a crowd of 90,151 saw the 2017 Premiership winning Richmond Tigers beat Carlton 121 to 95. At AAMI Park, the attendance was 12,866 and they watched as the Storm won 30-14. These crowd figures illustrates just what support Aussie Rules has in Melbourne and what the Storm are up against to promote and establish our game down south. The Storm joined the NRL in 1998 and have won three Premierships in 1999, 2012 and 2017. They also won the 2007 and 2009 Grand Finals but these Premierships were annulled because of salary cap breaches. Craig Bellamy began as the Storm coach in 2003 and is now in his 16th season with the club. In their time in Melbourne the club has done a great job to put Rugby League on a firm footing in the home of Australian football. At first the game received very little coverage from all forms of the Melbourne media, but during the past few years that has changed for the better. There are now regular match reports in the southern newspapers and sometimes the game has even made the back page. A few days before his 300th game against the Cowboys, Billy Slater was a guest on the Aussie Rules version of the Channel Nine Footy Show in Melbourne on Thursday 15 March. He received a great ovation from the fans in attendance and was interviewed by Eddie McGuire, Rebecca Maddern, Sam Newman and Brendan Fevola.

Continued on next page...

Billy Slater was disappointed in his 300th game with the 10-8 loss to the Wests Tigers but he was happy after his 301st match last Thursday when the Storm defeated the Cowboys last Thursday. In this clash, the Cowboys 21 year old forward, Coen Hess scored both his team's tries. In his 39 first grade games to date, Hess has collected 21 tries. The Bundaberg-born Hess weighs 114 kgs, stands 190 cms tall and has good speed for a big man.

After round three, the referees were in the spotlight again, mainly for inconsistency. In the Penrith-Canterbury match, Canterbury's first try was awarded by the bunker after what appeared to be obstruction on Panther's five eighth, James Maloney. Some neutral fans were happy that this try was allowed as Maloney did have a chance of stopping the try but in most previous games, in similar situations, a penalty would have been given to the defending team and no try awarded. Just an hour or so later, referee Ashley Klein awarded a match winning penalty to the Broncos in the Golden Point period, which allowed them to beat the Wests Tigers 9-7 at Campbelltown. If the penalty was for not being square at marker, the replay did not appear to support this, while the Broncos might have had some illegal protection for their field goal attempt. Also in the big majority of Golden Point periods, the referees have had problems awarding penalties for blatant offside play and other infringements. Referees boss, Bernard Sutton, said the next day that the penalty to the Broncos was a mistake and while it is good that the admission was made, it doesn't help the Tigers. As it stands there is no alternative but to move on but maybe the Golden Point idea should be canned.

What a great win by the Warriors. A win like that only happens when all squad members play well and that's what happened. Raiders coach Ricky Stuart blamed the obstruction rule for his loss, but he failed to mention that this is the third successive game when the Raiders have blown a good lead. Bunty Afoa was outstanding among an excellent pack of forwards. He is the leading player from all clubs in post contact metres gained with 174 metres from his three games this season. Roger Tuivasa-Sheck has the most running metres with 542. No doubt coach Stephen Kearney will have plenty to say to Adam Blair for his dumb act which led to his sin-binning in the seventh minute. The Raiders piled on 12 points as Blair was off the field.

After three rounds the Warriors and the Dragons are on top of the ladder, while the Raiders and the Eels are on the bottom with three losses. The Roosters were good in their 38-8 win over the Knights on Sunday and will be a big test for the Warriors in Sydney this Saturday.

OLD FRIENDS

Johnny Raper was delighted when some old friends called in for a visit at his retirement village in southern Sydney on Thursday 22 March. Bob and Anne Fulton, Bob and Judy McCarthy, Ron and Robyn Coote and Barry Ross, along with John and his wife Caryl, shared memories and laughter for nearly two hours. Although he has some short term memory loss problems, John amazed the group when he recited a Welsh folk song in Welsh, which was taught to him by Caryl before the 1959 Kangaroo tour of England and France. He also sang his Jax tyre ads he did around 40 years ago. John played 39 Tests between 1959 and 1968, Bob Fulton played 35 Tests between 1968 and 1978, Ron Coote played 23 Tests between 1967 and 1975, while Bob McCarthy played 15 Tests between 1969 and 1974. In the 1968 World Cup Final at the SCG on 10 June 1968, John captained Australia in the 20-2 victory over France, with Bob Fulton and Ron Coote as team-mates. Two years later at Headingley Leeds on 7 November in the 1970 World Cup Final, Ron Coote captained Australia in the 12-7 win over Great Britain with Bob Fulton and Bob McCarthy as team-mates. John Raper MBE, turns 79 in a couple of weeks on 12 April, Ron Coote AM is 73, Bob McCarthy MBE is 71, Bob Fulton AM is 70 and Barry Ross is 76.





VODAFONE WARRIORS SEEK FANS' HELP AFTER DEVASTATING GEAR THEFT



Auckland, New Zealand, March 26, 2018 – The Vodafone Warriors have asked for support from fans and the general public as they desperately seek to recover expensive equipment and unique playing gear stolen from a club van on Sunday night.

Due to the second Ed Sheeran concert at the club's home base Mount Smart Stadium last night, Vodafone Warriors staff were unable to gain access to their headquarters to store the gear after arriving back in Auckland yesterday following Saturday's win in Canberra.

The gear-laden unmarked van was parked outside a staff member's house on Auckland's North Shore when it was broken into.

"We're devastated with what's happened," said Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George.

"All the playing jerseys from our historic win over the Raiders have been stolen and they obviously hold special significance for the guys.

"Then we've also had a fair bit of expensive equipment including the players' GPS units and a video drone used for training that has also been stolen. All up it's worth thousands of dollars.

"It's taken the gloss off what was an incredible weekend but it's just another challenge and one we are certainly not going to let distract us from making our fans even prouder in the coming weeks."

George said it was hoped that putting the message out to Vodafone Warriors supporters would deter the thieves from trying to sell the jerseys.

"We think someone might have followed the van all the way home," he said.

"But we've got a massive fanbase and we are hoping our supporters can keep their eyes peeled in case any of this special gear ends up for sale.

"The police have been notified and we are confident that we will be able to get our gear back.

"For us, it's out of our hands now and our focus has already turned to Saturday's massive clash against the Roosters in Sydney before we host three NRL teams here a week later for the SKYCITY Auckland Double Header."

**If anyone has any information, please don't hesitate to call
the Vodafone Warriors on 0800 839 839.**



For inquiries please contact:

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Email: richard@warriors.kiwi





High-Tackle Holloway... I'll give ya the tip mate!

The Mad Butchers Weekly NRL Tipping Comp.

By John Holloway

NRL Round 3

		Tarsh Ieremaia	Joe Vagana	John Coffey	Fast Eddie	Monty Betham	Neville Kesha	High-Tackle Holloway
Date/ Venue	Game	<i>Flava Star. Moving to the beat.</i>	<i>League Legend and Machine Lease King.</i>	<i>Newsletter Columnist and Veteran Leagueie</i>	<i>Devonport Dutchman - Takin it easy...</i>	<i>The Warrior Boxer - StepsForLife</i>	<i>Ex International Referee</i>	<i>Richmond Bulldog - Old School Rich- mond Leagueie</i>
Thurs 29 Mar 1300 Smiles	Cowboys v Panthers	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys
Fri 30 Mar ANZ	Rabbits v Bulldogs	Rabbits	Rabbits	Rabbits	Rabbits	Rabbits	Bulldogs	Rabbits
Fri 30 Mar Sthrn Cross	Sharks v Storm	Storm	Sharks	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm
Sat 31 Mar Allianz	Roosters v Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors
Sat 31 Mar Lottoland	Sea Eagles v Raiders	Raiders	Sea Eagles	Sea Eagles	Raiders	Sea Eagles	Sea Eagles	Sea Eagles
Sun 1 April Win Stdm	Dragons v Knights	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons
Sun 1 April Suncorp	Broncos v titans	Titans	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos
Mon 2 April ANZ	Tigers v Eels	Tigers	Tigers	Tigers	Eels	Tigers	Tigers	Eels

Picks last week	3/8	4/8	5/8	6/8	7/8	4/8	6/8
Total picks	12	12	13	14	15	15	12

What The Flock...

After round one I said 1 swallow doesn't make a summer now after round three I suppose its 3 swallows don't make a flock but "what the flock" we're flying high. A brace of droppies at the death by Magic Johnson sealed the deal. As Kearney commented later we didn't really play that well but we hung in and pinched it at the death. Yeah brother! Poor old Sticky Ricky is beside himself his rocky Raiders at 0 and 3 and run down on the bell for the 3rd week in a row, they are rudderless without Pommy play director Hodgson. Some tall timber in front of us... away to the Bondi boyos but the Homies are showing a lot of confidence and their belief is growing. The Roosters will be a tough task. Ask the high flying Knights who are now roadkill, being flattened 8-38 by the charging chooks. They have their big guns primed and with Keary starring in his return will start a handy favourite with the Sydney bookies. The return of the Chosen One Mannering will not harm our chances. Go you good things. A week is a long time in this comp, the soaring Sea Eagles visited the South-side full of 54-zip Eel smash confidence only to find the winless Rabbitohs were up for it and indeed took the biscuits easily at 34-6. A very glum Manly Coach Barrett looking a tad confused. Talking Eels the look on the face of their coach gets worse each week as they spiralled down the gurgler again 4-14 to a relatively uninspiring Sharkies display. Cronullas big buy Moylan didn't make the start and the old war-horse Gallen is starting to look his age but the Shireboys are on the board at last. Down in AFL country JT and his Cowboys were not at their best and this suited the Storm who were back to business 30-14 at the bell.

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Might be my old eyesight but is the worlds best hooker showing signs of wear? Another to post first points was a revitalised Bulldogs outfit who saw off boom colt Cleary early which helped them to out-stay the prowling Panthers 20-18. Moses Mbye having a stunner from the back, Ivans boy Nathan looking at a couple of months on the sideline. Most impressive over the round were the devastating demolition Dragons, toppling the Titans 54-8. Ex Bronco Hunt is opening gaps bigtime and alongside classy half Widdup they were too hot to handle. With a big strong mobile pack and very sharp and aggressive backs they are looking like the real deal in 2018. After two squeaky 10-8 wins the Tigers run was halted controversially, 7-9 by Bennetts brittle Broncos. A post-match admission from the Refs boss that the deciding penalty was a mistake was of little solace to Ivan Cleary who has the Westies defence as tight as a drum but not big on the try scoring side of it.

Tipping time was a mixed bag for the punters with Tarsh and Montz the only ones on the Bulldogs upset. The Warrior/Boxer the best of the bunch this week on 7 out of 8 Go Montz. The rest of us mid range and bunching our totals between 12 points and the leaders Montz and Nifty Nev The ref on 15. But hey, a long way to go yet. The coming week is yet another puzzle with most games having the potential to go either way. The Dragons look a lock and the Broncos at Suncorp a probable stumble for the Titans. The absence of Cleary makes the Panthers look vulnerable up North in Cowboy country. You would think the Storm could go good but the Shireboys just might grow that extra leg at home? If the Sea Eagles repeat their recent Brookvale (ok Lottoland) form the hapless Raiders are toast...but hey you never know your luck in the big city.

The Panel always punts the Warriors because we are faithful and loyal ...but also because The Big Boss of The Newsletter Sir Sausage, The Butcher will kick ass if we switch. Will the boys do the business again? Saturday at ALLIANZ will tell the tale, woohooo Go the Mighti Warriiooorrrs.



A vibrant, stylized poster for a double header rugby match. The background is a gradient of orange and yellow with a geometric, low-poly pattern. In the center, the text "SKYCITY AUCKLAND" is written in a bold, sans-serif font, with "AUCKLAND" in smaller letters below it. Below this, the words "Double Header" are written in a large, white, cursive script. Four rugby players are depicted in action, running with the ball. From left to right: a player in an orange jersey (Tigers), a player in a dark blue jersey (Storm), a player in a red jersey (Warriors), and a player in a blue jersey (Cowboys). Below the players, the text "Tigers v Storm" and "Warriors v Cowboys" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the text "THE MAIN EVENT" is repeated twice, with "WILL BE FOLLOWED BY" in smaller letters between them. The date and location "SATURDAY APRIL 7, MT.SMART STADIUM" are written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. Logos for "AUCKLAND" (top left), "TICKETEK" (top right), "WESTS TIGERS" (bottom left), "STORM" (bottom left), "VODAFONE" (bottom right), "WARRIORS" (bottom right), and "COWBOYS" (bottom right) are also present.

SKYCITY AUCKLAND

Double Header

Tigers v Storm

Warriors v Cowboys

THE MAIN EVENT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE MAIN EVENT

SATURDAY APRIL 7, MT.SMART STADIUM



Kiwis' Doctor Insists Altitude Poses No Extra Risk For Denver Test

*By Adam Pengilly
Sydney Morning Herald*

A SPORTS MEDICINE specialist who will act as New Zealand's official team doctor for the proposed Denver Test – and has vast experience with Super Rugby sides playing at altitude – insists there is no science to support growing player welfare concerns over the contentious fixture.

The Kiwis' travelling physician Dr Greg Macleod, who once helped prepare the Otago Highlanders for a gruelling six-week round-the-world odyssey where they played on a different continent each week, stressed players would not be more exposed to injury if the mid-season match went ahead.

The NRL, its clubs and the Rugby League Players Association will hand a letter to the New Zealand Rugby League and Rugby Football League this week, escalating their resistance against the fixture being played at Denver's Mile High Stadium.

But Dr Macleod was adamant that the expected Denver heat, travel toll and altitude would not increase the injury risk for the millions of dollars of NRL talent that could make the trip.

A proposal to have the number of interchanges rise from the internationally recognised 10 to 12 as well drinks breaks midway through each half has been discussed for the Test, which is hoped to provide rugby league with a foothold in the United States before the 2025 World Cup.

Asked about playing at the highest altitude city in the United States, current Queensland Reds doctor Dr Macleod told Fairfax Media: "It's not what I would consider significantly high altitude and it is not the level of altitude where you would expect altitude sickness.

"I would say 1600 metres is above a level where you feel the effects in terms of performance, but Johannesburg is over 2000 metres and we have Test matches and Super Rugby games there, including travel, all the time.

"I've spoken to medical staff in Denver – including paramedics who run the medical support at the stadium and work with the [NFL's Denver] Broncos – and one gentleman who has been there for 27 years as a paramedic said he's never seen a case of altitude-related illness from people playing at Mile High Stadium.

"This is NFL where guys are 350 pounds and 150 kilos and playing in full gear. I know it's a different sport, but it doesn't seem to happen for guys that have played there.

"You've got to remember Denver and Colorado has an Olympic training centre and people deliberately go there to train at altitude and deliberately go there to put themselves under physiological stress and challenge themselves to improve their performance. No one has any welfare concerns regarding that.

"I just can't see how 1600 metres is a concern because it's not proven [scientifically]. I've never seen anyone have health consequences because they've played at this sort of altitude."

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Some NRL players, including the Dragons' Gareth Widdop and James Graham, would need to fulfil NRL commitments with St George Illawarra a little more than 48 hours after arriving back in Australia after the Test, which has been mooted for June 24.

Both have given their backing for the match, which could be played in temperatures around the 30-degree mark in the northern hemisphere's early summer.

Dr Macleod argued NRL and Super Rugby pre-season and early regular season matches are often played in searing heat nudging the 40-degree mark, as evidenced when Manly brutalised Parramatta a little over a week ago at Lottoland.

That clash kicked off as the mercury nudged 39 degrees and didn't feature any mid-game drinks breaks.

"Denver has dry heat and a low humidity so that 30 degrees is a much more comfortable temperature than if it was combined with humidity," Dr Macleod said. "The heat thing is a non-issue and we have many examples of players playing in higher heat and more extreme conditions than that."

If the match gets the green light, New Zealand players will travel in business class to Denver to allow for better sleep patterns as well as using masks to help with hydration and reduce the chance of picking up viruses.

While conceding the heavy travel schedule could affect the performance of both New Zealand and England, Dr Macleod denied it would enhance the chances of any player picking up an injury – and would be no greater risk than if a NSW or Queensland representative turned out for his club 48 hours after a State of Origin match.

"The theory that you can't travel, but play a lot of games in a short space of time seems a bit odd," he said. "It is a long way and no one is denying that, but it's not the furthest a sports team has travelled."

"If you look at what the [Rugby] Sevens guys do – which is a far greater travel load than what we're looking at here – there was a study which followed players over a five-year period and it confirmed there is no increased significant injury risk for them as opposed to players who didn't travel that far."

"Travel does affect performance, but both teams are in the same boat."

Dr Macleod said he is yet to be consulted by anyone acting on behalf of the NRL about player welfare issues that may stem from the Denver match on June 24.



Watch Joseph Parker take on Anthony Joshua with Monty Betham

This Sunday April 1st at the Sweatshop don't miss this screening party.. with special guest UFC sensation Dan Hooker and NZ Commonwealth games representative Patrick Mailata. Just last month Pat sparred Anthony Joshua and has also fought Joseph Parker as an amateur. Let's not forget the unlimited breakfast and your host for the day our mate Monty Betham. Click here: <https://bit.ly/2pISm00>

High-Powered Panel Named To Appoint Kiwi Coach

By NZRL

A HIGH-POWERED PANEL chaired by Kiwi great Dean Bell has been named to lead the appointment process for the next Kiwis coach.

Besides Bell, Frank Endacott, Monty Betham and Waimarama Taumaunu will interview candidates and make a recommendation to the NZRL board which will finalise the appointment.

Also on the panel will be a Recruitment Specialist who will be tasked with supporting the panel on all HR matters and ensuring the transparency of the recruitment process. The position is now officially open to all interested applicants, not just New Zealand-based coaches. Applications will close 6th April, 2018.

“A key recommendation of the post 2017 World Cup review was that there should be more transparency and rigor around various appointments NZRL chairman Reon Edwards says.

“This independent panel is a great step forward for what is going to be a busy year for the game.”

Panel convenor Dean Bell says there should be no excuses for the Kiwis not being competitive.

“With the depth of rugby league talent the Kiwis have at their disposal, we should be challenging the best international sides, including Australia, and achieving consistent success,” Dean says.

“I’ve already spoken with other members of the panel and as a group we’re determined to support the NZRL in moving on from the issues raised in the review of the last World Cup campaign,” he says. “We need to make sure that test football is given the status it deserves.”

He says the task for the panel is to ensure the appointment of a coach who can get the best out of the players.

The first challenge for the national side is a one-off test against England in Denver, Colorado on 23 June. This will be followed by a home test against Australia later in the year and a tour of England and France in October and November.

“The test has been scheduled in the internationally agreed window, so we’re now just working with the clubs in Australia to ensure we put the best possible team on the field,” Edwards says.

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



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Join Courtney Tairi & Monty Betham and Special Guest Simon Mannering Who Has Played 280 Games For The Vodafone Warriors & 44 Games For The Kiwis This Thursday Night 8.30pm on Sky Sport 2





Otahuhu Leopards To Host First Women's Nines Tournament

By Savannah Tafau-Levy
ARL

THE OTAHUHU Rugby League Club will hold their first women's nines tournament at home, leading into ARL's female season kicking off in April.

Following on from the Sportsafe ARL Nines earlier this month, the Otahuhu committee wanted to start something for the ladies.

Otahuhu committee member, Sally Va'afusuaga, said attending women's nines festivals overseas motivated her.

"With my experience at the Cabramatta Nines, I came home thinking we needed to do something here in Auckland," she said.

"We are looking to make this an annual event to attract more numbers to the game before the season has started, I thought it would be a good pre-season hit out."

The event will cater to three grades, under 15's, under 17's and premier women's.

"The short time frame to make this happen has meant that numbers will be limited and I acknowledge that it will take time to grow, but we just wanted to make a start," Va'afusuaga said.

"It just gives the girls a choice to play rugby league, if you don't provide that option, they will opt out for another sport and that's where we lose our foundation."

Auckland Rugby League's general manager, Greg Whaiapu, said it was a great way to start the women's season.

"It's an ideal lead into the women's competitions this year," he said.

"Seeing this is also the first time Auckland Rugby League has run under 15s and under 17s grades for girls (last year pilot competitions were run), it's a great way to continue growing our women's game."

Numbers for the Otahuhu Nines are limited, so get in quick to register a team of up to 20 players for \$100, [click here for a registration form](#).

Happy Easter from the Newsletter Team



Western Heights Boys And Westlake Girls Take Out National Volleyball Titles

By Dave Macpherson
Volleyball NZ

Rachael Webster spiking for Westlake Girls High in their Championship win against Tauranga's Otumoetai College at the NZ School Volleyball Championships, Palmerston North. Blocking for Otumoetai College are Emma Hegarty (43) and Tymara Cox (56). [PHOTO: Julie Maree Photography]

IT'S THE largest indoor sporting event in New Zealand every year, and its bursting at the seams as more and more teams from around the country enter the Volleyball NZ-run event, after playing in their local and regional championships.

The NZ Secondary Schools Volleyball Championships finished last Friday, with 171 teams, comprising nearly 2,000 players from 105 schools, playing in 11 Boys' and Girls' divisions over five days. The strongest regions have traditionally been Bay of Plenty and Auckland, and they once again threw up the champions – Rotorua's Western Heights High School for their 11th Boy's title, and Auckland's Westlake Girls High coming through for their first-ever Girl's title.

Other strong regions include Nelson, Canterbury, Wellington and the Waikato, but no-one is able to rely on their previous strength, with different winners every year for the last five in the Boy's section, and for the last three in the Girls.

New schools appearing this year included Waiuku College, winning Gold in the Girls' sixth Division at their first attempt, while fellow newbies Motueka High School took the 4th Division Girls' Bronze. Its a safe bet that both schools will be back again in 2019!

The tournament is mainly played at the huge Central Energy Trust Arena in Palmerston North, where 19 courts are in use from 8am until about 10pm every day, along with overflow games at Massey Uni, Palmerston North Boys High and Longburn College. There is currently nowhere else in the country big enough to host this massive event.

In the Boys' 1st Division final, the tall Western Height's team managed to hold off a fighting comeback from the high-energy play of the Rangitoto College Boys to win three sets to one. For the Rotorua side, setter Hemaia Tauroa-Apete was the major influence, and rightly took out the tournament MVP award.

The Girl's final was fought between the 1st Division's only two unbeaten sides, with Westlake just shading 13-times winners Otumoetai College (Tauranga) in each set to secure a three sets to nil win. Dominant for the Aucklanders were the near unstoppable open hitters Tamara Otene and Rachael Webster, with Otene deservedly winning the tournament MVP award.

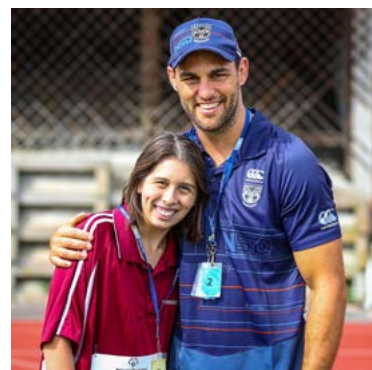


Hemaia Tauroa-Apete shows his trademark jump-setting style for Western Heights Boys in their Championship win against North Shore's Rangitoto College at the NZ School Volleyball Championships.

[PHOTO: Julie Maree Photography]

SIMON MANNERING, Gerard Beale, Junior Pauga, King Vuniyayawa and a whole bunch of club staff volunteered at the Auckland school's Special Olympics earlier this month.

VODAFONE WARRIORS CEO Cameron George hands over \$25,000 raised for Red Cross NZ's Pacific Disaster Fund to help the Cyclone Gita victims throughout the Pacific. Great work #WarriorNation.



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Elia Adjusting To Warriors Life On And Off The Field

*By Will Evans
Canterbury Rugby League*

IT'S BEEN a steep learning curve for recent Warriors recruit Patrick Elia, who has been pitched into the Jersey Flegg Under-20s ranks less than two years after his first game of rugby league.

But the gifted 18-year-old centre – a First XV star for St Thomas' of Canterbury before league scouts slipped under union's guard – is holding his own against more seasoned players and relishing his move to Auckland.

"It's quite physical and quite aggressive," Elia says of the Jersey Flegg competition.

"There's some pretty big 20-year-olds, and because I'm a young age my body's still not quite right.

"I've just got to work hard, knuckle down and focus on the little things."

Following the demise of the NYC after 10 seasons, the Warriors' Under-20s now play in the Jersey Flegg, which effectively runs underneath the InTrust Super Premiership NSW reserve grade competition.

Elia has featured at centre in both matches to date this season – losses to North Sydney (24-16) and Canterbury (28-10) – and he admits the standard is taking some adjusting to after coming straight from domestic high school tournaments.

"It's a massive step forward, but at the same time not too far ahead," Elia explains.

"It's more the pace of the game and how everything's more structured. It's that mindset and mentality that's the big difference between the two."

Former rugby union prodigy Elia was the subject of a code tug-of-war last year, signing a deal with the Warriors after also being courted by the North Queensland Cowboys, before the Crusaders named him in their Under-18s side.

But Elia followed a growing trend of promising Canterbury youngsters with a strong rugby union background choosing rugby league, including burgeoning front-rower Cruz Topai-Aveai, who has played Under-20s for South Sydney and Cronulla after taking out the rugby union UC Championship MVP award in 2016.

After a strong campaign for St Thomas' at the 2017 NZRL National Secondary Schools Tournament, Elia represented the New Zealand Secondary Schools side against NSW Combined High Schools – and there's no regrets about choosing the league path.

"So far, so good," he says.

Continued on next page...

“I’m slowly progressing and still learning. I haven’t quite reached the level that I want to but I’m thankful the Warriors have given me the chance to step up and get some game-time.

“The Warriors are developing me and I’m starting to feel it mentally and physically. I’m excited for what the future holds for me at the Warriors.

“This place is a high-performance centre in itself. They’ve got some great people coaching us as well, Jerome (Ropati) and Ricky (Henry), and at the club there’s some experienced players that teach the young guys a lot.”

Often the biggest challenge for young recruits is adjusting to life in a new city away from home for the first time, just months out of high school.

But Elia is settling in nicely thanks to Warriors Autex House, which the club has set up specifically to ensure the most seamless transition possible for their out-of-town tyros.

He shares the house with several Under-20s teammates, as well as NRL-contracted players Hayze Perham, Junior Puga and recent arrival from the Gold Coast Titans, Karl Lawton.

“I was born and raised in Christchurch so it’s a massive step to come up to Auckland,” Elia says.

“It’s a busy city, a lot of people but I’ve found the transition quite easy staying at Warriors House.

“That kind of makes me feel like I’m at home, staying with the boys. It’s always loud in the house, which is a good feeling to have. There’s a few familiar faces around as well, with fellow Cantabrian Graeme Patu-Vae-ga’au also in the Jersey Flegg squad (he is yet to debut). Elia’s St Thomas’ teammate, talented forward Seth Tauamiti, trained with the Warriors over the summer but is currently recuperating from injury.

Meanwhile, Canterbury juniors Daniel Sakisi and Sua Ailoilo were try-scorers in the Bulldogs’ Flegg win over the Warriors at Mount Smart Stadium last weekend.

But home, family and where he got his start in rugby league is never too far from Elia’s thoughts.

He revealed St Thomas’, Linwood Keas and Rockcote Canterbury Bulls coach Andrew Auimatagi has had a big influence on his brief rugby league journey.

“Andrew coached me and taught me a lot around the how the footy side of things work, the off-field stuff, welfare and player wellbeing and all of that.”



Just popped in to see my old mate Bill Whitehead (rugbyleaguebill) to his mate’s looking great.



Dear Peter. Just spotted this man on the MTR in Hong Kong today.
Hope you are well. Karl.

Vodafone Warriors Excited To Join NRL Women's Premiership

By Richard Becht



INVOLVEMENT IN the new NRL women's premiership has been hailed by Vodafone Warriors executive chairman Jim Doyle as the launching pad for significant growth of women's rugby league throughout New Zealand.

The Vodafone Warriors have today been confirmed as one of four clubs in the trailblazing competition which will run over a four-week period alongside the 2018 NRL finals.

"With the success the Kiwi Ferns have had, it's logical to have one of the teams in New Zealand while it's also tremendous for our brand to be able to embrace the community in the fullest sense," said Doyle.

"The board sees this as a huge opportunity to take the club and the game to new levels here by offering more pathways than ever for players in New Zealand. Not only that, this opens the door for new supporters and commercial opportunities."

Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George said taking up one of the four licences for the inaugural NRL women's premiership was vital from a strategic viewpoint.

It means the Vodafone Warriors will now have four

teams under their umbrella in the NRL, the Intrust Super Premiership, the Jersey Flegg Cup under-20 competition and now the NRL women's premiership.

"We put a lot of work into our bid once the women's competition was announced and we couldn't be more delighted to be taking up one of the spots," said George.

George said while the women's team was a Vodafone Warriors entity, the local game would be involved.

"We've had some discussions with the New Zealand Rugby League and the Auckland Rugby League about the new competition and working together," he said.

"The next steps will include assembling a squad and coaching staff, looking at sponsorship, a name for the team and much more.

"While there is much to be done, this is exciting for women's rugby league across the board and especially in New Zealand."

The other three clubs admitted to the women's premiership are the Brisbane Broncos, St George Illawarra Dragons and Sydney Roosters.



On behalf of all the newsletter readers and myself I want to wish Joseph all the best for the fight of his life this Saturday - Sir Peter Leitch

Vodafone Warriors Giveaway



**8x Unsigned 2017
Nines Jerseys**



**2x Signed 2018
Jerseys**

To celebrate the Vodafone Warriors creating a club record and winning three games from three we are giving you the chance to win!

Enter the draw to win one of two signed 2018 Vodafone Warriors Jerseys and eight 2017 Vodafone Warriors Auckland Nines Jerseys (not signed). ***Prizes posted internationally!***

Vodafone Warriors
Giveaway
P.O Box 54295
The Marina 2144,
Manukau, Auckland
New Zealand



Name:
Address:
Phone Number:
Email:
Jersey Size:

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

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

Winner will be drawn on

17 April 2018

I was privileged enough to be invited into the Crusaders changing rooms after the game. Here are a few photos.

ON FRIDAY I was hosted by the Crusaders in Christchurch. To say I had a fantastic night would be an understatement. Here are some pictures from the night.



It's game time.



Awesome to catch up with Scott Barrett brother of Buedan Barrett at the game.



Good to catch up with Jase Ryan. Crusaders forwards coach.



Good to catch up with All Black Wyatt Crockett and All Black captain Kieran Read. Two good buggers.



Had a great night with the Crusaders. Was great to catch up with former All Black Scott Robinson now the Crusaders coach and All Black Ryan Crotty.



At the rugby with Peter Winchester, David Frost and David Rhodes.

SKYCITY AUCKLAND

Double Header

WESTS TIGERS V STORM

V

WARRIORS V COWBOYS

SAURDAY APRIL 7, MT. SMART STADIUM

Reader Mail

Hi Sir Peter

I WAS THE lucky winner of your recent \$500 warriors gear prize ...

My son was super excited and was quick to place his order.

The same week, he was also lucky enough to be drawn from the members to be the ball carrier for the trial game in Rotorua... so we packed our bags and hit the road

Heres a photo of us in the stands in our new hoodies (even though it was bloody hot !) and him nervously waiting to run onto the field.

A fantastic day of league – with a great result for the warriors

Thanks again for your hard work & dedication to league

XX Vikki



AS PROMISED this is Glen Irving our Son in Law who we gave the singlet to he jus loves it and said to thank you for it. Have a great day both of you Lorraine and Dave xx



NZ WARRIORS fans playing at the Avonhead Tavern Dodge Ball competition today in Christchurch. Inspired by the Warriors great result in Canberra last night. - Jan.

10
GAME
MEMBERSHIPS
FROM \$109

Chalky Carr Charity Event



3 Crusaders and All Blacks. Codie Taylor, Ryan Crotty and Matt Todd.



All Blacks manager Darren Shand and former captain Rueben Thorne.



Great to catch up with Israel Dagg.



Great to see my old mate All Black's captain Kieran Read and Crusaders assistant coach Brad Mooar.



My good mate Steve Hanson.

I went to an amazing dinner the other night in Christchurch to support the Chalky Carr trust. I caught up with so many good people. Thanks for having me!

Find out more about the charity here:

<http://www.chalkycarrtrust.com/>

and

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

Earlybird Pricing Ends This Weekend

A reminder that if you want to take advantage of Earlybird prices you have until this Sunday, 1 April. From next Monday prices will rise. There are limited tickets available with Category A from \$59 and Category C from \$29, so get in quick.

Get your tickets now at:
<http://www.ticketek.co.nz/manly-warriors/>





NOTHING HITS YOU LIKE ORIGIN AT THE MCG



06.06.18

The Holden State Of Origin Is The Greatest Rivalry In Rugby League.

ON JUNE 6, 2018, Melbourne's MCG will host the first Holden State of Origin Game and it's an event not to be missed.

As you are one of our most valued customers, we are giving you an opportunity to purchase corporate hospitality tickets to game 1 of the 2018 Holden State of Origin Melbourne. Be a part of history in the expected full house of the mighty G! Nothing hits you like the roar of a packed MCG crowd and the fiercest rivalry in Australian sporting landscape.

This is the last chance to see Cam Smith and Billy Slater play for the Maroons in Victoria. Stay and attend a Melbourne Storm match or an AFL game and enjoy Melbourne with extensive restaurants and bars and iconic sites to see.

With a variety of hospitality options to best suit your needs, the Holden State of Origin game 1 offers a quality experience for you and your guests - be there to watch the NSW Blues take on the QLD Maroons.

WE HAVE PACKAGES TO SUIT EVERYONE!

IMMORTALS DINING - NZD

\$1,245.50pp

The ultimate location with all the best inclusions & an extremely entertaining pregame function:

- Diamond category seating
- Exclusive access to Immortals Dining Room
- Pre-match function, with fine-dining menu
- Selection of premium Australian wines, beers & non-alcoholic beverages
- MC & celebrity guest speakers
- Post-match function to review the game
- Official merchandise and program
- Corporate company table signage
- Dedicated event manager & hosts

CAPTAINS CLUB - NZD \$965.50pp

A casual and relaxed setting awaits you to enjoy all the pre-match hospitality:

- Gold category seating
- Exclusive access to the Captains Club
- Pre-match function, cocktail style menu with gourmet canapes
- Selection of premium Australian wines, beers & non-alcoholic beverages
- Post-match function to review the game
- Official merchandise and program
- Dedicated event manager & hosts

PREMIERS DINING - NZD

\$1,075.50pp

Offers a comfortable environment, delivering a premium experience to entertain clients.

- Platinum or gold category seating
- Exclusive access to Premiers Dining Room
- Pre-match function, with 3-course menu
- Selection of premium Australian wines, beers & non-alcoholic beverages
- MC & guest speakers
- Post-match function to review the game
- Official merchandise and program
- Corporate company table signage
- Dedicated event manager & hosts

Book now!

FOR BOOKING ENQUIRIES CONTACT: DONNA CHURTON

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THIS WEEK IN OUR ROUND 4 ISSUE

NRL, INTRUST SUPER PREMIERSHIP, INTRUST SUPER CUP +
UNDER-20s TEAM LISTS, PREVIEWS AND STATS + SCORES AND
RESULTS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY!



ROUND 4, 2018

On sale at newsagents, supermarkets and at the ground from Thursday, March 29

DIGITAL VERSION

Available via magsonline.com.au, the Apple Newsstand and Google Play

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

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Greg Inglis is one of the biggest stars in our game, but he's also human. In this week's Big League Inglis speaks honestly about the injury that ended his season in 2017, how he knew he needed to seek mental health treatment and how his life has positively changed since returning to the field. He will captain the Rabbitohs in their traditional Good Friday clash with the Bulldogs in Round 4.

James Graham built a reputation on being the passionate leader of the Bulldogs before leaving the club at the end of the 2017 season. But despite his switch to the Dragons, he's still as intense as ever. The 32-year-old explains why he will never change and the impact he hopes to have at his new club.

If anyone is qualified to speak about the Brisbane v Gold Coast rivalry, it's Wally Lewis. 'The King' played for both clubs during his time and says the competition between the two Queensland cities is no beat up. Lewis says the Broncos decision to release Ash Taylor to the Titans has only fed into the growing rivalry.

Parramatta legend Nathan Hindmarsh has penned a column for us, saying he has had enough of the referee-bashing and that players should cop penalties on the chin.

PLUS... This Week in History, Trent Hodkinson on the move to Cronulla, the Wests Tigers incredible start and a James Tedesco poster.

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HI SIR Peter.

Each Warriors game the Fox&Ferret@ the Palms mall chch shows all the warriors games on their big screen (with commentary) There are drink specials during the game. Also you can go in the draw to win a signed warriors 9s jersey.

Everyone is welcome to pop down and watch with keen warriors fans.

Winners of last week's give aways thanks to the mad-butcher

Matt and Dave will be joining Steve Anngow who enjoys taking Chch fans upto Auckland to enjoy the whole warriors game day experience.

15 will be heading up for the double header weekend.

These trips are made more enjoyable with the assistance of Sir Peter who always welcomes us in the lounge and supplies merchandise to spoil us.

It's most appreciated.

Cheers Steve Anngow Christchurch



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www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz

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Without the help of these brands the Sir Peter Leitch Club and Newsletter wouldn't be as fantastic as it is. If you do get the opportunity please support them whenever you can.



The Newsletter Team

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

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David Kemeys - Editor at Large
Hayden Woodhead - Graphic Designer

John Deaker - Correspondent
John Coffey - Southern Correspondent
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