

VODAFONE



# Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

## Newsletter

27<sup>th</sup> June 2018

# #223

### That Was Awful

By David Kemeys

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



**A**T LAST, a game where the result means I can put the boot in.

I got up at 7.30am on Sunday, which I basically consider to be the middle of the night, to watch the Kiwis in Denver, and truth be known I was not expecting much.

But I got less.

Poor Michael Maguire our new coach must now realise how big a job he has taken on.

We marched out to a 12-0 lead, surprising me, and cruelly having me thinking it might not be as bad as I had expected.

So with a 12 point head start we then managed to lose 36-18, with only a late try adding any kind of respectability to the score.

So at 36-18 would you could argue England were twice as good as us? Actually they were miles better at Denver's Mile High Stadium.

England had a near full; strength team and were clearly taking it very seriously indeed, the Kiwis had seven on debut and a host of players unavailable.

That does not alter the fact that they way we lost was the single most disappointing aspect of the game.

We looked all right early on, a shambles at the end of the half, letting England get back to 12-10 at the break, and were utterly awful in the second 40.

The number of mistakes was hideous, especially repeatedly kicking the ball dead from kick-offs, just plain stupid.

Our untested halves pairing of Kodi Nikorima and Te Marie Martin had little effect on the game and were almost invisible, the forwards bashed and crashed and gave away endless penalties, and the rest basically ran laterally.

Dallin Watene-Zelezniak is exempt criticism, playing magnificently at fullback, Esan Marsters wasn't bad either, the rest, the jury is out.

We got dominated, couldn't finish our own sets of six, and even the bacon and eggs breakfast I got handed could not lift my mood.

When you lead 12-0 you should kick-on, not fold up the tent.

Now we do need to consider that England were very good.

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I would not be broken-hearted if our scouts brought centre Josh Bateman to Mt Smart. He is a player who would easily cope in the NRL. He is not a giant, just a little guy really, but has tons of ticker, wonderful skills, great pace and a never-say-die attitude.

Once upon a time we would have crowed that players from the UK's Super League could not transition to the NRL, but James Graham, who was magnificent, and especially Canberra Raider Elliott Whitehead have dispelled that myth, while the Burgess boys make it look total nonsense.

But saving the worst until last, this was an experiment meant to showcase the game to America, and it failed dismally, which pretty-much anyone could have told you it would.

Don't ever send a mid-season game to Denver again. I could swallow Toronto in Canada, where there is an emerging professional team, or New York, where one is due to launch. But Denver, what is that about?

Never mind growing league in America, that thrashing will have done nothing for the game here.

The crowd was dismal, and don't believe any of the spin you have heard, this little exercise must have been a financial disaster.

Last year's World Cup fiasco, and then this, not great is it?

The kids will be lining up in their thousands to register to play the great game of league having watched that.

### **It's Just A Kiss**

Now here is something I never thought I'd be writing about. There is a mega-stink about Auckland-born NSW Blues player Vanessa Foliaki kissing a Queensland opponent Karina Brown, who is her long-term partner by the way, after the inaugural women's State of Origin match in Sydney.

The picture got put up on the NRL Facebook page and sparked thousands of reactions, many of which would have made Israel Folau proud.

The NRL slammed the moaners.

Foliaki hails from Mangere and has been with Brown since they were selected for the Jillaroos about four years ago.

Both players did say they felt supported and welcome in the game.

So for all the haters out there I will say only this. Get a life.

### **More Games On The Move?**

Reports at the weekend that the Vodafone Warriors are considering take a double-header game away from Mt Smart next year.

You will remember we all went along and pigged out on league when the Tigers played the Storm and the Warriors beat the Cowboys.

It was a great success with a really good crowd, Mt Smart actually sold out.

It seems that other venues have seen that and are keen to cash in, or at least taken a single game.

Normally we have 11 games in Auckland and take one on the road. This year we didn't – choosing to play the double-header at Mt Smart too.

In the past some of those games in Auckland were at Eden Park, but thankfully that bloody silly idea has been consigned to history.

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Next year we have a new deal with Regional Facilities Auckland, which is part of Auckland Council, and that is to have at least 10 games at Mt Smart.

Even a maths dimwit like me can figure out that means we can take two on the road.

I'd be amazed if they took the double-header away, although you could risk doing it in Hamilton, which is easily accessible for the Auckland fans.

You have to feel for the club a bit because obviously they want to spread the fan base, and the economic benefit of a big gate is useful too.

You need to throw into the mix too, the fact that an Aussie side often brings their home game against us to New Zealand, like Manly in Christchurch.

You can dress it up any way you like, but that benefits us because it reduces the travel burden, which is incredibly onerous.

But as an ordinary fan, I'll tell you this for nothing, I want the side I support at Mt Smart as often as possible. Is that selfish? Yes, but I don't care.

### **You're Famous Dave And Lorraine**

The drinks are on lounge members Dave and Lorraine McKee.

You will all have seen Dave and Lorraine in the lounge, and they have made Stuff.co.nz for being the Warriors most travelled fans, given that they attend all the home games from their home in Christchurch.

Now many would tell you they must have more money than sense, and others, like me, would defend them as salt of the earth bloody good people –not so much Dave, but Lorraine certainly.

They met through league, and I know this because they once told me so at a Warriors end of year function.

They travel from Christchurch for every single Warriors home game. Given that I have more than once said to myself it's too cold, wet, depressing, windy, and any other excuse I could think of, and stayed home, that's pretty bloody impressive.

They haven't missed a match in a decade.

They might be too broke to come to the next one after all the drinks they are paying for this week, so Dave and Lorraine, you don't have to buy me one.

Truth be told, they aren't really paying for the drinks!

If you want to read the story, click here: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/league/104869843/the-christchurch-couple-who-travel-up-for-every-warriors-home-game>







# Internationals named in an extended squad

*by Richard Becht*

**V**ODAFONE WARRIORS head coach Stephen Kearney has included all three of the club's Denver Test Kiwi internationals on an extended bench for Friday night's 16th-round NRL clash against the Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks at Mount Smart Stadium (8.00pm kick-off).

Hooker Issac Luke, centre Peta Hiku and wing Ken Maumalo flew out of Denver today and are due to arrive home early on Wednesday morning (NZT).

They were originally scheduled to return home this afternoon but an electrical storm in Denver prevented them flying to San Francisco to link with their homeward flight via Sydney.

Kearney has included all three on his bench after naming a squad of 23 rather than the usual 21. The move comes after an NRL ruling in which any club who contributed four or more players to representative sides last weekend has been given clearance to name two additional players.

Solomone Kata (hamstring) and the competition's top try scorer David Fusitu'a (15 in 13 games) have also been named in the starting side. Kata was forced off the field 52 minutes into his side's round 15 win against the Cowboys while Fusitu'a missed the encounter after picking up an ankle injury in the final training session the day before the game. It ended a run of 55 consecutive appearances stretching back to the eighth round in 2016.

Fusitu'a has been given the chance to fill his regular spot on the right wing, while Gerard Beale has been named to start on the left wing. Simon Mannering, who came off the bench against the Cowboys, will start at lock in place of the suspended Adam Blair.

"With the injury concerns we've had, we felt it was important to name the Kiwi boys in our extended squad," Kearney said.

"But the reality is we haven't even laid eyes on them yet. They'll be home tomorrow after being delayed in the States and we will then make a decision on whether they will play later in the week."

Kearney will reduce his squad to 19, as per NRL rules, 24 hours out from Friday night's kick off.

Also named in the squad are three Vodafone Warriors players who appeared for Toa Samoa in last Saturday's Pacific Test in Sydney – James Gavet at prop, Isaiah Papali'i in the second row and Bunty Afoa on the bench.

With regular hooker Issac Luke named on the bench, 2018 recruit Karl Lawton has been handed the No 9 jersey while Anthony Gelling has been included in the centres.

Utility Jazz Tevaga is also in line for a return after successfully recovering from a recent shoulder operation.

The Vodafone Warriors will be seeking their third consecutive win in the second of three straight Friday night matches, their victory against the Cowboys following a 34-14 win over Manly in Christchurch.

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Since opening the season with five wins on end, the Vodafone Warriors have won five of their last nine games.

The Sharks are seventh on the ladder on 18 points with a 9-6 record. Seven of the nine wins have come in their last nine games but they have lost two of their last three against South Sydney and Brisbane while beating Wests Tigers.

The Sharks have been among the Vodafone Warriors' more challenging opponents, more so recently with the ledger 8-2 in their favour in the last 10 meetings since 2012. The Vodafone Warriors' only successes in that time have been a 16-12 win at Mount Smart in 2014 and a 20-16 away victory in 2015. Overall Cronulla has a 21-16 advantage in 37 encounters while the Vodafone Warriors have a 9-8 edge at Mount Smart.

## **VODAFONE WARRIORS v CRONULLA-SUTHERLAND SHARKS**

**This Friday Night, June 29, 2018**

**Gates Open 6pm**

**6.15pm: Physical Disability  
Rugby League Game**

**8.00pm: NRL Kick Off**

**Mount Smart Stadium, Auckland**

### **VODAFONE WARRIORS**

|                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Roger Tuivasa-Sheck (c) | 13 Simon Mannering |
| 2 David Fusitu'a          | Interchange        |
| 3 Anthony Gelling         | 14 Sam Cook        |
| 4 Solomon Kata            | 15 Chris Satae     |
| 5 Gerard Beale            | 16 Bunty Afoa      |
| 6 Blake Green             | 17 Jazz Tevaga     |
| 7 Shaun Johnson           | 18 Blake Ayshford  |
| 8 James Gavet             | 21 Sam Lisone      |
| 9 Karl Lawton             | 22 Albert Vete     |
| 10 Agnatius Paasi         | 23 Peta Hiku       |
| 11 Isaiah Papali'i        | 24 Issac Luke      |
| 12 Tohu Harris            | 25 Ken Maumalo     |

**Sharks:** 1 Valentine Holmes, 2 Sione Katoa, 3 Jesse Ramien, 4 Ricky Leutele, 5 Edrick Lee, 6 Matt Moylan, 7 Chad Townsend, 8 Andrew Fifita, 9 Jayden Brailey, 10 Matt Prior, 11 Kurt Capewell, 12 Scott Sorensen, 13 Paul Gallen (c)

**Interchange:** 14 Joseph Paulo, 15 James Segeyaro, 16 Aaron Woods, 17 Jayson Bukuya

**Reserves:** 18 Aaron Gray, 19 Avagalu Seumanufagai, 20 Sosaia Feki, 21 Braden Uele, 22 Kurt Dillon, 23 Kyle Flanagan

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## **This Week on the Kiwi League Show Thursday Nights at 8.30pm on Sky Sport 2**

**J**OHNNY TUIVASA-SHECK takes us behind the scenes at Warriors HQ. They catch up with Krisnan Inu former Vodafone Warrior who now plays in UK super league for Widens Vikings and they catch up with former Vodafone Warrior Elijah Taylor who now plays For the West Tigers.



By John Coffey

## Breathless In Denver

Broncos Stadium at Mile High where the Kiwis played England

**W**HILE TWO of the results were entirely predictable, and Papua New Guinea's victory was not really surprising considering the weakened Fiji forward pack, the international rugby league weekend proved to be a pleasant diversion from the marathon that is the NRL premiership. England had all the cards stacked in its favour against New Zealand in Denver and Tonga proved too powerful for Samoa at Campbelltown.

England fielded a line-up very close to that which stretched Australia in last year's World Cup final, had the luxury of far less strenuous travel, and even brought along its own referee, Ben Thaler -- advantages of elephantine proportions to crush a Kiwis combination which included seven new caps. If they could fly video referee Jared Maxwell in from Sydney, why not have an Australian on-field referee accompany him?

Maybe they thought an Australian on-field official would suffer from the heat and altitude which clearly affected the Kiwis after they had forged a 12-point lead and twice went close to extending that within the opening half-hour. Prop Marty Taupau said he was gasping from the second minute and had never experienced tougher conditions -- ammunition for the NRL clubs as they plan to torpedo a repeat Denver Test in 2019.

New coach Michael Maguire must have been delighted with the manner in which his young side put his expansive game plan into action. But even in those early stages England enjoyed more possession and a Kiwis scrambling defence which had looked so impressive thereafter began running on rubbery legs. The next 32 points all came from England as the Kiwis' completion rate disintegrated and they fell off tackles.

Thaler did not define the outcome, despite awarding a try to Thomas Burgess after he lost the ball (Maxwell spotted that one, but was never shown the angle of Ryan Hall's fumble when 'scoring' England's first try) and whistled up a 10-3 penalty count to his countrymen. But three of them were conceded at kick-offs (two by Issac Luke, one by Jamayne Isaako); other costly penalties were donated by Jared Waerea-Hargreaves.

Maguire understandably emphasised the positives from what was billed as a Kiwis "home" game -- the "away" matches are in Hull, Liverpool and Leeds later in the year -- and there were indeed heartening performances within a team missing 12 seasoned internationals because of injuries, suspension, retirements or club self-interest. And that does not include a lost Tongan contingent boosted by Addin Fonua-Blake.

Dallin Watene Zelezniak was outstanding at fullback, on attack and defence, and proved there is life after another triple initial, RTS. In the centres, Esan Marsters embraced Test football with enthusiasm and success and was the best of the debutants. Hopefully Maguire can persuade Luke to stay on in the No. 9 jersey, though there are rumours he is headed for a post-season theatre (the surgical one, not the movies).

England's massive, and massively experienced, forwards eventually dominated. Sam Burgess must be admired for his non-stop 80 minutes of action, if not for all of his actions within those 80 minutes. Young Kiwi Raymond Faitala-Marriner was also on the field the full game.

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To me, he was the surprise selection in this team, but Maguire saw his resilience at club level. Remember when the Warriors swapped RFM for Shaun Lane?

By half-time of Tonga's match with Samoa Andrew Johns and Phil Gould were agreeing they must play the Kangaroos at season's end. Soon after that Tonga extended its lead to 36-6 and I was in tune with them. But in the last 37 minutes the Tongans added only a penalty goal and conceded three tries to win 38-22. It was the opposite of their World Cup games against the Kiwis and England, when they started slowly and stormed home.

"I've said the game we really need on a regular basis is against New Zealand. It's a grudge match," said Tonga coach Kristian Woolf. "But (the match against Australia) has to happen because we can't play New Zealand or England. Australia is the only team available. I have to give (Kangaroos coach) Mal Meninga a rap. He is right behind it." It will probably be in Brisbane. But wouldn't it be embarrassing if they close Auckland?

I spent much of the Pacific Test hoping Samoan Warriors James Gavet, Bunty Afoa and Mason Lino would survive their confrontation with Jason Taumalolo, Andrew Fifita, Fonua-Blake and company. What an atmosphere: there might even have been a few more fans scattered about Denver's vast stadium but the Campbelltown preliminaries were electrifying – and they didn't have Crystal Collins to mangle the national anthems!

Tonga has earned the right to play Australia, pitting a nation of 109,000 people against one of 25 million. Reinforced by David Fusitu'a, Mahe Fonua, Solomone Kata, Sika Manu and Tevita Pangai Junior, Tonga has the physical presence and natural ability to challenge the Kangaroos. Whether it also has the composure and confidence to compete with the world champions when the pressure is applied needs to be revealed.



A promotional poster for an NRL match between the Vodafone Warriors and the Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks. The background is a deep blue with a large, glowing shark silhouette in the upper left. In the center, two players are shown in action: a Warriors player in a white and blue jersey running with the ball, and a Sharks player in a black and red jersey tackling him. The text "THIS FRIDAY" is written in large, white, stylized letters on the left. Below it, the Vodafone Warriors logo is on the left and the Sharks logo is on the right, separated by a small 'V'. At the bottom left, it says "MT SMART STADIUM" and "KICK OFF 8:00PM".

**THIS FRIDAY**

VODAFONE

WARRIORS

V

SHARKS

CRONULLA SUTHERLAND

**MT SMART STADIUM**

**KICK OFF 8:00PM**





By Barry Ross

## A Weekend To Remember

NSW put a big tackle on Dane Gagai during the Holden State of Origin. Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

**T**HE NSW Blues completed an amazing weekend of sport for Sydneysiders with their deserved 18-14 win over Queensland at ANZ Stadium on Sunday night. The crowd of 82,223 saw the Blues win just their second State of Origin series in the past 13 years. Queensland won eight successive series from 2006 to 2013, before NSW broke the run in 2014. Then Queensland won the next three before the Blues were successful in the first two games of this year's matches and so won the series.

The NSW government Minister for Sport, Stuart Ayres, said that the weekend had injected more than \$15 million into the state's economy with around 27,000 overnight visitors. The weather was perfect over the weekend and that added to the occasion. Things kicked off on Friday night at North Sydney Oval for the Women's State of Origin clash. The was a tough and tight contest with NSW taking the honours 16-10 before a crowd of 6,824. The Wallabies took on the touring Irishmen in the third and deciding Test at Allianz Stadium on Saturday night. Before a new ground record crowd of 44,085, Ireland won 20-16 to take the series two Tests to one and cement their place as the world's number two Rugby Union team. This was the final Test match of any code to be played at Allianz, which was originally named the Sydney Football Stadium. The NSW government has decided to replace the venue which opened in 1988, with a brand new stadium and the demolition is set to begin in early September, days after the Rugby League semi final. The Wallabies and the majority Australian crowd, were bewildered by some refereeing decisions, especially late in the game. It is fair to say French whistle blowers and Kiwi television match officials are not the flavour of the month in Sydney after that Test. On the plus side, the Australian Rugby Union would have been delighted with the financial results from the Irish visit, with the Sydney Test being a sell-out more than a week out.

About 60 kms south west of Allianz Stadium, at Campbelltown, a crowd of 17,802 enjoyed the international Rugby League double header, which was also played on Saturday. At 4pm, Papua/New Guinea and Fiji did battle. With Jarryd Hayne at five eighth, the Fijians were favourites, but the P/NG side were too good, winning 26-14. Sharks hooker, James Segeyaro, who captained P/NG, had a top class game. With many of the crowd dressed in red, the Tongans enjoyed the majority of crowd support when they ran out to play Samoa at 7pm. Although Samoan prop, James Gavet opened the scoring with a well taken try after just two minutes, it was all Tonga for the rest of the first half. They led 36-6 after 51 minutes before Samoa added 16 unanswered points, making the final score 36-22 in Tonga's favour. But with the game in their keeping, the Tongans probably took their foot off the pedal. It was an entertaining game with 11 tries, seven by Tonga and four from Samoa. There is talk that Tonga will play Australia later this year, on October 20, in either Sydney or Brisbane, after the Kangaroos meet New Zealand in Auckland on 13 October.

And so to the New Zealand-England Test in the USA. The temperature of 31 degrees meant there were drink breaks in each half, but the game was entertaining, producing nine tries, six by England and three from the Kiwis. Although England won 36-18, new Kiwi coach, Michael Maguire, fielded seven new Test players, with several star players back in New Zealand.

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New Zealand played strongly in the first half and led 12-10 at the break. But their completion rate let them down as the match progressed. England completed 82 percent of their sets with New Zealand managing just 61 percent. England had 57 percent of possession and New Zealand 43 percent. England also took the penalty count by 10-3. Although the promoter was disappointed with the crowd of 19,320, the local baseball team, the Colorado Rockies, were playing the Miami Marlins nearby at Coors Field and drew 39,032 fans. Some locals were interviewed after the Rugby League Test and there were many positive comments. Casey Kreiter, 27, a long snapper with the Denver Broncos American football team, was at the game and he was quoted in an Australian newspaper, saying, "It's even more violent than I thought." Russell Crowe was also at the Mile High Stadium for the match.

A deal was brokered with CBS television, which had the potential to bring the clash into more than 60 million homes in the USA and Canada. But how many of these homes watched the game is not known as yet. The positives for Rugby League to come from this Test in Denver will not be known for a few weeks.

After the week's break, NRL football is back this weekend. The Dragons, who play the Eels at Wollongong on Thursday night, should win and so remain on top of the competition. Fans throughout the NRL will be watching closely to see what players turn out for their respective clubs this round after the representative weekend. The Dragons had three players, Gareth Widdop and James Graham with England and Leeson Ah Mau with New Zealand, in Denver. James Graham played his 40th Test for his country in Denver, while Issac Luke made it 43 Tests for New Zealand.

There are two great match ups on Friday night. First the Warriors take on the Sharks at Mt. Smart and right after that, the Roosters clash with the Storm at Adelaide Oval. The South Australians have the chance to see two of our top sides meet in a game with plenty on the line with the semi finals not too far away. Both teams are on 20 competition points with the Storm placed fifth and the Roosters sixth, on for and against. Another game which means plenty to both sides, is the Broncos-Raiders fixture in Brisbane on Saturday. The Raiders with 14 competition points, are four behind the eight placed Broncos, so a win is vital to their playoff chances.

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**Air NZ has a 24 hour sale on for internal New Zealand flights. If you live out of Auckland have thought about coming up to Vodafone Warriors' game at Mt Smart these are the games we have left at home this season:**

This Friday night Cronulla sharks  
Sunday the 22nd of July the Melbourne Storm  
Friday night 10th August Newcastle Knights  
Friday night 24th August Penrith Panthers  
Friday night 31st August Canberra Raiders

**AIR NEW ZEALAND** 

We would love to see you at Mt Smart the home of the Vodafone Warriors!

<https://www.airnewzealand.co.nz/new-zealand-on-sale>

# History of the Kiwis Association

By Ray Haffenden

**T**HE KIWIS Association was formed in 1950 for those who had represented New Zealand at league. It was formed to officially establish an annual reunion for current and former players.

The catalyst was a successful function for the 1947-48 Northern Hemisphere touring team, and the 1948 tourists to Australia, held on the eve of the annual North v South clash in 1948.

The dinner was arranged by tour manager Jack Redwood, the group having developed a tremendous sense of comradeship while away for more than seven months, with the tour running from August 4 1947 until January 25 1948, and involving four weeks of travel by ship on either side of that.

Everyone enjoyed it so much they decided it should become a regular fixture and a committee was elected to arrange future events, with 1939 Kiwis manager Bob Doble as the first president and 1948 Kiwi v Australia player Vic Belsham as secretary.

With a new constitution, the New Zealand Kiwis Assn began to expand its role in promoting the code. Players travelled the country to play exhibition games in the free-flowing style of rugby's Barbarian matches. These games were usually in aid of building projects, field development or some other support for the code.

From 1957 on, all newly-selected Kiwis have been invited to join the association.

In 2003 the Auckland group reverted to the original name, the NZRL Kiwis Assn, and the Canterbury Assn changed its name to the South Island Kiwis Assn.

The expansion of the game gave the opportunity to include Kiwi Ferns, who have provided us with many proud memories of their success at international level.

Four men have been made life members of the association, Ray Cranch, Don Hammond, Trevor Maxwell and Gerald Ryan.

The reunion tradition continues through an annual event, usually in October, and the current Kiwi team has attended if players were in camp before a tour or a home test. Members from all over the country, and Australia, attend the reunion, currently run by the following committee.

President Don Hammond, chairman Ray Haffenden, treasurer Brian Keane, secretary Juanita Woodhouse.  
Committee: Shane Cooper, Graeme Coutts, Troy Hardy.

Enquiries to Ray Haffenden  
09 534 1026.



## *A Little Bit About The Chairman of the Association*

*Ray Haffenden MNZM has done just about everything in Rugby League. He played from a very early age and represented Canterbury and then went on to coach Canterbury. He also coached the juniors Kiwis, was the manager of the Kiwis under two coaches (Bob Bailly and Frank Endacott). To top it off he was on the New Zealand Rugby League board and had a stint as Chairman of New Zealand Rugby League. To recognize this he was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Rugby League in 2017. Ray is a man that has great passion and love for the game. - Sir Peter Leitch*



By John Coffey

## Ray Cranch – Two Lifetimes In League

Ray Cranch the oldest living ex kiwi, 94, and one of the nicest guys you will ever meet. With Graeme Farrar kiwi number 398

*At 95, former Kiwis forward Ray Cranch is still going strong, and attending army and footy functions, in Auckland. This article was first published in the Newsletter two years ago when Ray was only 93.*

**I**T IS not unusual to interview someone aged in his fifties and write he has spent a lifetime in sport. By that measure Ray Cranch has spent two lifetimes in rugby league. He first played as a 13-year-old in 1936. Now, at 93, he is New Zealand's oldest former Kiwi and his 80 years of involvement have earned him life memberships of the Auckland and New Zealand leagues and the respect of thousands of colleagues.

Cranch would have been a Mt Albert man (and boy) his entire playing career had he not been too heavy for his mates' team in his debut season. So he spent that with the Akarana club, based in Parnell, before joining Mt Albert. A prop, second-rower and occasional hooker, Second World War army service interrupted his progress before he captained Auckland and earned selection for the 1951-52 Kiwis tour of Britain and France.

That was the unluckiest team of all time, losing all three British Tests by a combined total of only 11 points. Newspaper reports credit the home side as being marginally better in winning 21-15 at Bradford, but were adamant the Kiwis were robbed by a last-minute scrum penalty in losing 20-19 at Swinton and were again unfortunate when beaten 20-16 at Leeds. The Kiwis scored nine tries to Britain's eight in those last two Tests.

Cranch could not break into a Test forward pack which comprised Bill McLennan, George Davidson, Cliff Johnson, Charlie McBride, Frank Mulcare and Alister Atkinson – five of them Legends of League – but has indelible memories of that series 65 years ago. "It was the bloody referee at Swinton. Barchy (Des Barchard) put the ball into a scrum and the referee penalised him. It was right in front of our posts," he said.

These days that penalty would be a differential, though no-one worries any more how the ball is fed into the scrum. Third Test reports suggest the Kiwis might have been awarded a late try under the cross-bar, with the match-winning conversion a formality, had video referees been in vogue. The amateur Kiwis were that close to beating the professional Poms. Touring was enjoyable but tough back then.

"They were just coming off wartime food rationing, and there was not much good meat around," said Cranch. "Only the team that was playing the next game got the good stuff. The midweek players, the ham and egggers, got the rest. We played the continuous tackle rule and the English teams would keep the ball for 10, even 20, minutes," not to mention the harshness of a northern winter and 40-game itinerary.

But there were many memorable off-field moments. "I remember Cyril Eastlake and Andy Berryman, with napkins on their heads, doing their doctor and nurse act performing surgery on a banana. It was hilarious. Over in France we were travelling down a long narrow road with poplar trees on both sides when (co-manager) Dave Wilkie popped up and asked, 'Where's Henry' (Des White)? He was missing. We had to go another five miles before we could turn the old bus around. Going back the other way we met up with a taxi and Whitey hopped out. He had slept in. When he went down to the hotel reception the girl said, 'Kiwis are gone'. Des didn't know any French but he managed to get a taxi and set off after us."

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Cranch suffered a serious elbow injury when he and White simultaneously tackled an opponent during the second game in France, ruling him out for the rest of the tour and troubling him for some years. "There was still animosity in France against the English because of the bombing of their cities during the war. A lot of people on the street ignored you if you asked for directions in English. But we got on okay with their players."

Although he was not part of the on-field action, no-one was happier than Cranch when the Kiwis won Test series against Australia in 1952 and 1953, particularly when new coach Jim Amos devised tactics of using fast loose forwards Atkinson and Mulcare to expose champion Kangaroos fullback Clive Churchill, who had been dubbed "the little Master" by the Australian media.

"I had been in the Auckland Colts side which played the 1949 Australians," he said. "During that game Jimmy Edwards and I chased Churchill upfield and he was looking over his shoulder and saying 'can't you catch me, you bastards?' After the Kiwis beat them in '52 and '53 I remember saying to Alister (Atkinson), 'I'm glad you got that little, um, Master.'" Cranch played on until 1954, before starting his administrative career.

"Mt Albert said they would like to nominate me for the Auckland schoolboy board of control. I felt I should put something back into the game and that's where it all started." He was appointed chairman in 1960 and managed the first New Zealand Schoolboys team to tour Australia in 1964. He was also on the ARL senior control board and manager of the 1973 New Zealand Colts in Australia.

For more than 20 years Cranch was secretary-manager of the Auckland Leagues Club, and later a director, president and a life member. He selected and managed Auckland teams, worked with referees, served on judicial committees and managed Bartercard Cup matches. If there was a job going Ray Cranch was available to do it. He thoroughly earned his NZRL Distinguished Service Award and ARL and NZRL life memberships.

It was my privilege to travel to Britain as a Kiwis supporters' tour leader with Ray in 1989. He was a gentle man in every sense of the word, ever considerate of others. Happily, he is still sharp as a tack at 93, keenly watching the NRL and Super League on television and expertly analysing the two competitions. One gets the impression that if Clive Churchill was still around Ray would have no problem running him down.

*Editors note: Ray is one of the nicest men you will ever meet. A truly beautiful man. - Sir Peter Leitch*

Hello again Sir Peter,

**S**ORRY ITS been a while in emailing you,  
Some time ago I won a signed warriors 9's Jersey from your newsletter competition

My sons Under 13 league team raffled the jersey of as a fundraiser for their team . They made a whopping \$795, which they are very excited about.

Here is Ellerslie Chairman – James Waetford, his son sold the winning ticket to his grandmother, whos very excited, cause the jersey was her size

Thanks again, Vikki





John and Shaun Coffey in their Geelong Cats guard of honour T-shirts at the MCG



By John Coffey

## Lost In Aussie Rules Country

**C**RAIG BELLAMY, Cameron Smith and the Melbourne Storm have done much to give rugby league a footprint in Victoria but their city and state is still, and always will be, a hotbed of Australian Rules football. The Coffey family happened to be in Melbourne, catching up with son Shaun on his thirtieth birthday, when the New Zealand Rugby League held its annual meeting in Auckland just over a week ago.

I would like to thank the many people who have personally or on social media congratulated me on being awarded an NZRL Life Membership. It is an absolutely humbling experience for one who has never been officially connected to the governing body, apart from the honorary role of historian which the late Bernie Wood bestowed upon me when we began researching the game for his Annuals and our history books.

Over the years I was at The Press, and also writing for other publications, I probably annoyed some administrators who felt I had been too critical. But when they cooled down they usually realised the criticism was constructive and it was better to be reading about rugby league than other sports. But it would not have been appropriate to accept a Life Membership nomination while still working fulltime in the media.

Now that I have been retired from the mainstream media for a good decade I was chuffed to be remembered. Because of our Melbourne trip I was impossible to find on Monday and most of Tuesday. I actually first learned of my Life Membership via a phone call from Ray Cranch, an old mate who at 95 has – as I have written before – spent the equivalent of two lifetimes in rugby league on and off the field.

Anyway, back to Melbourne. Our son, Shaun, was unaware his family would be there for his birthday. His girlfriend, Hilary, and his sisters conspired to make the arrangements for us to attend the Geelong Cats AFL members' lunch before the match against Richmond Tigers at the MCG. Shaun and Hilary live in Geelong, an hour from Melbourne, but the Cats play their biggest games at the biggest stadium within reach.

Nor did Shaun or I know Hilary had arranged for us to be in the Cats' on-field honour guard. That involved pulling on club T-shirts and waving flags as the players burst out of the tunnel, ran between us and through a banner to begin their warm-up. Heavy morning rain limited the crowd to 47,000 but one could still sense the vast oval's unique atmosphere. For the record, Richmond went to the top of the table with a narrow win.

It was a pleasant enough lunch and, there were scones and party pies during halftime. The hospitality room could seat about 400; one wonders what would happen if all of the Cats' 60,000 members simultaneously asked for lunch tickets! But I can honestly say the Mad Butcher's lounge at Mount Smart Stadium on Warriors' match days is the equal of everything the MCG, with all its flash facilities, has to offer.

All in all, it was quite a weekend. Even the NRL staged the Warriors' match in Townsville on the Friday night so I could watch it live and still get a little sleep before our early Saturday morning flight to Melbourne. So, once again, many thanks to the unknown person or persons who nominated me for the NZRL Life Membership, to those who approved it, and to those who have since offered their congratulations.



By Miles Davis

# Luisa Avaiki

Luisa with some of the Vodafone Warriors management. Brian Smith general manager of football, Lui, Stephen Kearney head coach, Cameron George CEO

**W**HEN LUISA Avaiki was young she would never have dreamt that she would one day be a sporting superstar and lead her country to three consecutive Rugby League World Cup victories. She grew up in a traditional Samoan family and went to Sunday School every week. As she entered her teens her regular attendance at church wasn't always through devotion but sometimes felt forced to attend as her interests in other areas increased. Rather than attending Sunday worship every week she found herself wanting to play sport and socialising with her friends. She started to fall off the rails. Drinking from the age of 12 and by 15 she had a serious drinking problem. She became rebellious and her school grades started to deteriorate as well as other areas in her life.

(This isn't entirely correct so would like to change it. Not sure where this is from but I'm guessing it's from a church testimonial that didn't get everything correct. Instead maybe) However with the strong support of her family and close friends Luisa was able to find her identity again. A friend invited her to a youth group meeting and that is where she was invited to accept Christ. Knowing deep down inside that she was hiding her problems in alcohol, and was not the happy person her friends thought her to be, she stepped forward. And from that night on she gave her life to the Lord and knew that with His help and direction she could turn things around and use her God-given talents in all areas of her life.

A couple of years later she started playing rugby league with Auckland's Richmond Rovers club (with whom she won 9 club titles), feeling it was something she was destined to do. Within her second year of playing rugby league she was in the Kiwi Ferns and driven by her faith to give her all each week on the paddock. Luisa has played in 3 Rugby League World cups and led them to victory in 2 as captain. sorry Butch for changing a lot of this part it's just that the first WC I didn't captain but did play in England. Can't take that captaincy off Nadine Conlon and Nicole Presland (a feat that will take some beating). She also represented Samoa in league, rugby union and touch.

After a stellar 17 year career she turned to coaching with a spell at club and representative level with boys and girls before becoming Melbourne Storm's games development officer. In 2016 she was made NZRL's Well-being and Women's Development Manager.

Then in March this year she once again made history by becoming the first woman to hold a coaching position within an NRL club when she was appointed Head Coach of the Vodafone Warriors women's team to take part in the inaugural Women's NRL.

Avaiki is excited by the challenge and sees the advent of the competition as a major step forward for women's rugby league. "Women's rugby league has a long history in New Zealand but the introduction of this competition has taken our game to a whole new level," Avaiki said "It's a huge honour having the chance to take up this role."

*Continued on next page...*



*Continued from previous page...*

Vodafone Warriors' Football General Manager Brian Smith said he had not specifically looked for a female coach "I talked to quite a few people around the place about candidates and we had quite a few people who contacted us directly, but obviously Luisa's experience as a player, coach and her total absorption in the women's game in this country really made her a standout candidate."

Avaiki knows that she has a golden opportunity to take the women's game to the next level "The women's game has been going for about 30 years, Kiwi Ferns have been going for over 20 years. We were fighting to keep the game alive here just so we could get opportunities like this. In that sense it seems like a long time, but now that it has arrived I am just grateful to be honest.

"This is something that we had hoped for the future of our game, for the young girls who had an interest in rugby league and now I'm blown away that it is happening while I am still part of the game."

If the Vodafone Warriors women's team can show the same faith and determination to succeed that their coach has then I wouldn't mind betting that they will pick up an NRL Grand Final win before their male counterparts. Or perhaps they will both achieve that this season?????



One half of 'The Laughing Samoans', Tofiga is now solo and on the rise.

A show for the whole family. 'I Gan't Belive It' will bring tears of laughter. Let Tofiga take you on a world of whirlwind ride of life changing experiences about his childhood and having to grow up around his extended family and the Pacific people.

You will certainly flex muscles in your body that you totally forgot you had when you're laughing from the beginning to the end. 'I GAN'T BELIVE IT' will definitely bring the house down.

Tickets: <https://premier.ticketek.co.nz/shows/show.aspx?sh=IGANTBEL18>

# This Warriors Life Top 10 - Most Nz Test Appearances By Warriors Players

By Will Evans

**P**ETA HIKU and Ken Maumalo became the Warriors' 64th and 65th Kiwi representatives England in the historic Denver Test. This week we take a look at the club's longest-serving New Zealand Test stars.

## THISWARRIORSLIFE.COM TOP 10 - MOST NZ TEST APPEARANCES BY WARRIORS PLAYERS

### 10=. Clinton Toopi - 19

Brilliant centre Toopi received a taste of NRL football with the Warriors in 1999-2000 and represented Aotearoa Maori at the 2000 World Cup. The 21-year-old still had only 18 first-grade appearances under his belt when he debuted for the Kiwis against France in 2001.

Established as one of the best centres in the world by the end of 2002, Toopi was an automatic inclusion for New Zealand in ensuing seasons. He famously scored hat-tricks in wins over Australia in 2003 and '05, while also featuring in the Tri-Nations final triumph in the latter campaign.

Toopi linked with Leeds midway through 2006 and wound down his Kiwis tenure in the 3-0 series whitewash against Great Britain in '07, taking his Test tally to 22 matches - including 11 tries.



### 10=. Stephen Kearney - 19

Kearney already boasted an impressive international CV by the time he became a foundation Auckland Warrior. The second-row tyro played six Tests in 1993-94, including a shock elevation to the captaincy for the dead-rubber against Great Britain at Headingley in '93.

Kearney played 19 of a possible 21 Test matches for the Kiwis during his four seasons at the Warriors (1995-98), becoming the club's first Test skipper when he led New Zealand against Super League Australia in the 1997 Anzac Test.

He made a further 20 appearances for his country during a fruitful six-season stay at Melbourne Storm, leaving him just one short of Gary Freeman's then-record for most Tests for the Kiwis.



### 9. Sean Hoppe - 22

Northcote product Hoppe became a staple in the New Zealand line-up from 1992, playing 10 Tests as a Winfield Cup wing sensation for Canberra and North Sydney before joining the fledgling Warriors in '95.

Despite fluctuating club form, Hoppe played an impressive 24 consecutive Tests from the 1994 tour of Papua New Guinea until the 1999 Anzac Test - the season the prolific try-scorer finished his 88-game stint with the Warriors.

Hoppe, who eclipsed Hugh McGahan and Kevin Iro as New Zealand's all-time leading Test try-scorer on the 1998 tour of Britain, responded to an SOS from the 2002 Kiwis during his final season at St Helens. The 31-year-old extended his Test tally to 35 matches by playing in the centres against Great Britain and France.



*Continued on next page...*

### **8. Ben Matulino – 23**

One of only three players to break the 200-game barrier for the Warriors, Matulino joined Wests Tigers in the off-season and announced his representative retirement earlier this month, leaving behind a handy record of 23 Tests for the Kiwis.

The hard-hitting, offloading Matulino was just 20 years old with 33 NRL games to his credit when he debuted for New Zealand against France in 2009. He played 17 of a possible 20 Tests from the 2010 midyear show-down with Australia until the 2013 World Cup final, but missed the 2014 Four Nations campaign and last turned out for the Kiwis during the 2015 series against England.

### **6=. Joe Vagana – 25**

Auckland Warriors rookie Vagana represented Western Samoa at the 1995 World Cup but was a permanent fixture in Frank Endacott's Kiwis line-up from 1996-2000.

Remarkably, the giant front-rower's 25 Tests for New Zealand were all in a row, playing every match from the 1996 series against the Kumuls until the 2000 World Cup final against Australia at Old Trafford.

Big Joe left the Warriors for Bradford at the end of 2000 and was one of Super League's premier props for eight seasons – good enough to be named in Bradford's Team of the Century in 2007 – but never played for the Kiwis again.

### **6=. Shaun Johnson – 25**

Still only 27 years of age, the mercurial Johnson could conceivably climb to the top of this list by the time he retires...assuming he plays out his career with the Warriors.

The halfback was a veteran of just 23 NRL games when he broke into the Kiwis line-up for the 2012 Anzac Test and has been an automatic selection in the No.7 when available since the 2013 World Cup – a campaign that including an iconic match-winning try against England in the Wembley semi-final.

He singlehandedly steered the Kiwis to Four Nations glory and collected the Golden Boot in 2014, and despite frequent injury troubles the only Kiwis assignments he has missed in the past five years are the 2015 post-season series against England and Saturday's historic match in Denver.

Johnson overtook Matthew Ridge as New Zealand's all-time leading Test point-scorer during the 2017 World Cup, extending the record to 183 points from 25 matches.





### **5. Logan Swann – 26**

Rangy back-rower Swann had the rare distinction of playing Test football for New Zealand before making his first-grade debut. A member of Frank Endacott's Warriors reserve grade side that went down in the 1996 grand final, the 20-year-old featured in the Kiwis' 3-0 series whitewash of Great Britain a month later but was not blooded in the premiership until the opening round of 1997.

Swann starred in Test wins over Super League Australia in 1997 and the full Australian side in 1998-99, as well as the gallant World Cup final loss to the Kangaroos in 2000. He joined Bradford in 2004 and pushed his Test tally to 29 appearances by playing in that year's Tri-Nations tournament.

He returned to Auckland in 2007, rounding out his career with two further seasons at the Warriors that took him to 195 games for the club.



### **4. Lance Hohaia – 27**

The ultra-versatile Hohaia's 185-game NRL career with the Warriors and 27-Test tenure with the Kiwis both fit neatly into the same 10-season time-frame.

One of 2002's most impressive rookies, the 19-year-old debuted at five-eighth for New Zealand against Australia at the end of that season. Injuries and indifferent form meant Hohaia played just one Test over the next four seasons, but a stirring career renaissance including an integral role at full-back in the Kiwis' 2008 World Cup and 2010 Four Nation final wins over the Kangaroos.

Hohaia scored a try in the last of his 27 Test appearances – the 2011 Anzac Test – and linked with St Helens after featuring in the Warriors' charge to that year's grand final.



### **3. Manu Vatuvei – 28**

Vatuvei was a raw 19-year-old winger with just 17 NRL games to his name when he was pitched into the New Zealand Test line-up at the end of 2005. A couple of months later he was named the RLIF Rookie of the Year after scoring two tries in the Kiwis' 24-0 upset of the Kangaroos in the Tri-Nations final.

'The Beast' was a key component of New Zealand's 2008 World Cup triumph – scoring four tries in a pool win over England and starring in the final boilover against Australia – and became the Kiwis' leading try-scorer in Tests with a dazzling double in the 2014 Four Nations final defeat of the Kangaroos.

Fittingly, Vatuvei's last Test outing for New Zealand was a two-try, man-of-the-match performance in the drought-breaking 2015 Anzac Test victory over Australia. He represented Tonga at the 2017 World Cup after joining Salford City.



## 2. Stacey Jones – 40

The 19-year-old Jones needed just 14 rookie-season appearances during the Auckland Warriors' foundation season to convince Kiwis selectors he was ready for a call-up to the national squad. The gifted teenager usurped New Zealand legend and incumbent captain Gary Freeman for the No.7 jumper at the tournament and was an automatic pick when available for the next 11 years.

Jones masterminded three wins over Australian sides from 1997-99 and captained New Zealand for the first time against the Kangaroos in 2002, winning the Golden Boot award that year. Three months after finishing up with the Warriors at the end of the 2005 NRL season, 'The Little General' steered the Kiwis to a Tri-Nations triumph.

Jones added six Tests to his tally in 2006 while at Super League club Catalans, drawing level with Freeman in second place on New Zealand's all-time Test appearances register.

## 1. Simon Mannering – 44

Warriors appearances record-holder Mannering retired from rep football earlier this month with just four other players ahead of him on the list of most Tests for New Zealand.

The back-rower/centre broke into the Kiwis just weeks after his 20th birthday and with just 24 NRL games on his résumé, playing all five games of their 2006 Tri-Nations campaign. He was a centre in the 2008 World Cup and 2010 Four Nations final triumphs in Brisbane, but started at second-row or lock in 36 of his Test outings.

Mannering succeeded Benji Marshall as Kiwis captain for the 2013 World Cup and led the Kiwis to memorable victories over Australia in the 2014 Four Nations and the 2015 Anzac Test, but he subsequently went missing from the international arena for two years due to injuries and burnout.

His recent announcement meant one of the great New Zealand Test careers ended in the most unbecoming style imaginable: the Kiwis' shock loss to Fiji in the 2017 World Cup quarter-final.

### FURTHER READING

A Short History Of... Warrior Kiwis: <https://thiswarriorslife.com/2018/06/23/a-short-history-of-warrior-kiwis/>



## THIS WARRIORS LIFE

FRESH COVERAGE OF THE MIGHTY NEW  
ZEALAND WARRIORS

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Contact: [will@thiswarriorslife.com](mailto:will@thiswarriorslife.com)



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

*The Mad Butchers Weekly NRL Tipping Comp.*

By John Holloway

## NRL Round 16

|                           |                       | Tarsh Ieremaia                             | Joe Vagana                                   | John Coffey                                      | Fast Eddie                                   | Monty Betham                            | Neville Kesha                   | High-Tackle Holloway                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Date/<br>Venue            | Game                  | <i>Flava Star.<br/>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> |
| Thur 28 June<br>Win Std   | Dragons v Eels        | Dragons                                    | Dragons                                      | Dragons  | Eels   | Dragons                                 | Dragons                         | Dragons  |
| Fri 29 June<br>Mt Smart   | Warriors v Sharks     | Warriors                                   | Warriors                                     | Warriors   | Warriors                                     | Warriors                                | Warriors                        | Warriors   |
| Fri 29 June<br>Adelaide   | Roosters v Storm      | Storm                                      | Roosters                                     | Roosters   | Storm  | Roosters                                | Storm                           | Roosters   |
| Sat 30 June<br>Panther    | Panthers v Sea Eagles | Panthers                                   | Panthers                                     | Panthers   | Panthers                                     | Panthers                                | Panthers                        | Panthers   |
| Sat 30 June<br>McD Jones  | Knights v Bulldogs    | Knights                                    | Knights                                      | Knights  | Knights                                      | Knights                                 | Bulldogs                        | Knights  |
| Sat 30 June<br>Suncorp    | Broncos v Raiders     | Broncos                                    | Raiders                                      | Broncos  | Raiders                                      | Broncos                                 | Broncos                         | Raiders  |
| Sun 1 July<br>Leichardt   | Tigers v Titans       | Tigers                                     | Tigers                                       | Tigers   | Tigers                                       | Tigers                                  | Titans                          | Tigers   |
| Sun 1 July<br>Barlow Park | Rabbitohs v Cowboys   | Rabbitohs                                  | Rabbitohs                                    | Rabbitohs  | Rabbitohs                                    | Rabbitohs                               | Rabbitohs                       | Rabbitohs  |

|                 |     |     |     |       |     |      |     |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|
| Picks last week | 0/4 | 1/4 | 3/4 | 3/4   | 1/4 | 4/4  | 2/4 |
| Total picks     | 71  | 71  | 71  | 68### | 66  | 79## | 66  |

## please note Error Rep rd Nev was on PNG. 1 point added.

###Also error rd 15 fast Eddy my misread have added 1 extra point

### DEMOLITION IN DOWNTOWN DENVER...

**D**EMOLITION, WELL maybe not so much... a real hospital pass this one for new Kiwi bossman Madge McGuire. Pretty much a thrown together work-crew with several having their first day on the job. The young Kiwis looked handy early on, Isaac Luke leading the charge and offloads were producing busts but it didn't last. On the downside a drop-kicking but on the up some nuggets emerged. Marsters showed his penetration, Tapine has matured, Mamaulo is gaining in confidence, Fisher-Harris is a comer and Zelezniak is good value. We were in the ascendancy most of the first 40 and the three tries bombed by last pass inaccuracy could have tipped the scale our way but credit to the "to and froms" they lasted better in the heat played the smart footy and at the bell got home comfortably. Can't help but think that the power, pace and talents of RTS, Magic Johnson, Tohu Harris, Proctor and Jesse Bromwich would have carved a way different outcome to this match. Don't even ask me what "lost boys" Taumalolo and Ponga would add to Black attack. "Cest la vie". The Fijian Favourites starring a whole shipload of NRL talents (Hayne, Vunivalu, Uate, Naiqama, Bukuya etc) got nose-boned by the surprising no-name PNG Kumuls 26/14 but the Kiwi laden Tongans as expected despatched their Samoan Island Neighbours 40/30. SOO. Mate against mate, State against State, Ladies bring a plate and what a beast of a feast it was.

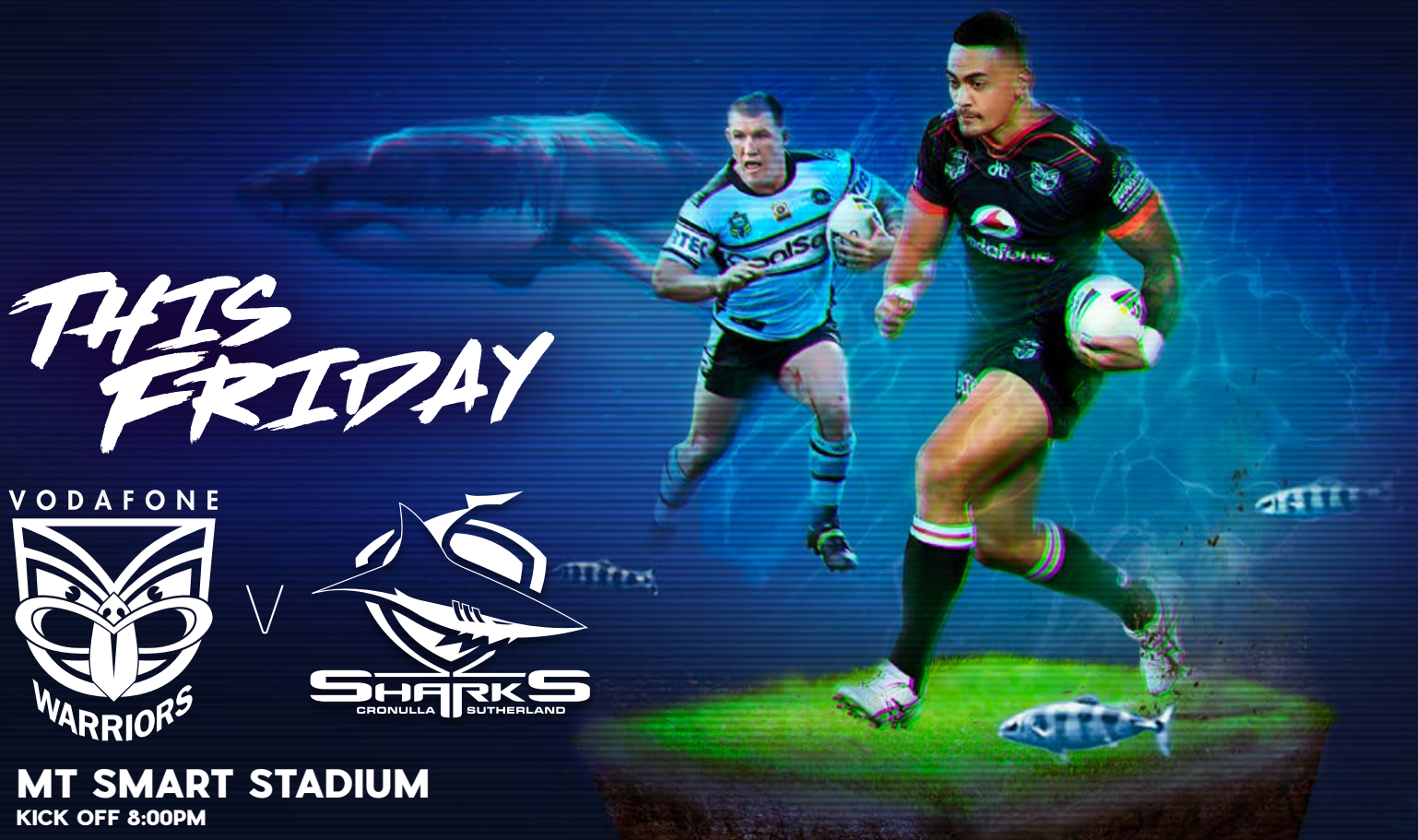
*Continued on next page...*



*Continued from previous page...*

A return to glory for the Blues, out of the wilderness at last. The Maroons gave it everything but just lacked the finishing touches and calmness that Smith, Cronk and Thurston used to provide. Slater the survivor gave it everything and his pace was a real threat throughout. Valentine Holmes and fellow flyer Gagai had a good go at it. Ponga apart from a couple of errors debuted successfully showcasing his wizardry and Munster was a one-man attack machine. The ferocity of the Maroons onslaught ruffled the Blues combinations but the sheer sum of their individual talents endured for the win. Cleary, Maloney, Tedesco, Addo-Carr and Superstar in waiting Latrelle Mitchell in particular prospered behind the faster more skillful NSW pack. Suncorp will be the next big test with the rabid Queensland homies baying for blue blood, the dead rubber will not be a factor for the Maroons looking to regain the last say and a little pride, on the other hand with the Title pressure off fearless Freddie's Sydneysiders might just put the hammer down. Back home now and the Sharks are circling, a big challenge at the old home ground on Friday night. Be there or be square!! KiaKaha mighty Warrriiooorrrsss.

Tipping I don't want to talk about it, only 4 games in the Rep Round and still we had some sorry returns... well not the runaway leader. Who said Refs made bad decisions? Nifty nev hit 4 from 4 and is damn near lapping the field. Two emerging questions...Who can stop the Whistle-Blower...and why is High-Tackle the supposed guru coming last?



A promotional poster for an NRL match between the Vodafone Warriors and the Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks. The background is a deep blue with a large, glowing shark swimming in the water. In the foreground, two players are running with the ball. The player on the left is wearing a white Vodafone Warriors jersey, and the player on the right is wearing a black Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks jersey. The text 'THIS FRIDAY' is written in large, white, stylized letters. Below it, the Vodafone Warriors logo and the Sharks logo are shown, separated by a 'V' symbol. At the bottom, it says 'MT SMART STADIUM' and 'KICK OFF 8:00PM'.

**THIS FRIDAY**

VODAFONE

WARRIORS

SHARKS

CRONULLA SUTHERLAND

**MT SMART STADIUM**

KICK OFF 8:00PM





# I'm A Cronulla Player Now: Woods Switches To Sharks From Bulldogs

By Michael Chammas

NRL.com

**F**ront-rower Aaron Woods has settled in with his new team on Tuesday within a matter of hours after making a mid-season switch to the Cronulla Sharks from the Canterbury Bulldogs.

The deal has been done for the prop to play for the Sharks this Friday in Auckland and he was named in Cronulla's 21-man squad on Tuesday afternoon.

"I've been given a really good opportunity from Cronulla here and coming here to meet everyone today, meeting [CEO] Barry Russell, it's been enormous," he said.

"I can't thank them enough for taking me on board and I'm really looking forward to ripping in with the boys and getting on with the job. This happened all last minute, obviously there was dealings behind the scenes but I only found out this morning after training with the Bulldogs boys.

"I'm a Cronulla player now and I'm really happy to be here."

Cronulla coach Shane Flanagan was thrilled to sign the international forward.

"Aaron is a quality player and I am confident he can add something to our team this year and into the future," Flanagan said.

"I also believe our club can help Aaron get back to the previous form which had him playing for NSW and Australia.

"We're pleased to have him on board and look forward to what he can bring to our team."

It is understood the Bulldogs, Sharks and Woods's management came to an agreement on Tuesday morning and Woods is believed to have taken a pay cut to join the club for the remainder of his contract which runs until the end of 2021.

"The Bulldogs and Aaron have decided that now is the right time for this move to happen," Bulldogs chief executive Andrew Hill said on Tuesday.

"It is a difficult decision for both parties, however, both Aaron and the club believe it is in their best interests for this to happen now.

"What it does allow is for Aaron to join his new club before the upcoming deadline and for the Bulldogs to be able to start to plan for the future with additional cap space.

"It has been well documented that we have had very little flexibility with our cap going forward and this will now allow us to look to the future with increased flexibility around our options.

"We wish Aaron all the very best for the future."

The 27-year-old has represented Australia 15 times including at last year's World Cup and made 14 State of Origin appearances for NSW, and played 14 games for the Bulldogs after playing 146 matches for the Wests Tigers between 2011 and 2017.





# Southland District Round League

By SOUTHERN RUGBY LEAGUE

Photos by: Dave Loudon

**C**ONGRATULATIONS TO the Lonestar Cowboys on winning their second Grand Final since winning their first one back in 2011 when the club was established.

This was He Tauaa 's 7th straight Grand Final appearance. After losing their first one in golden point to Cooks back in 2012 , the club has gone on to win the last 5 Grand Finals and creating history for the club and Southland.

This was the Cowboys third Grand Final in a row and like they say ( third time lucky ). Cowboys deserved the win today , they were the better team on the day and have been all season.

There was a good crowd watching and supporting either clubs.

He Tauaa tried their hardest to restrain the Cowboys and worked some good plays , but handling errors let them down. He Tauaa fought back in the second half and had their opportunities cut short by a well drilled Cowboys team. He Tauaa never gave up even when the score was slipping away from them.

Cowboys worked hard to keep He Tauaa from gaining any momentum. He Tauaa were on the back foot for most of the game and the Cowboys knew they couldn't let up , not even an inch , if they wanted to stay in front. They knew that He Tauaa could turn it around in a heart beat and make a come back.

Both clubs showed each other respect after the game , with He Tauaa admitting that they were just outclassed by a better team and wished the Cowboys all the best in their next game against the Otago champions.

Cowboys will have a couple of weeks off before they face the Otago champs down here.

Half Time : Cowboys 18 / He Tauaa Nil

Full Time : Cowboys 42 / He Tauaa 16



SOUTHERN RUGBY LEAGUE by DAVE LOUDON PHOTOGRAPHY



SOUTHERN RUGBY LEAGUE by DAVE LOUDON PHOTOGRAPHY





# ARL Match Reports

By ARL

Richmond's David Dyer is tackled by Pt Chevalier

## Rd 11 SAS Fox Memorial Premiership Match Reports

Northcote 26 Mt Albert 10

The Northcote Tigers picked up their sixth win on the trot in 2018, overcoming Mt Albert in the second half after trailing 4-0 at the break. Winger James Waterson bagged a pair of tries, while interchange playmaker Thomas Connick scored a late double. The win ensures Northcote will remain safely in the top four for the time being, with four wins now between them and the chasing pack.

Otahuhu 34 Howick 12

The Otahuhu Leopards continue to be the surprise package of 2018, getting up for a comfortable victory over top-four side Howick. Behind 12-6 at the break, Otahuhu overcame Howick early in the second, scoring a number of tries before icing the win with a four-pointer on the buzzer. Fullback Geronimo Doyle scored a double and was on song with the boot, converting all but two of the Leopards' tries.

Richmond 10 Pt Chevalier 38

Pt Chevalier bounced back from their first loss of the year last week, to record a convincing victory over Richmond. The match saw both sides make a number of handling errors, and the penalty rate was high. Prop Daniel Palavi scored a double on his way to Man of the Match honours for the Pirates.

Marist 26 Mangere East 36

An Inga Limoni intercept on full-time ensured Mangere East picked up their fourth win of the year. As Marist pushed hard for a late equaliser, with Mangere East sitting on a 30-26 lead, Limoni picked off a pass to go the length of the field. The Hawks led by just two points at the break, in a game which was close throughout.

Papakura 16 Glenora 24

The Glenora Bears claimed their 10th-consecutive win on Saturday, grinding past a dogged Papakura side at Prince Edward Park. Up 14-6 at the break, the Bears had to fight off a Sea Eagles comeback in the second, which saw the home side score back-to-back tries, but recovered to put the result beyond doubt heading into the final 10 minutes. Veteran Hooker Zac Tippins was a standout for the Bears.

*Continued on next page...*

## Rd 9 Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup

Manukau 24 Ponsonby 36

Ponsonby overcame a scare from Manukau to pick up win number six in 2018. Down 24-12 at one stage, Ponsonby looked set to suffer a shock loss, but powered back in the second 40, led by a double to lock Alan Zaharia. The win keeps Ponsonby third on the second division ladder.

Ellerslie 28 Northern 22

An intercept try from Liam Tuaiti with 10 minutes to play secured a dramatic comeback victory for Ellerslie over the Northern Brothers. Behind 18-0 after just half an hour, Ellerslie stormed home in the final 20 minutes to ensure they remained in the competition's top four.

Te Atatu 18 New Lynn 20

A conversion after the full-time siren saw New Lynn secure victory in one of the games of the season. New Lynn hadn't led the match at any stage prior, but scored inside the final minute via Patrick Ioane-Unasa, before captain James Nathan nailed the match-winner for the youthful Stags.

Manurewa 36 Pakuranga 16

The Manurewa Marlins put together what coach James Hema described as their best performance of the year to beat Pakuranga. Winger Damian Mataroa scored a double for the Marlins, while in the halves Cody Mahu-ika set up a number of four-pointers.

Waitemata 10 Franklin 18

Franklin came out on top against Waitemata in a match which saw the two sides locked on the scoreboard for much of the 80 minutes. The Storm were guilty of turning over cheap possession, while at the other end Waitemata's strong forward pack kept them in the match. Tries either side of half-time to hooker Jason Tou gave Franklin the edge.

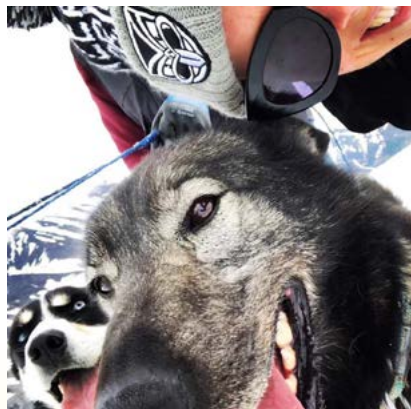
Mt Wellington 36 Papatoetoe 20

A four-try haul to fullback Boss Rolleston saw Mt Wellington overcome bottom-of-the-ladder Papatoetoe. The score sat 24-14 in Mt Wellington's favour for much of the second half, before the Warriors ran away with it late in the game, scoring twice inside the final 20 minutes.

Bay Roskill 30 Hibiscus Coast 0

Win by default.

Otara BYE



**B**UTCH ~ Nigel Rattray here  
- hope your all well mate? -  
just sharing a pic a mate just sent  
me - Warriors fan Shelley Ryder  
in Alaska with huskies and sleds  
- she send me the pic showing off  
her Warriors Beanie - greats pics  
thought you may want to share on  
your next newsletter- cheers mate  
- Nige



# Masters Team Gives Back To The Community

*By Patea Masters*

**A** CLASSIC DISPLAY of Masters Rugby League was shown over the weekend. In what was to be called a "Give back to the Community event"

The Patea Warriors played against a gutsy Western Suburbs Tigers who traveled down from New Plymouth in a intriguing game of Masters Rugby League, the first ever to be played at the Patea Domain for over 20 years.

Sam Broughton the Executive Manager said that the game was played with such passion from both sides "Although Patea took the win, you could sense the determination from the Western Suburbs Tigers who never gave up and showed a lot of mana on the field throughout the game."

A standout of ex Patea personal patrons and players who had traveled from afar turned up to be part of this memorial event.

"To see past players come out of the wood works from both sides giving their all and enjoying themselves was a awesome experience to witness"

Broughton also stated.

The Patea Management team would also like to acknowledge the local Community of Patea who turned up in numbers

Marketing Consultant Renee Kepa and Communication Coordinator Neville Hinga have gone to great lengths with there commitment and engagement towards the Masters.

The amount of people that showed up at the Domain to watch the game was exhilarating.

To play in front of a big crowd was a highlight of the game,cheering the team on the field, sensed a sensation-al vibe.

Having a wide range of support not only at home,but overseas as well. Receiving request from those who were wanting to see the game been played via Live stream through social media was exciting.

"The support the Masters team has been receiving has been phenomenal"

"Seeing the local tamariki wearing a supporters jersey is inspiring to see from the sideline".

Now they look forward to the next date which is set on the 28th July 2018 when they meet the Coastal Co-bras in Opunake in a Over 35s Memorial match



# Rd 3 Farrelly Photos Women's Competition Match Reports

By ARL

## Mt Albert 26 Otahuhu 28

The accurate boot of Kiwi Ferns playmaker Kimiora Nati proved the difference for Otahuhu, as they edged past Mt Albert in a thriller at Fowlds Park. Both sides traded tries through the opening hour of the match, setting up a tense finish. The win was Otahuhu's second of the championship rounds.

## Richmond 18 Manurewa 34

A strong second half lifted Manurewa to victory over Richmond, in a re-match of last year's Farrelly Photos Women's Premiership Grand Final. The Marlins led by only two points at the break, but scored three second half tries while holding Richmond to just one. Kere Matua was the difference for Manurewa, scoring two tries and kicking five conversions. Former Kiwi Ferns star Sarina Fiso played her first game since the birth of her child earlier this year, scoring a try for Manurewa.

## Te Atatu BYE

## Rd 3 Farrelly Photos Women's Pennant

### Ponsonby 62 Manukau 12

Ponsonby remain undefeated at the top of the table after beating Manukau in Round 3. Up 34-0 at the break, Ponsonby kept their foot on the pedal in the second to keep the scoreboard ticking over. Both Maureen Tuia and Mele Toki registered doubles in the win. Manukau never gave up though, scoring three tries in the final 15 minutes to restore some pride.

### Mangere East 16 Pt Chevalier-Waitemata 56

Pt Chevalier-Waitemata overcame a horror injury toll, which at one stage reduced them to 11 players, to record a big win over Mangere East. Ahead just 18-12 at half-time, Pt Chevalier-Waitemata turned it on in the second, with Joanna Tuala scoring a hat-trick for the second time in as many games, while Philly Rapana and Claudia Barnett both grabbed doubles.

### Mt Wellington BYE

## Auckland to Host Niue challenge

By ARL

**T**HE AUCKLAND Rugby League will stage an end-of-year representative challenge against Auckland Niue, involving U16 and U18 representative sides.

The two games will be played on October 13 at Cornwall Park, coming at the conclusion of the ARL's new Region of Origin Series, which will see North and South Auckland clash in three matches through September.

The best Region of Origin players from the U16 and U18 grades will then earn selection in the Auckland sides to play Auckland Niue.

ARL coaching and development manager Andy Hay said the new initiative would bring benefits for players from both organisations.

"This will give us the chance to bring together Auckland's best players in these two age groups, from

clubs all over the region, and put them in the same team to see how they perform," Hay said.

"But this is also about giving back to our Pacific neighbours. Niue don't get many chances to play quality representative matches, so this will be a big day for both Auckland and Auckland Niue rugby league."

The Auckland Niue challenge continues Auckland Rugby League efforts to work closely with Pacific Island nations, with the ARL hosting a representative day in June which involved teams from Tonga and Samoa.

### Auckland v Auckland Niue challenge

Auckland U16 v Auckland Niue U16 and Auckland U18 v Auckland Niue U18

Saturday, October 13

Cornwall Park, Auckland



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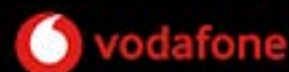
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