



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

24th April 2018

Newsletter #214



Vodafone Warriors Slay the Dragons



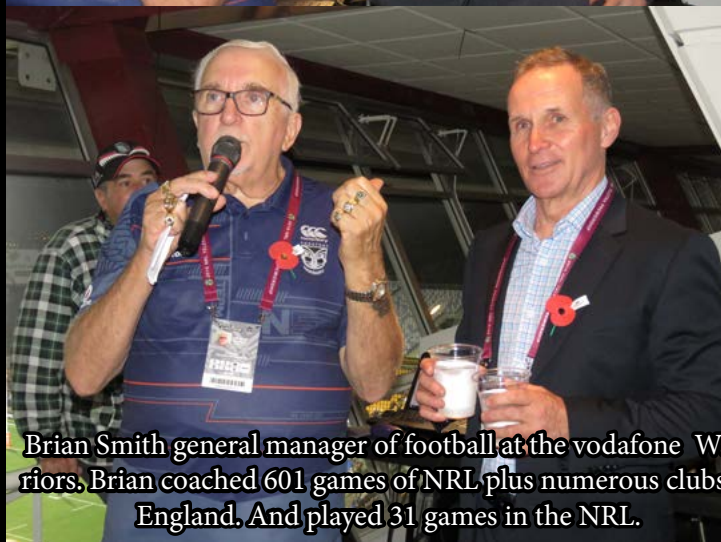
Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz



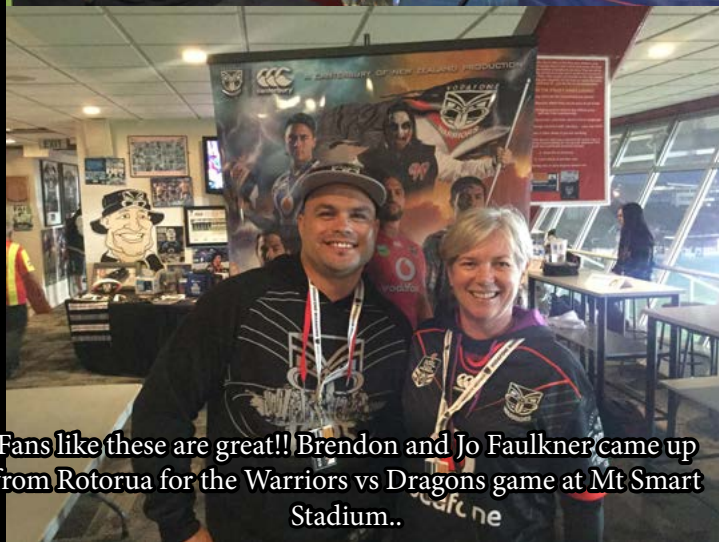
Assistant warriors Coach Andrew McFadden talks about the great win and what's changed in the Stacey Jones lounge after the game.



Brandon Faulkner who drove up from Rotorua for the game was fired up for a Warriors win.



Brian Smith general manager of football at the Vodafone Warriors. Brian coached 601 games of NRL plus numerous clubs in England. And played 31 games in the NRL.



Fans like these are great!! Brandon and Jo Faulkner came up from Rotorua for the Warriors vs Dragons game at Mt Smart Stadium..



Injured player Blake Ayshford talks about his injury and what's been happening around the club.



Jen Lucich and Russell Jost celebrate their birthdays in the Stacey Jones lounge.



KIWI Dougie West who owns a bar in Thailand flew home to support the Vodafone Warriors.



Mark Flannagan from Campbelltown who flew over to support the St George Dragons got hammered by Butch in the lounge.



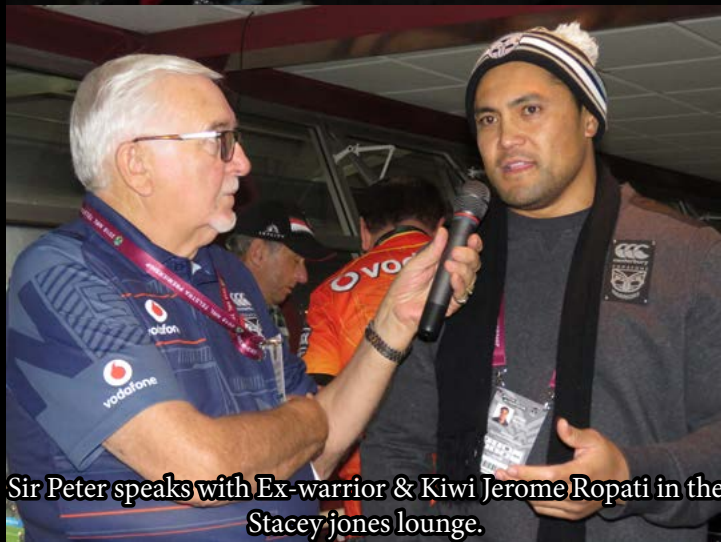
Miles Davis radio personality with sons Cole and Jack are all Dragons fans and got hammered by the butcher.



Shane Harrison wins What a Ride Mate in the Stacey Jones lounge even though he had a Dragons jersey on.



Taurean from Western Australia who flew in for the game with Sir Peter.



Sir Peter speaks with Ex-warrior & Kiwi Jerome Ropati in the Stacey Jones lounge.



Anthony Gelling sharing the love with the fans



Isaac taking a selfie with the fans



The Butcher loves seeing the stands packed like this



Simon Mannering and Roger Tuivasa-Sheck take selfies with fans after the game.



The boys celebrate in the changing rooms after the game.

ASICS & the Vodafone Warriors

As the official footwear supplier of the Vodafone Warriors, ASICS is proud to support the Junior mini-mod half time games by supplying boots to 1 x player of the day at each home game. During the recent double header weekend, one lucky winner won a pair of ASICS football boots for the season ahead, and was surprised by ASICS Ambassador Adam Blair who gave him his signed playing boots straight after the victory over the Cowboys. It's great to see the guys inspiring players not only through their on-field performance but also through the little details off the field as well.



Adam Blair boots and signed.



Dragon Slayers

By David Kemeys

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



THAT HAS to be the best game at Mt Smart for bloody ages.

Given no chance again, with the undefeated Dragons red hot favourites with the bookies, and without Shaun Johnson and Solomone Kata, the boys pulled off a miracle against the 15 men of St George – that's the 13 players on the field at any one time plus Henry Perenara and Benn Cummins in the yellow shirts with the red vee.

All anyone can ask of a referee is consistency, so in fairness to Cummins he was totally consistent. He blew against the Warriors, again, and again, and again, yet saw virtually none of the many transgressions St George got away with.

Cummins in particular pinged us endlessly for going early, but St George were up so quick on us all night I had to check the programme to see what number Usain Bolt was playing in.

But the worst of the night was the two Tariq Sims knees to the head that saw Tohu Harris taken out of the game.

You can say players have enormous respect for each other and don't set out to intentionally hurt each other, but it looked pretty bloody malicious to me.

Sims certainly did not miss with the first knee, and he added plenty more power to the second shot.

Suddenly Cummins and Perenara were Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder.

But in their defence, they also sent a Tim Lafai four-pointer upstairs, which would have given the Dragons the lead, where it was - quite rightly – ruled out for a knock-on.

The penalty count was atrocious, and no matter how much bleating we do, Stephen Kearney is going to have to sort it out.

But despite the lop-sided count, losing Harris, being without Johnsons, we still ended the last undefeated NRL run, so that now it is Warriors and Dragons both at six and one.

I said last week that if we were to lose to the Dragons it would not be a disaster. It would not have meant that a team that had been going well was suddenly a pack of losers, as some seemed to be arguing.

But I also said winning would send a message to the NRL that this Warriors side has more about it than the ones from previous seasons – which in reality, would not be that difficult.

Friday night's game had everything.

It was tense, two really committed sides trading blows all night.

We had no possession, did all the tackling, all the defending, copped it from the refs, dodged bullets, had a player in the bin...so much was going against us it was no surprise when I spilled my chips.

Make no mistake- defence won this one.

We might have reeled off five in a row, but the down side of that is that it lifts expectations very quickly, and the fans were left a little disappointed by the loss to Brisbane, and did not hesitate to say so.

This one was the perfect reply.

Take A Bow Issac Luke

Since arriving from Souths hooker Issac Luke has endured some patchy times at Mt Smart.

But he was exceptional on Friday night, his 40/20 kick setting us beautifully for a try, fittingly scored by the former Kiwis hooker himself - and who will soon be, in my humble opinion, the restored Kiwis hooker.

It was his best game by some distance in our colours, and the intensity of his game was something quite remarkable.

That's quite a bonus was because that enthusiasm must flow on to the other players, especially those with not so much NRL experience.

One interesting though, given Luke copped plenty of flak about his performances - or lack of them - in the past, is that his numbers are actually inferior this year to what he was putting up last season.

How can that be, I hear you say?

I think, and given that the only person who thinks I know anything about league is me, so I may be a mile off, it is because he only has his own game to worry about this year.

Whatever the reason, I will have more of it.



Lino Passes Another Test

Poor Mason Lino came into a Warriors side last season that was whipped.

It went backwards faster than the French army, and Lino had no chance to show his stuff, suffering nine losses on the bounce and copping a fair bit of the blame for it along the way.

But this year, with fans nervously chewing their fingernails, he came in for Shaun Johnson against the Roosters and had an outstanding game.

There were plenty of fans on Friday who thought that might have been a one off - miserable gits.

It was the old "we can't win without Shaun" mantra.

But Lino was again really good.

Perhaps not as good as he was against the Roosters, but still good enough to score a great try, and con-

tribute all around the park.

Johnson's fitness is being monitored ahead of the Anzac Day clash in Melbourne but if he is out, Kearney will have confidence Lino can again step up.

"It's a bit different from last time. We had a lot of players who were injured so I didn't have that leadership I needed," Lino said.

Praise Gelling

He was the "Who?" signing of the off-season.

Reduced to bit parts in his NRL contribution so far, with Solomone Kata and Peta Hiku doing a fine job, Anthony Gelling, who played for the Auckland Vulcans in 2011 before making 115 appearances for Wigan, finally got a start with Kata out injured.

And didn't he take it?

His try was just reward for a good night's effort, and the celebration was excellent.

"There's a lot of work that goes into getting a start or even scoring a try," Gelling said. "For that to be the first one, it's kind of like all those years leading up to that point... it just feels good."



Injuries A Bit Of A Worry

All sides get hit with injuries, it is the nature of an intensely physical game.

But our list is a bit of a concern, even if those who are stepping up are proving capable replacements.

Shaun Johnson, Solomone Kata and now doubts around Tohu Harris but Kearney rates all three a chance for Melbourne.

Johnson has a groin injury, Kata an ankle, and hardly surprisingly given Tariq Sims kneed him in the head twice, Harris has had a concussion. He will have to go through the protocols for head injuries, and the other two will undergo fitness tests.

I am no doctor, but the short turnaround time with our match on Anzac Day is clearly not going to help.

Prop James Gavet has a hamstring injury, back-rower Leivaha Pulu a foot injury, while centre Gerard Beale has not laced his boots since suffering a broken leg.

Message from Vodafone Warriors CEO Cameron George



WELL, HOW good!! The loyalty from you (our fans) in conjunction with our players doing an awesome job is what makes this club so special.

We as a club can be so proud and loud about our results so far. There is certainly a long way to go and each and every week will be tough, we cannot get ahead of ourselves but at the same time we need to do everything we can to keep the momentum up.

On Friday night the atmosphere was outstanding, I know the players really appreciate the support as it adds to their performance and results. As fans you're a major part of what this club is doing and we ask that you help grow our fan base by spreading the word and getting your friends along to the West Tigers game. The more people we have at Mount Smart cheering the better, in fact, help us sell the stadium out. Let's show the NRL what we as Vodafone Warriors can do and sell out the stadium for the second time this year, no other NRL club as done it this year so let's lead the way.

Once again thanks for your ongoing support and remember "anything is possible"..

Spread the word and get your friends along to the West Tigers game, let's sell out..

Cheers

Cameron George



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Lino, Gelling and Papali'i all start on Anzac Day

by Richard Becht

HALFBACK MASON Lino, second rower Isaiah Papali'i and centre Anthony Gelling have all been named in the Vodafone Warriors' starting line-up against the Melbourne Storm in the annual Anzac Day match at AAMI Park on Wednesday (7.00pm kick-off local time; 9.00pm NZT).

Lino and Gelling again start in place of Shaun Johnson and Solomone Kata after helping the Vodafone Warriors to their gritty 20-12 seventh-round win over St George Illawarra at Mount Smart Stadium last Friday night.

And Papali'i is set to start an NRL match for the third time after replacing Tohu Harris 27 minutes into the encounter with the Dragons.

Johnson (groin) and Kata (ankle) ran at training today but weren't declared fit to play while Harris hasn't been cleared as he undergoes concussion protocols after leaving the field on Friday night.

Lino, Gelling and Papali'i – boasting just 23 appearances between them – scored three of the Vodafone Warriors' four tries as they ended the Dragons' six-match unbeaten start to the season in one of the most extraordinary contests in the club's history, just the sixth win in 27 meetings.

With Penrith losing to Cronulla yesterday, the result leaves the Vodafone Warriors level with the Dragons at the top of the table on 12 points and second on points differential.

With Johnson, Kata and Harris out and Lino, Gelling and Papali'i replacing them, Ligi Sao, Joseph Vuna and Sam Cook have been brought onto the extended bench alongside Jazz Tevaga, Sam Lisone, Albert Vete, Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad and Chris Satae.

While the Vodafone Warriors have started their campaign with an unprecedented six wins in the opening seven rounds, Melbourne has mixed four wins with

three losses. Two of their defeats were by two points and one point to the Wests Tigers but, since losing to the Tigers in Auckland on April 7, the Storm have seen off Newcastle 40-14 and Brisbane 34-20 to sit fifth on the ladder with eight points.

This will be the ninth time the Vodafone Warriors and the Storm have met since this Anzac Day fixture was introduced in 2009. The match-up was shelved in 2015 when the Storm met Manly and the Vodafone Warriors faced Gold Coast.

The first meeting nine years ago was a 14-14 draw after golden point extra time while the Vodafone Warriors have had wins in two of the other seven encounters in 2011 (18-14) and 2014 (16-10).

With the Michael Moore Trophy at stake, the Vodafone Warriors will wear their Heritage jersey bearing a poppy on Wednesday night.

Overall this will be the 41st time the Vodafone Warriors have met the Storm since the first game in 1999. The Vodafone Warriors have 16 wins, Melbourne 22 with two games have been drawn.

VODAFONE WARRIORS v MELBOURNE STORM

AAMI Park, Melbourne

7.00pm, Wednesday, April 25, 2018

Vodafone Warriors

- 1 Roger Tuivasa-Sheck
- 2 David Fusitu'a
- 3 Peta Hiku
- 4 Anthony Gelling
- 5 Ken Maumalo
- 6 Blake Green
- 7 Mason Lino
- 8 Bunty Afoa
- 9 Issac Luke
- 10 Agnatius Paasi
- 11 Simon Mannering

12 Isaiah Papali'i

13 Adam Blair

Interchange:

14 Jazz Tevaga

15 Sam Lisone

16 Albert Vete

17 Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad

18 Ligi Sao

20 Joseph Vuna

21 Chris Satae

22 Sam Cook



Mason Lino on the run.
Photo www.photosport.nz



By Miles Davis

Warriors v Dragons

FRIDAY NIGHT at Mt Smart was a bizarre experience and certainly a bitter-sweet one. I shall try and explain.

For about 35 years I have been a die-hard Dragons fan and have indoctrinated my sons to be likewise. One would have thought that, supporting a side that had once won 11 titles straight, it wouldn't be long before another came along. The reality was different. Made it to the big day on a few occasions but could never get across the line to pick up the big prize. Until 2010 when after a 31 year wait the Dragons pulverised the Roosters in the Grand Final. I watched it with 4 of my sons and the scenes of unbridled joy and celebration in the Davis household at the final whistle is something that will live with me forever.

When the Vodafone Warriors came along in 1995 it didn't take me long to garner affection for the new outfit. It was a local entity battling away in an Australian competition and deserved the support of all of us who live on the right side of the Tasman. As time progressed and when I moved up to Auckland my affection grew stronger and I frequently made the trek from the North Shore to Penrose to cheer them on. Except when they played the Dragons.

I support the Vodafone Warriors fanatically every other game but when it comes to playing the Dragons they become the enemy. I want to see them drop the ball, give away penalties, get sent to the sin-bin and every other event that would help the Dragons get a win. It is a strange feeling to take joy at an opposition player's mistake when most weeks you are cheering that very player on and feeling bad for him if he makes an error. But that is exactly what happens. The fact is that however much I love the Vodafone Warriors, I love the Dragons more. They were my first love and no matter how poorly they have treated me over the years I could never bring myself to support another over them.

I know that many of the Vodafone Warriors faithful will understand my sentiment. They will understand the blind devotion we have to our teams. The hard-core fans that turn up every week at Mt Smart are the soul of the club, they are why it exists and what keeps it going. They were joined by an extra 10,000 on Friday night and everyone had a ball (apart from some Dragons fans perhaps).

The team and the fans were as one for the whole 80 minutes with each feeding off the other and raising their respective games as a result. Every crucial tackle was greeted by loud endorsement and seemingly every loud endorsement was greeted by another big tackle. The noise from the crowd on those occasions was at least as great, if not greater, than that made when a try was scored. The atmosphere was as good as any sporting occasion I have been to in my over 33 years in NZ (right up there with the All Whites vs Bahrain in 2009). The place was humming and I just wish that it was anyone but the Dragons they were playing so that my sons and I could have fully joined in.

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It was most frustrating being in a big crowd, watching the Warriors put on one of their best performances in years, and not be able to fully appreciate it. Had it been any other team they had been playing I would probably have lost my voice from screaming and shouting along with the rest but instead the noise was just a loud reminder of how my Dragons were being well beaten. It only got worse when we went up to the Mad Butcher Lounge after the game and were on the end of one of Sir Peter Leitch's inimitable put-downs. (Although I am used to it I was rather proud of my two youngest as they coped with being dragged up on stage in front of a crowd of strangers and given stick by Sir Peter).

There is no doubt the Vodafone Warriors fully deserved the win. Their defence was phenomenal all night, even when they were reduced to 12 men after Blake Green was sent to the bin and Tohu Harris had to leave the field. When they got an opportunity at the other end (not that frequent occurrence in this game) they made the most of it with great execution.

Many thought that the loss of Shaun Johnson would spell the end of the home team's chances but once again Mason Lino stepped into the breach and did a fantastic job. He truly looks the part now but those who are suggesting the side are better without Shaun Johnson need to pull their head in. Johnson is a star of the NRL and any side would gladly have him in the team. He has carried far more than his fair share of responsibility when things have gone wrong for the side in recent years and could easily have walked away for an easier life but has stayed loyal. Lino is not a better option than Johnson he is a fantastic example of the new depth in the squad.

Tickets for games at Mt Smart are going to become more scarce as the bandwagon loads up but rather than knock the fair-weather fan, let's embrace them and hope they catch the bug and can't rid themselves of it. Although NRL prizes aren't handed out in April I have no doubt the Vodafone Warriors will have a big say in the play-offs. There is a blend of belief and performance that indicates it is going to be a fun time for the club and their fans.

There are going to be more raucous nights like Friday's at Mt Smart this season and I can't wait for it to be against someone other than my beloved Dragons so I can fully appreciate it.

This Anzac Day Remember Those Who Have Served

OF COURSE I am writing this ahead of our Anzac Day match against the Storm.

To me, Anzac Day is incredibly special, honouring those who have given their lives, been wounded or served their country in our military forces.

It is easy to take our freedom for granted, but let's not forget that it is grounded in the efforts of those who were willing to lay down their lives to secure it for generations to come.

It is as important to Australians as it is to Kiwis, as we remember the Anzac spirit.

There is nothing wrong in looking to our favourite sports teams to provide our modern day heroes, but take that minute as they play The Last Post before the game to reflect on who the real heroes are.





By John Coffey

Now They Are Really Taking Notice!

Photo www.photosport.nz

FOR THE first time since their dramatic run to the 2011 NRL Grand Final the Warriors are being taken seriously on both sides of the Tasman. Last Friday night's 20-12 victory over the previously unbeaten St George Illawarra Dragons was the clincher, extending the Warriors' record to six wins from their first seven matches.

It is fair to say plenty of commentators and fans were noticing the Warriors – originally a popular pick for the wooden spoon by some of Sydney's most experienced scribes – as they won their first five games. But the manner in which they doused the Dragons' fire counted for much more than their already promising start.

There were multiple reasons why the Warriors could have capitulated: the one-sided losing history between the clubs, the Dragons' convincing and high-scoring form line, having to bounce back from a disappointing loss to the Brisbane Broncos, and the late injury-enforced withdrawals of Shaun Johnson and Solomone Kata.

Even during the game the Warriors were faced with adversity when star forward Tohu Harris was concussed after 27 minutes and pivotal playmaker Blake Green sin-binned just before halftime. The Warriors enjoyed only 38 per cent of possession, were out-run by almost 300 metres and were hammered 13-5 in the penalties.

A big percentage of their 359 tackles were made within the shadow of their own goal posts, and it was that amazing defensive performance which got them through. Yet the Warriors still had the energy and teamwork to strike back with four tries and maintain an 81 per cent completion rate under great pressure on a wet night.

These days I read my newspapers on laptop via a library website and it was a pleasure on Saturday morning to find the Sydney Daily Telegraph's back page featuring a crash tackle by three Warriors on an unfortunate Dragon. The banner headline read BLACK SLAMMED. It was the club's most positive coverage since that 2011 Grand Final.

Even before the Dragons game, veteran journalist Paul Kent said on NRL360 he believed St George Illawarra, Penrith and the Warriors would remain in the top four for the rest of the season but felt the fourth-placed Wests Tigers were under threat from the Melbourne Storm. Last weekend's results added strength to his opinion.

Radio Sport gave the Warriors the compliment of broadcasting their game ahead of the Blues. Next morning a trio of Radio Sport rugby union types talked about the Warriors in glowing terms. One of them reckoned people in Wellington had made it known on Friday they were going home to watch the league, not the union.

Rugby league needs the Warriors to be strong, especially at a time when the Kiwis have so much rebuilding to do after their disastrous World Cup. Perhaps it is an unfair burden on a small number of people at Mount Smart. On the other hand, the Warriors have smothered all other levels of rugby league in the minds of the general public.

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Our younger followers in particular need heroes. Last Friday night there were heroes across the field, from fullback Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, with his 200 running metres, setting up of the clinching try, courageous tackling and inspiring captaincy, through to rejuvenated hooker Issac Luke, who produced his finest performance for the club.

Late replacements in the starting line-up Mason Lino and Anthony Gelling and bench player Isaiah Papali'i were not only try-scorers but outstanding in every facet. Lino has twice proved there is life without Johnson, Gelling showed he has a place in the NRL, and Papali'i went way beyond the call of duty after Harris was injured.

Comparisons with the Blues are inevitable in Auckland, especially when they clash. Have you noticed rugby union officials don't release crowd numbers? Last Friday they had good reason not to front up with a figure for Eden Park. There always has been and always will be a battle between the rugby codes in our biggest city.

But it does not take long for Warriors fans to become grounded again. On Friday night the Melbourne Storm ran over the Broncos in Brisbane, winning 34-20. Cameron Smith, Billy Slater and company are fiercely defending their premiership crown and are now awaiting the Warriors for their annual Anzac Day clash in Melbourne.

Footnote: Much maligned Kiwis World Cup coach David Kidwell is smiling again. Last week he was invited to join the Parramatta coaching staff and on Sunday the Eels thumped Manly Sea Eagles 44-10 for their first win of the season. Only a few weeks ago Manly routed the Eels 54-0 at Brookvale – an 88-point turnaround.

SHOW US YOUR TXTICLES

April is World Testicular Cancer Awareness month. Did you know this is the number one cancer for men aged 15-39? This month Testicular Cancer NZ is going balls out to raise much needed funds to go towards research for a cure and all you have to do is send a TXT... make that a TXTICLE.

Simply TXT any two ball emojis to 4644 to make a \$3 donation. Any two balls will do, soccer, footy, crystal. If it's ball shaped it's a TXTICLE.

Get involved, it's for a good cause.



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 **TESTICULAR
CANCER NZ**

**#GO
BALLS
OUT**



PETER AND Jackie Sims needed an atlas last weekend to check on their five children. They live at picturesque Gerringong, on the NSW South Coast, about 140m kms south of Sydney. They have three sons and two daughters and each of the five are successful and talented athletes. Last weekend, all five were scattered around the world involved in Rugby League. Ruan, 36 is the oldest and she is a dual Rugby League and Rugby international. She represented Australia at Rugby from 1999 to 2010, playing in Australia's win at the first ever Womens Sevens World Cup at Dubai in March 2009. Ruan also played in the 2010 Womens 15 a side World Cup when Australia finished third. She changed to Rugby League soon after and played with the Australian Jillaroos in their 2013 and 2017 World Cup wins. Nowadays Ruan is an NRL Ambassador, living in Sydney and waiting for the 2018 NRL competition to begin.

Ashton, 33, is playing with the Toronto Wolfpack in 2018 and was in Barrow, northern England last Sunday, for a round five Challenge Cup match against the Barrow Raiders. Ashton played 228 first grade NRL games in his 12 season career with the Dragons, Broncos and Cowboys. He then went to England where he played 90 games in two seasons with Warrington before joining the Wolfpack this year. While attending Kiama High, near Gerringong, in 2002, he represented the Australian Schools Rugby League team and has also played 12 Tests for Fiji.

Tariq, 28, was in Auckland on Friday night, playing with the Dragons at Mt. Smart Stadium in their 20-12 loss to the Warriors. He has played 137 first grade matches in eight seasons with the Cowboys, Knights and Dragons. He has also represented NSW Country six times and played five Tests for Fiji.

Canecia, 27, is next and she plays both Rugby League and Gridiron. In June last year, she represented Australia in the Womens Gridiron World Championship held in Canada. In their first game the Australians were beaten by host nation Canada, but Canecia won the award as Australia's MVP. Known as CJ, she lives and works on the Gold Coast and plays Rugby League with the Ipswich Brothers Womens team. Both Canecia and Ruan were named in the 2018 NRL Womens elite squad.

The youngest of the five siblings is 26 year old Korbin, who was in Brisbane on Friday night playing for the Broncos in their 34-20 loss to the Storm. Korbin has 105 first grade games to his credit in six seasons with the Knights and the Broncos. He has played seven Tests for Fiji.

The three brothers, Ashton, Tariq and Korbin, are eligible to play with Fiji, because their mother, Jackie, is Fijian. All three played their early football with the Gerringong Lions in the NSW Rugby League Group 7 competition. Mick Cronin, OAM and now 66, has coached Gerringong for many years without being paid. Mick played 33 Tests for Australia and scored 309 Test points.

How good was Issac Luke on Friday night. Now 30 years of age and in his 12th season of first grade Rugby League (nine with South Sydney, three for the Warriors), Issac was the best of an excellent team effort. He has now scored 524 first grade points (42 tries, 178 goals) in his 238 first grade games (188 Souths, 50 Warriors) and the NRL statistics also say he has 76 try assists to his credit during his career. Issac turns 31 in a month (on 29 May), but when he plays like he did against the Dragons, the Warriors would be keen to re-sign him when his contract ends at the end of this season. He also has an impressive record in Test football, with 40 Tests on his CV and 58 points for New Zealand. He was the Kiwi hooker in the 2008 World Cup and kicked three goals from three attempts in the 34-20 win over Australia in the final at Brisbane on 23 November 2008. He was also a member of New Zealand's winning Four Nations side in 2010. In 2013, he was named as the hooker of the year by the RLIF (Rugby League International Federation).

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Today, ANZAC Day, means a lot to Australians and New Zealanders. We should never forget how many brave men and women gave their lives to allow us to live the way we do in two great countries. Their sacrifices will be remembered at both games today in Sydney and Melbourne. Both of these clashes should be high quality and given good weather, very entertaining. The Dragons play the Roosters in Sydney at 4.10pm Sydney time and down south, the Warriors meet the Storm at 7pm. Although they suffered their first loss of the season, the Dragons did not play badly and will be keen to get back in the winner's circle. There is no love lost between them and the Roosters so it will be an intense and tough game. In Melbourne two in-form teams meet and that is usually a recipe for a memorable match.

Feedback from Vodafone Warriors Fans!

HI, I have been a member of the Warriors since year dot and had never seen such a courageous effort as I did on Friday night from our team.

Howard Everson – 87 years old

HHEY MATE hope you're well. Got a story you might like. We were ready to go to the game on Friday when my daughter said she was sure her 4th baby was coming. We decided to stay home to look after the kids when they went to the hospital. Still hadn't chosen a name when someone suggested naming him after the 1st Warrior try scorer. He was born Saturday morning. So that's how Mason Levy became my 6th grandchild.

Cheers your old Mangere East Hawks mate
Peter Campbell





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

The Mad Butchers Weekly NRL Tipping Comp.

By John Holloway

NRL Round 8

		Tarsh Ieremaia	Joe Vagana	John Coffey	Fast Eddie	Monty Betham	Neville Kesha	High-Tackle Holloway
		<i>Flava Star. Moving to the beat.</i>	<i>League Legend and Machine Lease King.</i>	<i>Newsletter Columnist and Veteran League</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 League</i>
Date/ Venue	Game							
Weds 25 Apr ALLIANZ	Dragons v Roosters	Dragons	Roosters	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons	Dragons
Weds 25 Apr AAMI	Storm v Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors
Thurs 26 Apr ANZ	Rabbitohs v Broncos	Broncos	Rabbitohs	Rabbitohs	Rabbitohs	Rabbitohs	Broncos	Rabbitohs
Fri 27 Apr Lottoland	Sea Eagles v Knights	Knights	Knights	Knights	Sea Eagles	Sea Eagles	Knights	Knights
Fri 27 Apr Panther Std	Panthers v Bulldogs	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers
Sat 28 Apr CBus	Titans v Sharks	Sharks	Titans	Sharks	Sharks	Titans	Sharks	Sharks
Sat 28 Apr 1300Smiles	Cowboys v Raiders	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys
Sun 29 Apr ANZ	Eels v Tigers	Tigers	Tigers	Eels	Eels	Tigers	Tigers	Eels

Picks last week	6/8	6/8	6/8	5/8	4/8	4/8	3/8
Total picks	32	33	32	28	32	33	27

Warriors Get Up Against All Odds...

COACH KEARNEY called it one of the best victories he has ever had and I have to say he has had a few, from a glittering and highly successful career starting with club footy in Wellington to Sydney club Wests Magpies, the Warriors, the Storm, Hull in pommyland and coaching stints with the Eels (maybe not) the KIWIS and currently the mighty Warriors. A lot of great moments for Mooks along the road to last Friday nite . He watched his team beat injuries, before and during the match, penalties, sinbinning, extra tackles, 45% possession and the high flying unbeaten Dragons, it doesn't get much better than that. All of a sudden the words "real deal" are appearing in the Aussie papers and league TV shows and yes there's something to that but while it all feels warm and fuzzy right now we are still a long way from hearing the large lady sing. The big question is who are the major obstacles on the way to the 8, the first one is Super Smith's Storm on ANZAC Day but after that it's a lottery in terms of form teams. Right now it remains the Dragons, the Panthers and the Tigers even though they all lost this week. The big names ie Roosters, Broncos, Cowboys and Sharks are struggling to get near the top but the Rabbits are peeking out from the burrow. The Raiders, Sea Eagles and Titans are very shaky, the Doggies toothless and the Eels have only just broken their duck. The Knights look promising with the brightest star rising in Kaylen Ponga but have lost their experienced guiding light with Pearce a goner for 4 months. Old heads will say that the cream will rise to the top and maybe so but there is a sense of a changing of the guard in the air. I have mentioned previously a feeling that some of the stars are losing their twinkle. Thurston, Smith, Thaiday, Cronk, Hayne, James Graham, Darius Boyd to name some, will they and their teams come good at the business end of the season only time will tell. So what am I saying?...go figure.

Continued on next page...

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Tipping remains a very hit and miss affair, but not for Tarsh, Big Joe and the wily old timer JC who kicked 6 from 8 this week. Big Joe and Nifty Nev the Whistleblower hold the lead after 7 rds. Montz right on the pace but The Devonport Dutchman and yours truly still floundering. The Butcher always says stay positive so what I can say is if it wasn't for the 6 games I got wrong I would have had a perfect card!

Righty ho The Anzac Day Battle in Melbourne. As I write this I have no idea what our teamsheet is in relation to Tohu Hurricane Harris, Magic Johnson and Solomone Kaos Kata but you know what? last year I would be crying in my soup, this year it doesn't matter so much as we have the troops to step in and do the business. It won't be easy but then again neither are we. Yeehaaa and Amen to that my brothers. Gooo the Mighty Warri-ooorrrss.



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Howdy Warriors fans!

*By Glen Larmer
Sky TV Commentator*

HOWDY WARRIORS fans! What a season so far. Are you starting to get excited? I can tell you that I and many of my Sky TV colleagues most certainly are. The most impressive thing for me so far this season, is the courage the players are showing, particularly on defence. If they keep playing like they have been then we will all be very proud of this team come season's end. It's amazing to think they've won as many games as they have without once being able to field their full-strength line up! Look out when they do!

I feel wonderfully honoured to be commentating the Warriors games for Sky Television. I've been most fortunate to commentate at five Olympic Games, and several other events overseas like the just completed Gold Coast Commonwealth Games where I called all the weightlifting and some wrestling. And while I loved every minute of it, I missed my league fix, and I was pumped to be back at Mt Smart for the Dragons game.

Like many of my generation, I fell in love with the game when the game first appeared on TV in NZ in the mid 1980s. Then one day, Wally Lewis, Mel Meninga and the rest of the Kangaroos squad showed up for a training session at my high school, Naenae College in Lower Hutt. I'll never forget that day, seeing these giants of the Australian game up close. It was quite intimidating for a skinny little teenager let me tell you!

I never thought back then that I'd be in the privileged position I am now. I began commentating the game after I came back from the London Olympic Games in 2012. I started off calling schoolboy curtain raisers for the NZRL premiership before progressing to the Vulcans, the NSW Cup, the Nines and then to NRL games and test matches.

I don't try to complicate things too much when I commentate. I just try to be myself and add to the pictures that you see. So when you can't get to Mt Smart, hopefully you can continue to enjoy our coverage on Sky.

I also host a weekday radio sports show on TAB Trackside. It's on Monday-Friday 6am-10am. There is plenty of league chat each week. Hugh McGahan's on the show Monday's at 810am, I generally chat to someone from the club on a Wednesday around 730am, we have tips on a Thursday from 810am (although I haven't been going so great so far this year!) and Andrew Voss is on each Friday at 845am.

Finally, if you want to follow me on Twitter, @GlenLarmer is the handle. See you at the Tigers game May 5th, and if not, catch the call on Sky Sport! And thanks Sir Peter for the opportunity to say giddyay!

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



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Instagram



Twitter

Reinstated Masters First Game Big Success

*By The Patea Warriors
Masters Rugby League Club*

Samuel Broughton in Action. Photos by Nicky Gray Photography

ON APRIL 1st 2018 the Patea Masters Team from South Taranaki was able to play their first ever rugby league tournament after a 20 year absence that resulted in a unanimous success against the Western Suburbs Tigers from New Plymouth Taranaki.

The Patea Team which has been gaining local publicity within the Taranaki region has been a popular figure after the team had been reinstated into the local Masters Competition 2018

Since then, Renee Keepa -The Marketing Consultant and Neville Hinga -The liasion Coordinator have worked together to try and promote a successful and enjoyable Rugby League community that people of all skill levels can participate in.

Masters Executive Manager- Samuel Broughton was extremely pleased with the success and turnout of the tournament

"I'm so glad to be part of the this journey the re-connections between brothers was awesome, Patea went out there in force and showed we are here to play Masters was great to play along side yous (players) and we will show Organisations that we in patea can host good Home games in due course" Broughton mentioned

The Patea Masters Team is willing to work to promote an environment that is open to everyone from (Players over 35) to coach and management staff to our very own First Aid personal

We want to promote a Kids team next year and get this up and running disregarding inexperience in Rugby League as long as there is a General interest.

The teams next focus will be the up and coming games which commence on the following Dates:

Waitara April 29th 2018 @Clifton Park Waitara

Bell Block May 27th 2018 @Hicksford Park
BBK

Patea. June 23/24th 2018 @Patea Domain PTA

Opunake. July 28th@ Sandford Event Centre
Opunake



**Brendan Mackay and Jason
Broughton in Action.**



**Ex Wellington Repre-
sentative Norm Brought-
on comes back home to
represent the Patea Masters
Team.**

Harvey Norman Community Warriors Wrap Up

SPCA

THE HARVEY Norman Community Warriors along with a number of the Vodafone Warriors players descended on the SPCA to get up close and cuddly with the animals on the 26th of March. Whilst the team got their hands dirty helping to make various and many toys for the animals, they were well rewarded with numerous friendly kisses and cuddles from the fur babies staying there.



Footy Clinic

THE HARVEY Norman Community Warriors once again are running their awesome three-day holiday programme for kids to learn skills and meet our Vodafone Warrior boys on the 17th to the 19th of April. The kids will not only be learning new skills but will also be getting an insight into what our Boys get up to on a normal day at training and finding what it takes to be a Vodafone Warrior.



ACC Presentation

OUR ACC SportSmart presentation with our Vodafone Warrior boys has started strong with visits to many Rotorua and Auckland schools already completed. The ACC SportSmart programme aims to enhance students' knowledge on the importance of sleeping, hydration and belonging using interactive activities such as trivia, reading and group games to encourage student participation.

Rotorua Trip

IN THE preseason Junior Pauga, Johnny Tuivasa-Sheck and Gerald Beale road tripped as part of the Harvey Norman Community Warriors team to Rotorua delivering the ACC SportSmart programme to over 3,600 students as well as spreading awareness and fundraising for Tonga following Cyclone Gita.



Special Olympics

MT SMART Stadium #2 played host to the Special Olympics on the 15th of March with many of our Vodafone Warrior players helping the athletes from multiple schools around Auckland as they competed to earn 1st place for their schools.



Intellectual Disabilities

ON FRIDAY 6th April the Harvey Norman Community Warriors and Auckland Rugby League hosted intellectual disabilities 'Have a Go Day' where anyone aged 5 years and older with an intellectual disability interested in participating in rugby league were welcome to come along. What a wonderful day with an overwhelming response and more than 80 people ranging in ages from 5 to 55 attending the day. All of the participants enjoyed a fun filled day learning about the fundamentals of Rugby League, meeting Gerard Beale and Junior Pauga who also ran the water as we finished the day putting their newly found skills together with a tag game.



Continued on next page...

Duffy Books

Georgia Hale, Harvey Norman Community Warrior Programme Co-ordinator and Kiwi fern along with Keanu Laumatia-Paki Junior Warrior and Harvey Norman Community Warrior are true role models for many New Zealand School Children both boys and girls. This month the pair have been seen out and about in schools around Auckland highlighting the importance reading and how reading has helped them both get to where they are today.



Brendan Inkster Rehab Coordinator making coffee for the staff & players at 7am Monday morning. We are a versatile lot at the Vodafone Warriors.

Was nice to meet this young man at the Warriors on Monday morning. Jamie Williamson he is the head strength in conditioning coach for the development squad and a teacher at Westlake high school.



Hello Sir Peter Leitch

I JUST WANT to say a huge thank you for your generosity.

Our Hornby Panthers Under 12 League team are currently fundraising for a trip next year for our team to go on a tournament.

We are relying on fundraising to get them there, we are trying to take the financial pressure off our whanau as it is important all our players have the opportunity to go.

After reaching out to you and asking if there is any way you could help with our fundraising you were more than generous. We didn't expect to get a box full of league merchandise.

This photo was taken of the team in the weekend after playing the Papanui Tigers. Where we had an awesome win! Thank you so much again for your generosity and support and we will let you know how our fundraising journey goes

Look forward to keeping updated on what is happening through your newsletter

Kindest regards
Laura Mills



Tactix and Pulse Lead The Way At Pre-Season Tournament



SILVER FERNS

Tickets for all 2018 ANZ Premiership matches are now available from ANZPremiership.co.nz

THERE WAS particular satisfaction for captain Jess Macclennan (nee Moulds) after the Silvermoon Tactix finished the Te Wānanga o Raukawa pre-season netball tournament, in Ōtaki, with a perfect record.

With all six ANZ Premiership teams taking part, the Tactix and Te Wānanga o Raukawa Pulse remained the only unbeaten teams when the three-day tournament ended on Sunday.

The tournament provided the last formal hit-out ahead of the start of the ANZ Premiership in two weeks with teams using the opportunity to fine-tune in a competition environment. Operating without their Silver Ferns, due to a mandatory two-week stand-down following the recent Commonwealth Games, teams took the opportunity to test their depth by giving their expanded squads plenty of court time.

It was a happy return, after 18 months on the injured list, for Macclennan, the hard-working Tactix defender and captain.

Sustaining a serious knee injury in late 2016, Macclennan showed her excitement at being back on deck fulltime with strong showings during an impressive Tactix presence

at the pre-season tournament.

With the benefit of retaining a stable core from last season and astute off-season recruiting, Macclennan said the southerners had gained plenty from the weekend's exposure.

“It has definitely been a valuable exercise, going out there and having a hit-out against three teams we haven't played yet has been really rewarding for us,” she said. “Each team's thrown something different at us, so we've had to learn through each game which has been great.

“It's been a really long pre-season, so we've just been chomping at the bit to get out there and actually play and now with the start just two weeks away, it's all go from here.”

With the frustration of being confined to the side-lines now in the past, Macclennan is delighted with how the Tactix team is progressing and taking shape.

“I've been really, really happy with the girls' intensity and commitment,” she said. “Everything they're doing is with fervour and purpose. So far, everything we've been doing is great, there's still lots to learn and lots to improve on but

we've got a really exciting team.

“Personally, it's been a long off-season for me. I've had 18 months off, so to actually be playing netball again, being in the thick of it and actually on court while also being able to lead on and off the court, I love it and really enjoying it.”

The young Pulse team also delivered an encouraging pre-season to remain unbeaten, coach Yvette McCausland-Durie pleased with the continued improvement shown over the three days.

With the Silver Ferns set to return to their respective teams in time for first-round action on May 6, there is an element of the unknown about this year's competition.

Tournament Results:

Steel 53 Mystics 44, Pulse 64 Magic 46, Tactix 55 Stars 52, Pulse 64 Steel 40, Magic 65 Stars 53, Tactix 54 Mystics 46, Pulse 48 Stars 29, Tactix 50 Magic 44, Steel 66 Stars 53, Pulse 59 Mystics 49.

The 2018 ANZ Premiership starts on 6 May with a Super Sunday at Fly Palmy Arena in Palmerston North where all six teams take to the court for an action packed afternoon Tickets for all 2018 ANZ

Jersey Winners



THANKS FOR the jersey! I sent my entry from Peru,

Adam Hutchins



Peter,

MY GRANDSON Beau Dixon in the Warrior jumper we won in the last lot in your news letter.

He loves it and feels great wearing it. Great win over the weekend

Regards Kevin Dixon



13 YR old Aiden Scragg from Gisborne. H was happy to get a signed Warriors Jersey from Sir Peter Leitch just days after getting Joe Ofahengaue player boots after the Warriors vs Broncos match at Mt Smart.



I'M PROUD to be a winner at last and I'm a big fan of the newsletter.

- Gary Whittle, President of Auckland Rugby League



THANKS FOR the opportunity to win this jersey. It will go great to auction off for our fundraiser on the 16-17th of June

Much appreciation

Amelia Wilson



Morning Peter,

YOU DIDN'T allow for my Lion Red Belly, all good mate thanks heaps see you Friday in the lounge

Regards David Jacobsen

Continued on next page...



CHEERS SIR Peter for an excellent prize. I'm very excited to win.
I enjoyed the Broncos game from the Eastern Stand.
You may see me in the crowd wearing this jersey at the next afternoon game.
All the best
Oliver.



Sir Peter

THANKS A lot for the signed Vodafone Warriors shirt.

Arrived in time for Friday night's big game.

Just gotta keep my boy away from from it.

GO THE WARRIORS

Your a legend. Thanks again
Rodger Hallberg



Kia Ora Peter,

I'M SO happy that I've won this jersey. I want to thank Sir Peter Leitch, who made it possible for us fans to win these awesome prizes. As a longtime Warriors supporter, it is great to see the boys playing well again and I hope that this form continues for the rest of the season. Go The Mighty Vodafone Warriors!

Troy Taylor



Hi Sir Peter

WAS STOKED to get your call on Friday Morning to tell me I hadn't won a jersey in the competition, but that you did have some VIP passes for the Stacey Jones lounge and tickets for Friday Nights game. A cracker of a game too, we beat the top team and the Ref, and had a blast. Photo is me and my son Adam with our souvenir of the evening.

Thanks very much for your hospitality

Regards, Peter & Adam Clifford.



Dear Sir Peter,

IT WAS a wonderful surprise hearing from you on Friday evening, and finding out that although I had not won a jersey in the recent giveaway, that you were going to very kindly gift me 4 tickets to the Warriors vs Dragons game.

Thank you so much - we had a great time!

Best consolation prize ever!

Warmest regards, Fiona PS: Sorry about the blurry photo.



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WARRIORS FANS enjoying another committed effort from their team.

All league fans pop down to the fox&-ferret@the palms mall chch and have fun watching the warriors roll on. All games live on the big screen with the commentary. Around 35 fans rocked up for the dragons game. Happy hour for fans and some give aways during the game. Also remember to purchase your tickets for manly v warriors in chch Saturday June 9. The fox will be running a bus to and from the game. Ask bar staff for details.

Also remember to ask Steve Anngow about trips to Auckland to support the boys. Trips made possible with the great assistance from Sir Peter who always helps out our Chch fans.

Cheers, Steve A

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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.

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