



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

11th February 2018

Newsletter #212

Vodafone Warriors 5 From 5!



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz



Vodafone Warriors Fans at Mt Smart Double Header



Six Of The Best Please

By David Kemeys

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



NO MATTER where you stand, you have to love it.

Five from five.

Not a soul tipped it, anyone who tells you differently is a liar.

This side looks nothing like the rabble of previous years, and I am way too dumb to know how the turnaround has been achieved, but I am certainly not going to moan about it.

Strangely it has almost made it more difficult to watch.

The one good thing about having a truly horrible side is that you have zero expectation so you kind of arrive at the ground resigned to losing, and when it happens, you leave it muttering “told you so”.

Now you arrive thinking “we could win this, we are going so well”, but the mind plays funny tricks on you after all those years of throwing games away from winning positions or never having been in them in the first place, so that you sit trying to put the demons telling you your side will blow it, back in the box.

It is doing nothing for my nerves but I like it.

At the start of the season, no one gave us a show, not a snowball's chance in hell.

Plenty of the experts had us as down as dead-certs for the wooden-spoon.

What a difference five weeks and five wins can make.

Sure we should be cautious. You do not win a comp in April – though you can get yourself out of the running.

But here we are, undefeated after five games.

The hope has returned.

It is a wonderful gift from the players to the fans, because we have suffered through the lean years and us true fans know the band-wagon jumpers will flood back, and that's fine too.

I think we have seen enough now to know we are going to be competitive.

The jury was still out despite beating the Bunnies in Perth, and then Canberra and the Titans, who are not likely to set the world on fire.

Beating the Roosters – and doing it well, and then the Cowboys, is a step up in class.

Let's just enjoy it while it lasts, because Ken Maumalo had one of his best games for us, David Fusitua is at the top of the try-scoring list, RTS is, well, RTS, Peta Hiku has given us a centre pairing alongside Solomon Kata that looks better than anything we have seen in a number of seasons, Blake Green is going superbly, and Shaun Johnson is a player any club would snatch your hand off to take.

Our forwards – powder-puffs for years – are revitalised. Props with fire in their bellies, Tohu Harris and Adam Blair adding legions of experience, Simon Mannering back, and Issac Luke looking like the player we all knew he had the capability of being. Leivaha Pulu was a signing plenty of us wondered about, but he's been excellent, and Bunty Afoa has silenced the doubters.

There is clearly a special bond in the team, and it is one the players are forging with the fans too, giving them a reason to believe again.

Whatever is going on, just keep it up I say. It might make for nail-biting watching, but it is infinitely preferable to having very little hope.

Now if we can just make it six from six, we are really going to have plenty of people sitting up and taking notice.

JT Praises Our New Attitude

North Queensland star Johnathan Thurston is without a doubt one of the finest footballers I have ever seen.

He is something special, so I was tickled pink when he said our resurgence did not surprise him.

Bugger me, it has surprised pretty-much everyone else!

The line of those who tipped us to be five and oh, given we have not seen finals footy since Adam was a lad, would be a short one.

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But JT reckons we are aside with “talent across the park” and that we appear to be playing to our potential.

To which all I can add is - about bloody time.

playing to their potential,” he said.

Thurston was surprised though by our defensive toughness - which was again on show as we beat our visitors.

“They’ve always been a side that attack but their defence is what’s winning them games,” he said.

Like a lot of people, JT has pointed to the difference that bringing fitness guru Alex Corvo to the club has made.

“They look a lot fitter and stronger.”

The Cowboys meanwhile have four losses in a row. I can’t see that continuing for much longer though.

There’s too much talent across the park for that.

JT Also Cops A Serve

It happens to the best of them.

Before Saturday night’s loss, Greg Alexander took aim at JT, basically saying he’s been around too long.

“I’ve seen players when they get too old. They hit the ground more often, they are easier to tackle, they’ve lost half a yard of speed. That’s not to say he won’t find his feet, but that’s how he’s playing at the moment. He looks half a yard off the pace.”

I’ve seen players who have been around too long – and frankly, Greg Alexander was one of them when he came to the Warriors.

But it just goes to show you can be as wonderful a player as Thurston, and it does not exempt you from criticism.

Take A Bow Brian Smith

All sorts has been said and written about our quite remarkable turnaround, but one name frequently missing from the conversation is that of Brian Smith.

The well-travelled and hugely experienced Smith is our general manager of football, and he must be a huge influence and source of ideas for our coaching team.

He was in the papers at the weekend talking to our old mate David Long at Stuff, saying he was determined the player drain to Australia could be stemmed.

We all know almost every side has a collection of Kiwi-born players.

We also know we cannot expect to keep every player, because there is just not enough room in our roster.

But we also know we have let go some who we should not have.

Our Under 20s were a breeding ground of talent that Aussie clubs cherry-picked for years, though we have been derailed of late, shifting emphasis away from the side, promoting players to reserve grade much faster than before.

Smith says Australian clubs have been picking up the best Kiwi players very early, sometimes as 14-year-olds.

“There is a player right now who is 14 and being courted by an NRL club with an offer that would blow your mind.”

Smith was never backwards at coming forward, and he wants us to fight back, not just stand around and let it continue to happen, and to that end wants the club to be “more proactive” in identifying and recruiting the best young New Zealanders.

“We’ve got to get in and get dirty, if that’s what it takes.”

Seeing Double

I confess I was a bit worried by this double-header thing, because my Warriors companion is the wife, who enjoys immensely the spectacle of grown men belting along and scoring magnificent tries, and the physicality of the game.

At least that is what she tells me.

But given that I am never going to be accused of being a magnificent physical specimen, it may well be that her interest in the game is a bit more superficial than she lets on.

Two matches, I wrongly thought, might be a bit much for her, but she loved it.

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What's not to like about watching Melbourne lose, and the seeing your side carry on its merry way?

So I am in Warriors CEO Cameron George's camp, because he wants a double-header in Auckland as an annual event.

We might be coming off a bit of a high, with the Tigers tipping over Melbourne at the death courtesy of our old mate Benji Marshall, and our own win.

The level of enthusiasm might be different if it was Canberra v Cronulla, and we were on a losing streak.

But I'd certainly sign-up for another round.

The atmosphere was great, the crowd amazing, and the results even better.

The most obvious draw is having teams you want to watch. As I say, I am not sure I would race to watch Manly – unless there was a very good chance they would get beat, and of course they have to be willing to take a home game to NZ.

“We haven't had a full house for years and then for our team to win in the manner they did, to keep us unbeaten, and it's put us in a position that the club has never experienced before. We're not getting ahead of ourselves, but our players are realising the potential is there, the support is there and every week we're walking towards our ultimate goal, which is to continue to win,” George sais.

Sounds fair enough to me.

Bit Of A Grumble Though

If you know you are going to have sell-out crowd, and we certainly did given there were constant reminders to get a ticket because it was getting harder and harder as match day approached, then how come the food vendors can't see they might have to get their act together?

The queues for a cup of coffee were appalling, for food worse, though I cannot comment on the beer stands, because I do not drink at the games, being a responsible driver-type person, and also having a terrible aversion to having get up constantly to take a pee, which might mean I miss something.

People pay good money for the tickets, so having to line-up for a carton of chips for 45 minutes is just not on.

It's not like a saw a concession stand that said: Line-up here for your money back because you missed half a game.

I have a deep suspicion that those in the corporate lounges and boxes get very well looked after – as they should, but something has to be done to make it a little easier for us poor old ordinary folk who stump up and fill the stands.

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



Facebook



Instagram



Twitter

Big thanks to Sky City for hosting this fan day!



Arliya from Whangarei, Logan from Whangarei, Ethan from Orewa and Korbyn from Orewa.



Dakota & Pauline & TK enjoying the fan zone.



Debs and Eddie enjoying the fanzone at Skycity.



Jason and daughter Islah who drove up from Patea in south Taranaki enjoying the fanzone at Skycity on Friday.



Jeff, Jay and Issy from the Hornby panthers in Christchurch.



Te Hiko family from Manurewa at the fan zone.



Pelenato and Taylor Tanoai.



Peter Samuel, from Temuka In the South Island, and family, All massive Vodafone Warriors supporters.



Zoe Seaward from Wellington and Helen Poole from Hawkes Bay loveing the fanzone.



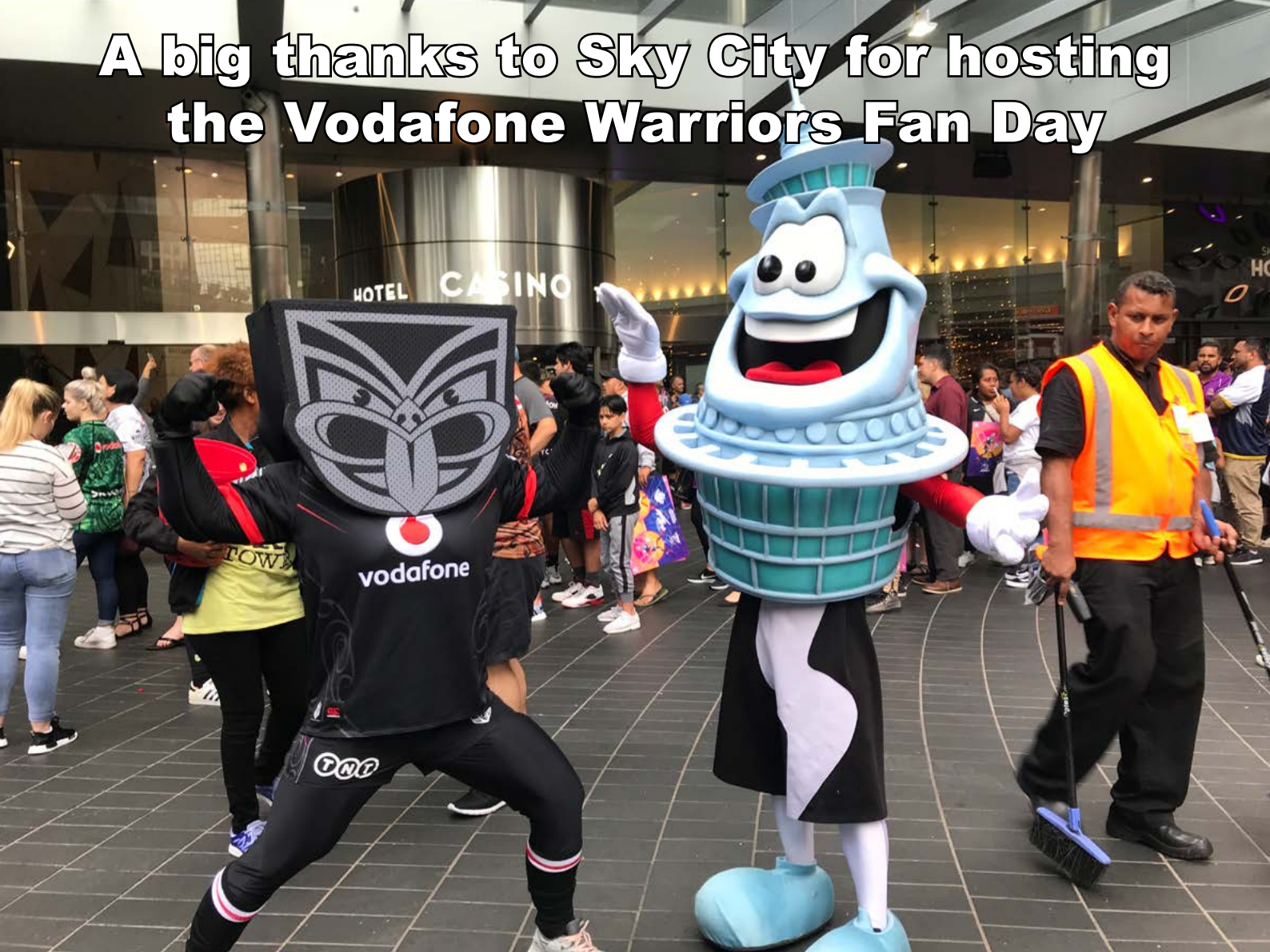
The Whitehead family who drove from Taranaki for the double-header at Mt Smart but thoroughly enjoyed the fan-zone @skycity.



These two dudes flew up from Christchurch for the game. Mike Wouters & Graeme Day had a great time at the fan day.



**A big thanks to Sky City for hosting
the Vodafone Warriors Fan Day**



Tour of Mt Smart taken by Dexter



In the Stacey Jones Lounge



3 very happy ladies Chris, Lorraine and Lizzie.



Mark Jennings, Craig Richards, Allan Roberts, Steve Ottley, Gordon Stanley, David Blair, David Bainbridge a great bunch of guys from Christchurch..



Charlie and Sue Winter from New Plymouth loved the lounge.



Craig Johnston former chairman of the Ellerslie Eagles Rugby League club sings Under the Roadwalk.



Marty from Masterton receives a copy of What A Ride Mate the Butcher's biography from Don Graham.



Darren Brady presents Steve Ottley from Christchurch with a package for a Warriors game for 2 in his corporate box at Mt Smart.



John Cooper and Anthony Holland from Christchurch who paid over \$5000 at a charity auction in Christchurch to be the Butchers guest at the game. Well done guys.



Delilah Southon (Adam Parore's niece), Anthony Dempsey (Benji Marshall's uncle), Hugh Southon, Rakapa Dempsey (who is a great dancer).



Don a lounge member parked his car next to 2 police cars and they promised to look after his Warriors flag. That's great policing.



Howie Tamati x Kiwi rep and Kiwi Coach with Alan Given who flew in from Melbourne for the game.



Hugh Southon, Lynda Southon, Delilah Southon, Rakapa Dempsey all had a ball in the lounge.



Dave McKee who takes all the photos in the lounge winning a raffle prize.

In the Stacey Jones Lounge



Kim from Masterton and Kay (in red) celebrating their birthdays in the lounge.



The wonderful Birthday cake was made and iced by Trudy Warrington.



Arapata and Kay celebrated their birthdays with a Vodafone Warriors cake donated by the Butch.



Daniel sings HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Kay for his punishment for not joining in when all the lounge sang happy birthday.



Michael Wells and Cathy Callister both originally from the UK.



Mike Dunn who had his stag do in the Stacey Jones lounge with 20 of his mates with Sir Peter.



Nick from Panasonic who supports the Vodafone Warriors and the West Tigers. He was very happy on Saturday night.



Paul Burrell and Sue Mathews from the Gold Coast.



Peter Heron from Timaru WON a 2017 Vodafone Warriors jersey as a spot prize.



Piri from Wanganui sings her very own Warriors song and done a great job.



Ricky, Tom (Steve's Son), Steve Weastell (who flies up every year to a couple of games) from Christchurch with Don Graham and Zenny.



Rob O' Neale from Masterton had a blast in the lounge.

In the Stacey Jones Lounge



Ronald Given (in the wheel chair) with Leanne & Alan Given (his son).



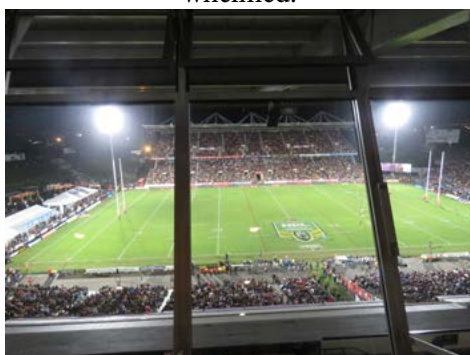
Rosa from Timaru receives a spot prize of a copy of the Butcher's autobiography What A Ride Mate and was overwhelmed.



Stephanie from Hastings enjoyed the night.



Stephen Hall, Tim Hall, Alistair Hall, Luke Hall from Te Miro in Cambridge..



The view from the Stacey Jones Lounge on Saturday night it was a sell-out..



Kurt Dawson and Nicole received a spot prize of a Vodafone Warriors jersey each for coming all the way from Invercargill.



Tony Tatupu former Warrior, Kiwi and Western Samoa rep and Ed Radcliffe with Sir Peter..



West Tigers supporter Les Becks who flew in from Sydney for the games.



Zenny gets the TAB bet \$50 KATA to score 1st try from Anthony Niteri. So close.



Stacey & me just after we took our VIP guests out for lunch on Sunday



ONLY 5 DAYS LEFT! GET IN QUICK!



**20x 2017 Nines
Jerseys Signed by
Stacey Jones, Simon
Mannering, Ruben
Wiki, Mason Lino,
David Fusitu'a and
Ken Maumalo**



**2x Signed 2018
Jerseys**

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

Enter the draw to win one of two signed 2018 Vodafone Warriors Jerseys and **twenty** 2017 Vodafone Warriors Auckland Nines Jerseys signed by **Stacey Jones, Simon Mannering, Ruben Wiki, Mason Lino, David Fusitu'a and Ken Maumalo.**
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



Vodafone Warriors' Settled Squad For Old Boys' Day Clash

by Richard Becht

VODAFONE WARRIORS head coach Stephen Kearney has retained a largely unchanged 21-man squad for the club's Old Boys' Day clash against original 1995 opponents the Brisbane Broncos at Mount Smart Stadium on Saturday (5.00pm kick-off; match day sponsor: Flava).

Already boasting an unprecedented 5-0 start to the season, the second-placed Vodafone Warriors face their third Queensland side in three games at Mount Smart Stadium having disposed of Gold Coast 20-8 on March 17 and North Queensland 22-12 in the second leg of last week's SKYCITY Auckland Double Header in front of the biggest regular season crowd (25,600) since 1995.

Kearney has named the same starting line-up used against the Cowboys while there are two changes on the extended eight-man bench.

Second rower Isaiah Papali'i returns after missing the last three rounds with a knee injury sustained in the second-round clash against the Titans and rookie hooker Sam Cook is also listed after being used in the In-trust Super Premiership in the last three weeks.

Gates open – 12.30pm

Jersey Flagg– 12.45pm Vodafone Warriors under 20 vs Manly Sea Eagles

ISP 2.45pm ISP Vodafone warriors vs Blacktown Workers Sea Eagles

NRL Warriors V Broncos – 5pm

VODAFONE WARRIORS
v
BRISBANE BRONCOS

Mount Smart Stadium, Auckland

5.00pm, Saturday, April 14, 2018

Referees: Adam Gee and Ziggy
Przeklasa-Adamski

1 Roger
Tuivasa-Sheck
2 David Fusitu'a
3 Peta Hiku
4 Solomone Kata
5 Ken Maumalo
6 Blake Green
7 Shaun Johnson
8 Bunty Afoa
9 Issac Luke

10 Agnatius Paasi
11 Leivaha Pulu
12 Tohu Harris
13 Adam Blair
Interchange:
14 Jazz Tevaga
15 Sam Lisone
16 Simon Mannering
17 Anthony Gelling
18 Mason Lino

20 Chris Satae
21 Isaiah Papali'i
22 Sam Cook



Old boys attending:

Bryan Henare
George Gatis
Justin Murphy
Sir Peter Leitch
Joe Vagana
Logan Swann

Anthony Seuseu
Tea Ropati
Iva Ropati
Talite Livaa
Monty Betham
Awen Guttenbeil
Francis Meli

Tevita Latu
Hame Lauaki
Stacey Jones
Ben Henry
Jerome Ropati
Jerry Seuseu
Stephen Kearney

Shannon Stowers
Shontayne Hape
Ritchie Blackmore
Whetu Taewa
Wairangi Koopu
Tony Tatupu
Wade McKinnon



By John Coffey



David Fusitua scores a try.
Photo www.photosport.nz

Super Saturday

SATURDAYS DON'T get more super than this one. Nine hours of television covering four games. It started with the Warriors NSW Cup team losing to a hot Western Suburbs Magpies outfit, leading into the memorable NRL double header at Mount Smart Stadium and finishing with another full house at Newcastle. Who would have thought the Melbourne Storm, North Queensland Cowboys and Brisbane Broncos would all be beaten in one day!

At last the Warriors have gone into a game against a quality opponent – boasting arguably the code's best back and best forward – as a co-favourite and won with conviction. Having the Storm and Wests Tigers playing the “curtain-raiser” helped of course, but the capacity crowd of 25,600 was largely testimony to the Warriors' brilliant start to their campaign. Ahead of them are four more tantalising home fixtures in the next five rounds.

Sure, it was not perfect. A Warriors' fumble when leading 18-0 just before halftime provided the Cowboys with a try-scoring chance that was not wasted and swept away their momentum. They never regained that control and made more errors in the second spell but their defence was again of the highest standard. It wilted only once despite Johnathan Thurston's scheming and involvement in nearly every play when his team had possession.

Thurston has not been at his incisive best since coming back from the injury which cut short his representative career and 2017 club season but the slick double around for the Cowboys' second try proved he cannot be left unguarded. In fact, Thurston was battered and bruised when taking the ball to the line and in bravely facing the onrushing Warriors forwards. The “other” JT, Jason Taumalolo, was restricted with enthusiastic multiple tackles.

I had Melbourne in my picks (what a hopeless cause they are this season) but still raised a fist pump when another ageing champion provided his Tigers with two more premiership points. Benji Marshall has only looked good in two jerseys – those of the Tigers and Kiwis – and the scene was set for him to kick the winning field goal. His presence has also been the making of halfback Luke Brooks. Marshall will be back to play the Warriors on May 5.

Hopefully the next New Zealand coach was watching the Mount Smart action. There were literally dozens of Kiwis on display. Tigers props Russell Packer and Ben Matulino relished their chance to take on countrymen Nelson Asofa-Solomona and Jessie Bromwich. But with the Kiwis' Test in Denver clashing with Tonga's Test at Campbelltown on June 23-24, what were Taumalolo and David Fusitu'a chatting about at fulltime in the second game?

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Rejuvenated hooker Issac Luke is on course for a recall to play his 43rd Test against England but there was an interesting variation to the pecking order among the Knights at Newcastle. Slade Griffin retained his starting position but after 30 minutes he was joined on the field by 2017 World Cup Kiwi Danny Levi. Griffin had previously been used as a bench forward by Melbourne and has developed into a skilled and versatile all-round forward.

While spectators at Mount Smart had a unique chance to admire the ongoing influence that Marshall and Thurston still have on their teams, Newcastle fans (22,000 of them on Saturday) can anticipate years of thrills from brilliant fullback Kayln Ponga. Born in Western Australia but of New Zealand heritage, Ponga turned 20 last week. It is all too obvious why the Knights threw millions of dollars at him and Queensland worked so hard to gain his allegiance.

Also very obvious was just how much of an embarrassment disgraced Brisbane prop Matt Lodge is to the game. The booing whenever Lodge carries the ball is getting louder at every Broncos away game, rising to a crescendo in Newcastle. The rugby league public clearly believes Lodge has not paid his dues (or the court-ordered compensation) for his drunken home invasion in the United States. But are Todd Greenberg and the NRL listening?

I caught up with my old mate Benji Marshall in the changing room after the Tigers game. Check out my interview on facebook. Be warned it does contain some coarse language:

<https://www.facebook.com/sirpeterleitch/videos/1577975722256613/>



This week on the Kiwi League Show our special guest is the greatest Warrior of all Stacey Jones. Plus Courtney Tairi catches up with Jess Blair to talk about footy and family life and Daryl Halligan goes From Here to There with the Broncos Kodi Nikorima.



Join Courtney Tairi & Monty Betham this Thursday Night 8.30pm on Sky Sport 2

A large advertisement for Vodafone. On the left, two male rugby players in Vodafone-branded jerseys are standing. The player on the right is holding a white Steeden rugby ball. On the right side, there is a large red background with the text '10 GAME MEMBERSHIPS FROM \$109' in white. In the background, a large stadium filled with spectators is visible under a night sky.



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

The Mad Butchers Weekly NRL Tipping Comp.

By John Holloway

NRL Round 6

		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 Richmond Leagueie</i>
Thurs 12 Allianz	Roosters v Rabbitohs	Roosters	Roosters	Roosters	Roosters	Roosters	Roosters	Rabbitohs
Fri 13 AAMI	Storm v Knights	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm
Fri 13 Win	Dragons v Sharks	Sharks	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Sharks
Sat 14 Mt Smart	Warriors v Broncos	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors
Sat 14 1300 Smiles	Cowboys v Bulldogs	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys
Sat 14 GIO	Raiders v Eels	Raiders	Raiders	Raiders	Eels	Eels	Raiders	Raiders
Sun 15 Panther	Panthers v Titans	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers
Sun 15 Lottoland	Sea Eagles v Tigers	Tigers	Tigers	Tigers	Sea Eagles	Tigers	Tigers	Sea Eagles
Picks last week		5/8	4/8	3/8	3/8	4/8	5/8	v
Total picks		22	22	21	20	24	24	20

Lets Buck The Broncos

BRING ON Bennetts bungling Broncos. The Mt Smart Men are ready. The mighty Warriors are on a roll and confidence continues to build. Mind you we need to retain respect with the calibre of the visitors, new destroyer Pangai jnr, as good as they get rake McCullough, mean man Mcguire, Bad Boy Lodge, Nifty Nikorima, Mischief Milford, Bustling Boyd and "Gone in a Second" Jimmy the Jet Roberts. They might not be travelling so good for the old master-coach but sooner or later they will come good, lets hope its later. The daring Dragons continue as the pace-setter, looking ominous. The Tigers continue to strangle out very skinny wins, The Panthers continue to struggle home and the Roosters remain thereabouts. More surprise results this week with the comeback kids the Titans besting an injury affected Manly mob 32/20, Ivan Clearys tenacious Tigers accounted for Bellyache Bellamys Storm 11/10, The Knights held off the Broncos 15/10 and I can tell you the Cowboys were Oztab favourites against the Penrose Punisher Homies. High-tackle and the Moko Jack were "in the zone" among the 25,000 at Mt Smart on Saturday nite and enjoyed the huge support that erupted for our boys (with a special sausage sizzling cheer for our main man Super Simon Mannerings interchange entry) and he didn't disappoint getting straight into his work with telling tackles. Thurstons desperadoes had heaps of pill and the Cattle Rustlers threw plenty at our boys throughout the contest especially the second half but our magnificent defensive attitude hung tough. Another double for the flyer Fusitua and tall timber Maumalo is growing even more in stature. The Team is playing as a Team. Amen to that brother.

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Tipping so far in this season has been far from easy and each week has seen a series of hard to predict upsets and outcomes. Top rated journos across the Ditch would tell you that the Warriors have provided 5 of those upsets! Last season had a similar start but settled down when the big name teams got going, this year the Old School crews are nestled in the middle to bottom of the ladder and will need to buck up their ideas sooner rather than later. The Top Tipping efforts this week came from both ends of the age bracket, Mt Smart and FLAVA favourite Tarsh matching the pensioned off Whistle Blower Nifty Nev with 5 from 8. The ex-Ref joining Monty B in the lead with 24 points. Not a lot of daylight between them and the backend stragglers, the Devonport Dutchman and High Tackle in the trail with 20. But hey 21 rounds to go and the business end is where its at. Aint no lollies on offer in March.

Hast la vista till next week amigos and go the Mighty Warriiooorrrs.



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Thanks to Fantastic Fridays, Vodafone customers can buy one ticket and get one free, plus chances to win tickets or jerseys throughout the season.

19 years and still going strong –we're backing the boys!

The future is exciting.
Ready?



Memories Of 1974 Christchurch Games

By John Coffey QSM

Author of ten rugby league books, Christchurch Press sports writer (44 years), NZ correspondent for Rugby League Week (Australia) and Open Rugby (England)



WATCHING THE Commonwealth Games from the Gold Coast inevitably brings back memories of those held in my Christchurch home town in 1974. They were exciting times for a city which seemed much less complicated than the still very earthquake-mangled one in which we now live. Attitudes to sport were different then too, and thousands volunteered to make them the Friendly Games and the success they undoubtedly were.

I was just starting my second decade at The Press newspaper and, because rugby league, cricket and yachting were not Games sports, I was assigned to assist the regular athletics reporter. Just to keep me busy the boss added amateur wrestling to my assignments. It meant some long days, from the morning track and field sessions at QEII in the eastern suburbs to several nights at the wrestling at the Town Hall in the city centre.

They were contrasting assignments. Athletics is the prime spectator attraction at all Games, whether Commonwealth or Olympic, while wrestling appeals only to its most enthusiastic adherents. So I spent my days in a stadium which was filled to capacity for the major track finals, and some of my nights in a near empty auditorium – or as an old classical music critic used to write, among “a small but appreciative audience”.

While I will never forget Dick Tayler’s heroics in the opening-day 10,000m, there are three other memories which have stayed with me just as vividly, two of them from the track and field and the other from the wrestling. They involve brilliant 1500m runners Filbert Bayi and John Walker, burly discus thrower Robin Tait, and an unknown wrestler who was later to achieve fame in a far more familiar sport to New Zealanders.

Bayi and Walker were always going to be headliners at the 1974 Games. The brilliant Bayi hailed from Tanzania, somewhere in darkest Africa, and New Zealand golden boy Walker was on the verge of international fame. Bayi paid no heed to his emerging rival or anyone else as he cruised to a comfortable lead and effortlessly ran a solo world record. Walker chased him all of the way up the straight without threatening to catch him.

Unlike Tayler’s heroics, the man in black did not win

and the race ended in disappointment for many locals, including our athletics reporter. It took a couple of nudges with my elbow to turn his attention to the scoreboard, where Bayi’s time bettered the previous world record. What a shame Bayi and Walker did not clash at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, boycotted by the African nations because of the All Blacks tour to South Africa.

In contrast to the pencil slim Bayi, Auckland Robin Tait was a bear of a man. But he was just as dominant in the discus. Tait biffed the disc out a great distance three times, knew he could not be overtaken and declined his last three throws. If any of his opponents still harboured gold medal aspirations they were shattered psychologically by Tait’s cheerful air of confidence as he relaxed in the Christchurch sun.

It was the highlight of Tait’s long career, which included appearances at six Commonwealth Games from 1962 to 1982, when he carried the New Zealand flag. But it angered him that only the glamour track athletes made money in those “amateur” days (he said so at his 1974 press conference) and he openly used steroids in an era when they were not illegal. Sadly, he died in 1984, aged only 43, and those steroids were almost certainly a factor.

The 1974 Games wrestling tournament was virtually a showdown between India and Canada, with the others grappling for bronze medals. An exception was Auckland green keeper David Aspin who won the middleweight gold. However, it was the super heavyweights I remember most though there were only five entrants. The Australian, New Zealander and Scotsman were outclassed by the top two but there were three medals at stake.

After a bye, the 22-year-old New Zealander was pinned by the Canadian before he and the Scotsman were both disqualified for passivity. Yet somehow he “won” the bronze. The liaison officer asked the media if we wanted a press conference but no hands were raised. What could we ask? In 1974 no-one had heard of Gary Knight. A year later he debuted at prop for Manawatu and in 1977 he played the first of his 36 Tests for the All Blacks.



By Barry Ross



Jason Nightingale of the Kiwis.
Photo www.photosport.nz

Milestones

IT WAS pleasing to see the records of two high quality Rugby League men recognised last weekend. Dragons and Kiwi winger, Jason Nightingale, played his 250th first grade match, while the Melbourne Storm's Craig Bellamy reached the 400 first grade games coached mark. Now 31, Jason was born in Sydney to New Zealand parents. He is of Maori descent and lived in Waikato for a few years as a small boy. When the family moved to Sydney he grew up in the southern suburbs and began playing junior Rugby League with the Renown United junior club. He came into grade with the Dragons in 2005 and in that first season scored a try in the Dragons Jersey Flegg (under 20s) 30-20 win over Parramatta in the Grand Final at ANZ Stadium on 2 October. The next year he won the award as the Dragons under 20 player of the year and on 4 May 2007, at Kogarah Oval he made his first grade debut, scoring one of St. George/Illawarra's five tries in the 28-16 win over the Panthers. When he ran on to Kogarah Oval last Friday night, 6 April, for his 250th first grade match in 12 seasons wearing the red and white jersey, he became the fourth member of an exclusive club. Only four players have played 250 first grade games, won a first grade Premiership (2010), scored more than 100 first grade tries (he has 109) and played more than 30 Tests. Jason has now joined three Australians- Brad Fittler, Darren Lockyer and Billy Slater- in this illustrious group. He made his Test debut for the Kiwis in the Centenary Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground on 9 May 2008 and played the last of his 32 Tests in last year's World Cup, when he scored two tries in the 74-6 win against Scotland at Christchurch on 4 November 2017. Jason has 17 Test tries on his CV. In October 2008, Jason played for the Maori against the All Golds at New Plymouth and in February 2012 on the Gold Coast, he was a member of the NRL All Stars team which defeated the Indigenous All Stars 36-28. Married to Bianka in December 2014, the couple have a two year old daughter.

Craig Bellamy joined Wayne Bennett, Tim Sheens, Brian Smith, Warren Ryan, Bob Fulton and Ron Willey in the 400 club at Mt. Smart on Saturday. He has 271 wins and two draws from the 400 games in his 16 seasons as Head Coach of the Storm. With a winning percentage of nearly 68, Bellamy has the best win percentage of all seven coaches in the 400 club. He was Dally M Coach of the Year in 2006, 2007 and 2011, as well as the Rugby League International Federation (RLIF), Coach of the Year in 2009 and 2012. He took the Storm to Grand Final wins in 2007, 2009, 2012 and 2017, although the club were stripped of the 2007 and 2009 Premierships because of salary cap breaches. Now 58, he coached NSW in State of Origin football from 2008 to 2010 and Country Origin in 2005, 2006 and 2007. Born at Portland. 167 kms north west of Sydney over the Blue Mountains, Bellamy played 148 first grade games with the Canberra Raiders from 1982 to 1992, including the winning 1990 Grand Final (18-14 over Penrith).

There were several other milestones last weekend and these included passing the 800 first grade points mark for Shaun Johnson. He now has 803 points (59 tries, 278 goals, 11 field) goals from his 147 matches.

The latest NRL statistics indicate that the Warriors should continue their winning run when they take on the Broncos at Mt. Smart this Saturday. The Warriors are well in front of Wayne Bennett's side in most of the NRL team numbers. They lead the post contact...

Continued on next page...

Continued from previous page...

... metres with 2,510 metres in their five games, while the Broncos are not in the top four. That is a telling stat and it shows that this season the Warriors have averaged 502 metres per game after the first defensive player had made contact with the ball carrier. Other positive numbers for the Warriors are that they are second on the linebreaks table and third on both tackle busts and running metres. The Broncos led the most tackle count table but that is because they often turned the ball over. They are third on the error count table and fifth on handling errors. There is one area of concern for the Warriors team and that is the penalties conceded table where they are fifth with 45 against them. They gave away 8 in their good win on Saturday while the Cowboys were penalised 7 times. Given good weather on Saturday, the crowd should go close to the Mt. Smart record for a Rugby League game of 30,003 which was set at the World Cup Tonga-England semi final in November last year. If the Warriors defeat the Broncos and the Dragons continue on their winning way at Wollongong on Friday night against the Sharks, get in early for your tickets for next Friday night (20 April) when the two sides clash at Mt. Smart as unbeaten competition leaders. Watching the Warriors beat the Cowboys on TV it was obvious that there was plenty of atmosphere at Mt. Smart. No doubt this was much better being at the game and it will be even better this week when the Broncos visit.

Warriors Artwork

Joyce Putohe

1



2



3



4



1: #Warriors doing the mahi to get the 5 - 0 Result

2: As we Welcome back our Legend Simon Mannering to the 2018 Season this is the last Game for Jonathon Thurston who will play at Mt Smart for his beloved Cowboys

4. Support for our #Warriors Fantastic



By Miles Davis

The Originals - Warrior No. 10: Hitro Okesene

Hitro Okesene. Auckland Warriors. ARL 1995.
Photo www.photosport.nz

THERE ARE certain players who, whether by strength of personality or style of play, become a cult hero at a club. Vodafone Warrior No. 10 became a cult hero at two clubs on opposite sides of the world. That man was 'Nitro' Hitro Okesene.

Of Samoan heritage but born in Auckland, Okesene was a block-busting front-rower who started his league journey with local club Manukau. As a young man he had aspirations to travel and maximise his league potential and pestered his Manukau coach, Cameron Bell (father of Dean Bell) to see if he could sort him an overseas contract. Bell had strong connections with Carlisle so at the age of 18 Okesene was playing half the year for Manukau and the other half for Carlisle.

After 3 seasons of travelling to the Northern Hemisphere he settled back in New Zealand and signed for Counties Manukau, where he played alongside his brother Paul. He captained them in the 1994 Lion Red Cup, leading them to the minor premiership and to the Grand Final where they lost 24-16 to North Harbour. His form was dynamic and he was rated the best hooker in the competition. It was this form that made the fledgling Warriors take notice and sign him.

He was in the starting line-up in the first game against Brisbane in 1995 but was used as a prop with Duane Mann starting at hooker. Originally signed as a back-up hooker to Mann he got his start at prop due to an injury to Andy Platt. It was a special moment for Okesene as he recalls fondly "I remember the lady in the tunnel, trying to organise us before we came out. I remember the fire, a massive haka and everyone cheering. You couldn't hear anything else. It was a great experience – it was awesome. Then seeing, on the other side, these Broncos, who I'd watched on telly. And now we were lining up against them. It was a great thing".

Friend and team-mate Stacey Jones felt that being played out of his favoured position limited his time at Mt Smart "He could have stayed at the Warriors longer than he did," Jones says "He ended up going hard on the weights - we all did that year - and was turned into a prop. I think his best value was as a hooker or even a second rower when he was trimmed down a bit. He was outstanding in 1994 - the best hooker on the domestic scene. The way he was playing then he could have put a lot of pressure on for hooker's job with the Warriors."

However it was as prop that he endeared himself to the Warriors' fans. His powerful runs, with his mullet flying, were a sight to behold and even today he retains a cult status. His total commitment was also apparent as skipper Dean Bell said of him "You were never in doubt that he'd play to his very best and that enabled him to reach the heights of playing for the Warriors and also representing the Kiwis. He certainly got the best out of himself."

Continued on next page...

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Okesene scored his first try in round 10, notching the match-winner against the Cronulla Sharks but after 3 seasons and just 22 games he returned to the north of England. He played a season for Hull then Featherstone Rovers before a short stint with a Catalan XIII in France once again joining up with brother Paul (who passed away from a heart attack at the tragically young age of 44 in 2012).

In 2001 he signed for Workington Town where he was to spend the next 4 years. Just as he had with the Warriors, Okesene earned the undying love of the Town fans. His "up the guts" style was tailor-made for the down to earth folk of Cumbria and the fact he had started his career in the county and had returned also endeared him to the locals.

He played 93 games for Workington scoring 10 tries. He also made international appearances for 3 countries, Western Samoa, American Samoa and New Zealand.

A family man at heart (he met his wife Donna during one of his early trips to Cumbria) he was living in his parents garage in Mangere when he was signed by the Vodafone Warriors and now lives in Aspatia, Cumbria with Donna and his 3 children, Shakayla, Giavanna and Lerocco and works in the construction industry.

Well established and liked in his local community Okesene is comfortable, enjoying life and his family and grateful for what rugby league has given him "I'm blessed," he says. "Nah, that's corny. I'm thankful, really. Life's all good."

Sharks v Warriors Round 10 1995

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn3FQyKvPBQ>



Coming to Mt Smart this Saturday?

If you're coming to Mt Smart this Saturday for the game against the Broncos. Want a tour of Mt Smart. Meet Dexter at the BACK of the WEST STAND along the concourse. Wait by the elevator. The tour starts after the first curtain raiser at roughly 2pm.



NZRL Confirms Preparations On Track For Test In Denver

*By Brooke Hurdell
NZRL*

PREPARATIONS FOR the Kiwis' ground-breaking Test against England in Denver are coming together nicely, New Zealand Rugby League confirms.

The RLIF sanctioned match scheduled to be held on 23 June at Mile High Stadium will bring international rugby league to North America for the first time. With planning stages of the fixture in full-swing, NZRL can confirm the players' insurance policy was also locked in last week.

Players selected to represent their country while in Denver will continue to receive benefits that mirror the current NRL representative, State of Origin and ANZAC Test insurance policies in place. They will also receive the extra insurance required for playing in the United States.

In addition to medical concerns being allayed by Doctor, Greg Macleod, the confirmation of the insurance policy was another essential part of the planning stages that ensures the players will be well looked after.

Ample due diligence and player welfare is always at the forefront of planning for Tests in any part of the world and Kiwis Manager Nadene Conlon says the Test in Denver is no different.

"There's always a lot of preparation that goes into any fixture the Kiwis play in, whether it's a Test or a tour, and travelling overseas, regardless of where it is means the same rigorous processes are undertaken," Conlon says.

"Of course playing in Denver brings with it some unique considerations but having experts on board like Greg Macleod allows us to be prepared in the

best possible manner," she says.

West Tigers co-captain Elijah Taylor and Warriors prop Adam Blair are a couple of the Kiwi eligible players who say excitement for the Test in Denver is brewing among the player networks.

"Pulling on the Kiwis jersey is always an honour and privilege – it's the pinnacle for any New Zealand Rugby League player,"

"Any opportunity I get I'll grab with both hands and I'm 100 percent committed to every Kiwi game wherever it's played,"

"I understand the NRL clubs have concerns about playing in Denver, so it's great to see the player insurance has been sorted for the Test, along with Doctor Macleod's reassuring words that the conditions over there don't increase our chances of injury,"

"In the camps I've been a part of with the Kiwis, we've been well looked after and I expect the Test in Denver will be no different,"

"If the Kiwis have future games in the Pacific Islands or Europe, I will be just as committed to making the Kiwis squad if given the privilege to play for my country," Kiwi #770 Taylor says.

Kiwi #732 and RLPA Director Adam Blair adds, "everything looks like it's falling into place and I'm excited not only for the international game but for NZRL as this is a great opportunity to show case our game in America."

Old Boys' Day

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WARRIORS

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Final Preparations Underway For 2018 ANZ Premiership



WITH THE 2018 season underway for many Netballers around the country it's the perfect time to find inspiration on court in the form of New Zealand's elite league, the ANZ Premiership.

It's now less than a month until the 2018 season launches on Sunday 6 May with the first of three Super Sunday events, which see all six teams competing at one venue on the same day, providing a fantastic festival of Netball for fans.

This year will see three Super Sunday's held at Fly Palmy Arena in Palmerston North (6 May), Horncastle Arena in Christchurch (10 June) and the Northern Stars new home playing venue of Pulman Arena in Takapuna, Auckland (22 July).

Teams are now well in to their pre-season preparation with a lot of the hard work being laid down, including a series of pre-season matches played around the country. Despite some disruption with key players unavailable during the international season there is an excitement with players keen to take to the court for their teams.

With some significant player movements in the off-season, including new international players coming to the competition, this season promises to shake things up and provide an exciting ride for fans.

All six teams will meet up for a three day pre-season tournament hosted by Te Wānganga O Raukawa Pulse in Otaki from 20-22 April, giving each team the chance to try out new combinations and put finishing touches on preparations before the season launches on Sunday 6 May.

In its inaugural season the ANZ Premiership saw growing membership and attendance figures across the competition, with new-comer team the Northern Stars filling their home venue to capacity on a number of occasions.

Netball fans are encouraged to secure their seats now to see their favourite local stars in action. With 47 games held over 13 weeks there will be loads of top quality netball action on offer to Netball fans throughout the country.

For full season schedule and information on tickets head to ANZPremiership.co.nz

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



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**Tickets still available for this
Friday's dinner. Contact David
on 027 355 5280 to book!**

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WAYNE BENNETT**

Friday 13th April

Ellerslie Convention Centre

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tables david@ita.net.nz
or 027 355 5280

**The Mad Butcher
has just
purchased
two tables.**

You can join both Warriors and
Broncos legends including
Tony Tuimavave and Tea Ropati
and hear from Supercoach Wayne
Bennett speak about his time at the
top.

MC for the day Jerry Seuseu.
Stephan McIvor from Sky TV will
interview a special guest.

- 6.00pm** Arrival for pre-game beverages
- 6.45pm** The "Originals"
 - Bronco old boys legends
 - Warriors old boys legends
- Take us back to that magical night
10th March 1995
- 7.15pm** Seated for dinner
- 7.45pm** Auction
- 8.00pm** Welcome Super coach
Wayne Bennett

Rd 1 Sas Fox Memorial Premiership Match Reports April 7, 2018

By Auckland Rugby League

A wrap of the action from Round 1 of the 2018 SAS Fox Memorial Premiership.

Glenora Bears 10 Pt Chevalier 11

Pt Chevalier wrestled control of the Konica Minolta Roope Rooster, and the Stormont Shield, thanks to a late field goal which saw them edge past the defending-champion Glenora Bears. Tied at 10-apiece heading into the final 10 minutes, Tevin Arona delivered the killer blow from a drop goal. Glenora will rue the decision to twice turn down a penalty goal from in front of the sticks inside the final 20 minutes, which would have won them the game.

Richmond Bulldogs 16 Howick Hornets 26

A double to wing Connor Morris proved the difference in a nail-biter at Grey Lynn Park, as Howick edged past Richmond. With eight newcomers to their side, the Hornets looked strong through the middle of the park, but despite racing out to a 20-10 lead, couldn't shake the determined Richmond outfit, who more than held their own against last year's third-placed team.

Marist Saints 6 Otahuhu Leopards 30

The Otahuhu Leopards made a winning return to the SAS Fox Memorial Premiership, downing the Marist Saints 30-6. The Leopards were guilty of some early-season jitters, but built on an 18-0 half-time

lead and put together some quality second-half tries. Marist battled against a heavy injury toll, which saw them play the back part of the match with no remaining interchanges.

Papakura Sea Eagles 10 Mt Albert Lions 30

The new-look Mt Albert Lions powered past Papakura, spurred on by a star showing from young hooker Johnny Falelua-Malio, who scored two tries and set up a third in the win. Despite the look of the eventual scoreline, Papakura showed plenty of promise, led well by their bulky forward pack.

Mangere East Hawks 10 Northcote Tigers 28

The Northcote Tigers travelled away to Mangere East and returned with the two points, helped along by a double to winger James Waterson and the accurate boot of captain Taylor Daniels. Trailing 18-0 at the break, the Hawks finished strong with two late tries, and will take plenty of confidence into next week's clash with Marist.

For more visit aucklandleague.co.nz

Congratulations to all the Kiwi medallists at the Commonwealth games. If anyone can Kiwis can!



The New York Rugby League Club just went live on their Website and Twitter Accounts. With the new franchise hoping to be playing in 2019/2020 English League season— check them out at www.nycrugbyleague.com or @nycrugbyleague. Exciting times are ahead as they seek to make our great game a truly global one. We will be following them for sure and helping to spread the news! Keep an eye out for their merchandise due to be available soon.



ARL Masters Underway

By Sonny Teio

MASTERS OF Rugby League NZ module kicked off on Sunday 8 April with four modules of 6-8 teams from the Auckland and Waikato region. One of the modules was hosted for the first time by the Rodney Rams at Whangateau Park (10mins drive north of Matakana) with two games played at 12pm and two more games at 1pm. After the games, the players and their family and friends head to the clubrooms for meal and beverages over the announcement of the player of the day and the "dick of the day". A lot of aroha was given to the Rodney Rams for putting on a well organised event even though it was their first time with only 5 days notice to make it happen. The clubrooms was burnt down in 2014 by an electrical fault and this was their first main event since the club reopened in 2017.

There are 8 teams in this module - Te Atatu RLFC, Glenora Bears RLFC, Hibiscus Coast RLFC, East Coast Bays RLFC, Glenfield Greyhounds RLFC, Glenfield Conz, Waitemata Seagulls RLFC and the Rodney Rams RLFC. Every three weeks, one of the clubs has the opportunity to host a round within their module with the year ending an International Tournament either in New Zealand or Australia. This year the tournament will be hosted by Petone Panthers in Wellington, September 3rd-7th.

The Masters of Rugby League Inc has been a wonderful success, with the goal of promoting fun football for the over 35's who no longer take part in serious competition. We have players up to 70 yrs old taking part and playing games in the spirit of having fun, promoting good will and sportsmanship, reliving old glories and bringing people back to football clubs with a wealth of experience and knowledge to pass on. For more information visit: www.mastersrugbyleague.co.nz





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Reader Mail



HI SIR Peter
Thank you so much for your gifts today for the auction next Friday, was great to see you again and my son is so so happy for his gifts as well he is running around stepping like RTS with the ball which you gave him. He absolutely loves the Warriors!!! And also remembers you and Lady Janice from our time with you up at your lounge

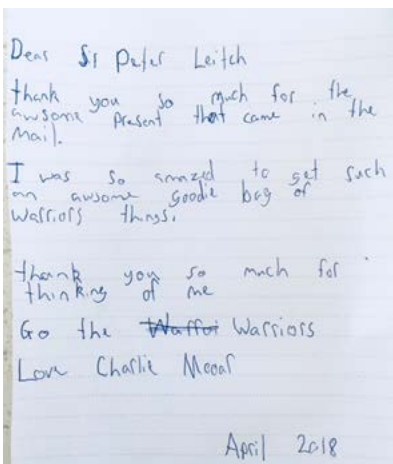
Kindest regards

Andy and Ziah (My son)

GOOD EVENING Sir Peter. I just wanted to thank you for the wonderful time we had with you for the double header. It truly was an enjoyable occasion. We met new people watched outstanding games of league and we had the pleasure of your company making us smile all night long. It was an honour to tour your museum and the grounds. Lastly I want to thank you for your dedication to the Warriors and the great work you do for New Zealand

Many thanks

Donna Carter



Charlie Mooar sent in this letter and picture.

Dear Sir Peter,

I'D LIKE to thank you for personally welcoming my father-in-law, Ron, sister-in-law, Margaret, husband, Alan (aka AJ) and I into your lounge this afternoon.

The care, kindness and hospitality shown to the Given family by you and your friendly staff was commendable. Organising for Ron, his wheelchair and I to sit in front of the windows on the centre line was greatly appreciated.

Even though the result wasn't what us Melbourne Storm supporters wanted, our game vs Tigers, the Warriors vs Cowboys game and the healthy rivalry banter were very entertaining.

You may not be PC, but you're certainly a gentleman. Ron and I enjoyed our final chat as you escorted us down the lift. Even the final dig to Ron, "he's too ugly to be my twin".

Wishing you all the best and good health in retirement.

Kindest regards, Leanne Given



Meet Rob the man that fixes everything around the Vodafone warriors is one very handy man to have around good bugger.



THIS WEEK IN OUR ROUND 6 ISSUE

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



ROUND 6, 2018

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The Panthers will play host to the Titans on Sunday, led by the man who developed most of their NRL team, Garth Brennan. The former Panthers NSW Cup and under-20s coach is responsible for mentoring many of Penrith's stars including Dylan Edwards, Viliame Kikau and James Fisher-Harris, who say they wouldn't be playing NRL without his support.

The 2018 season has already featured too many broken streaks, anomalies and bizarre games to count. However, with the help of rugby league historian David Middleton we break down the stats that prove this season is unlike any other.

Since rugby league began, no two teams have shared as much history and despised each other as fiercely as the Roosters and the Rabbitohs. We chat to Braith Anasta, a South Sydney junior who eventually signed with the Roosters, about the vitriol he faced and what Angus Crichton might expect when he makes the most taboo defection in the game next season.

Big League columnist Michael Ennis says while Greg Alexander is entitled to point out Johnathan Thurston is playing below his best, he's confident the North Queensland champion will bounce back.

PLUS... This Week in History, why Matt Moylan belongs in the No.1 jersey for Cronulla, how Corey Thompson has returned to the NRL a better player and a Jason Taumalolo poster.

Editorial:

pamela.whaley@news.com.au

Advertising:

bowie.phillips@news.com.au

This should have been in last weeks newsletter but got lost in cyber space one fans tribute to Mason Lino.

A 4 - 0 start to an NRL Season isn't what some people would think of when it comes to the Vodafone Warriors But this team is proving many wrong The performance they put on Saturday in Sydney was beyond fantastic Putting into practise every detail of what they have learnt over the pass few months of pre season training With is performance putting other Clubs on notice that yes the Warriors are here to play A part of the team on Saturday was Mason Lino who started his Rugby League Life off as part of the Marist Saint Juniors doing what had to be done to help make his dream come true Mason having been called into the Warriors NRL Team step into the boots if one of the best in this game with the full support of his fellow team.mates he more than did justice to the game with some outstanding numbers

Total Brakes - 4

Most Supports - 17

Trys - 1

Points - 18

For this young player the future looks bright He is learning from the best in his quest to be part of an ongoing Legacy of Rugby League History

Joyce Putohe



SAMANTHA IS a 15 year-old year 11 student at Stratford High school, she painted this banner in just under a week for us to take to the double header. Both Samantha and her father Wade are massive Warriors fans, they watch every game and we try getting up to a couple from Taranaki every year.

Regards

Kathleen Perrett



HERE ARE some pics of our family supporting the mighty Wodafone warriors.

Kindest regards

Tasha



MORNING SIR Peter,

I got home to Wellington late last night from an awesome weekend with so many high points on top of the Warriors win over the Cowboys!

So I wanted to say a huge thanks to yourself for your generosity by going above and beyond the already awesome prize and opportunity I won through your newsletter.

The lounge you host at Mt Smart is full of atmosphere that you cannot get anywhere else with your personality and enthusiasm for the game of Rugby League. I'll be highly recommending it to everyone to go and experience the fun and uniqueness for themselves.

It was also truly an honour to have lunch with yourself and Stacey Jones on Sunday who I finally got to meet in person after so many years as a faithful Warriors supporter. He's not only one of our best players ever, but he is a humble and great bloke too.

Again thank you for all your efforts in making the weekend memorable and I hope to catch up with you again sometime soon.

Cheers!

Svend Madsen



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www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz

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The Newsletter Team

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

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

John Deaker - Correspondent
John Coffey - Southern Correspondent
Barry Ross - Australian Correspondent
Ben Francis - Northern Correspondent
John Holloway - Correspondent
Miles Davis - Correspondent
Shane Hurndell - Correspondent