

VODAFONE



# Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

12<sup>th</sup> September 2018

## Newsletter #235



Krystal Rota looks to pass.



Laura Mariu in action.



Georgia Hale looks to take on the defence.



The Warriors pose for a team photo after their victory.

Photos courtesy of [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)





# 2018 WARRIORS



Inaugural NRL Women's Premiership squad



**LUISA AVAIKI**  
Head coach



**LAURA MARIU (c)**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Loose forward/  
halfback



**RAQUEL ANDERSON-PITMAN**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Halfback/forward



**SARINA CLARK**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Fullback



**LISA EDWARDS**  
Club: Mount Albert  
Position: Wing



**LUISA GAGO**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Second row/  
loose forward



**GEORGIA HALE**  
Club: Richmond Roses  
Position: Halfback/  
standoff/forward



**AMBER KANI**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Centre



**ONJEURLINA LEIATAUA**  
Club: Otahuhu Leopards  
Position: Centre/  
second row



**HILDA MARIU**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Hooker/wing



**VA'NESSA MOLIA-FRASER**  
Club: Richmond Roses  
Position: Centre



**APII NICHOLLS**  
Club: Otahuhu Leopards  
Position: Fullback



**TANIKA-JAZZ NOBLE-BELL**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Second row/prop



**ANNETTA-CLAUDIA NUUAUSALA**  
Club: Richmond Roses  
Position: Prop



**LORINA PAPALI'I**  
Club: Richmond Roses  
Position: Second row/prop



**KAHURANGI PETERS**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Prop



**KRYSTAL ROTA**  
Club: Manurewa Marlins  
Position: Hooker



**AIESHALEIGH SMALLEY**  
Club: Otahuhu Leopards  
Position: Prop



**SUI TAUASA-PAUARISA**  
Club: Linwood Keas  
Position: Second row/  
loose forward



**CRYSTAL TAMARUA**  
Club: Richmond Roses  
Position: Second row/  
loose forward



**ALICE VAILEA**  
Club: Richmond Roses  
Position: Second row



**LANGI VEAINU**  
Club: Otahuhu Leopards  
Position: Wing



**SHONTELLE WOODMAN**  
Club: Richmond Roses  
Position: Centre/wing



Shontelle Woodman on attack.



Alice Vailea in possession.



Apii Nicholls on attack.



The Warriors bench celebrate as the final whistle sounds.





By John Coffey



Tanika-Jazz Noble-Bell on attack  
Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

# Warriors Women Make History

**N**OW FOR the good news. The Warriors women's team and a couple of the individual players created rugby league history at ANZ Stadium in Sydney on Saturday. Despite an exhausting travel schedule they beat the hotly favoured Sydney Roosters 10-4 in the inaugural NRLW match. Right wing Hilda Mariu scored the first try and Apii Nicholls kicked the first goal when converting Luisa Gago's try.

Those scoring deeds, achieved within the first 18 minutes, were eventually enough to stave off an ever-threatening Roosters outfit. Jillaroos centre Isabelle Kelly replied with a try just before halftime and the Warriors had to display great stamina and defensive grit during a scoreless second spell before they could raise their weary arms in triumph. The scoring was low but the tension was high.

Luisa Avaiki, the only female head coach in the new NRLW, and captain Laura Mariu also have special places in women's rugby league folklore. But while there will be other winning captains and female coaches, the story of Lorina and Isaiah Papali'i might never be emulated -- mother (aged 41) and son (19) playing NRL football for the same club at the same venue in matching number-15 jerseys.

Fox Sports commentators clearly believed the Warriors were in Sydney only to make up the numbers and offer token opposition as the Roosters (considering their gender, shouldn't they be named the Hens?) showcased their talents. Only after fulltime did they grudgingly admit the Warriors deserved their victory and revealed to Australian viewers the travel tribulations the Auckland-based side had overcome.

Their trans-Tasman flight could not land in stormy Sydney on Friday and was diverted to Brisbane, where accommodation had to be found. That allowed them only a few hours of sleep on what already promised to be a nervous night before an early morning flight landed them bleary-eyed back in Sydney. New Zealand viewers had already been informed of that by the Sky Sports crew.

We were told by the Aussies that the Roosters fielded seven Jillaroos in their starting line-up and eleven players from the impressive State of Origin match at North Sydney Oval earlier this season. But we were not told that six of the Roosters were born in New Zealand. It seems that Kiwi Ferns and other expats will have a major role to play in this competition, regardless of their jersey colours.

The Warriors made their intentions known from the opening minutes, direct running and slick passing leading to the tries by Mariu in the right corner and loose forward Gago, who scythed a path to the goal posts. Some Roosters enthusiasm had already been drained by firm defence, highlighted by a massive Annetta Nuuausala hit. The locals were relieved when she limped off with an ankle injury.

But always in the back of this viewer's mind was the effects that tiring inter-city trip would have on the Warriors, whether fatigue would allow the Roosters to justify their favouritism. The Roosters certainly had more possession in the second half (the Warriors share dropped from 65 per cent at halftime to 51 per cent at the end) but they could never unleash their vaunted speed out wide.

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The Warriors' completion rate of 80 per cent overshadowed the Roosters' 68 per cent, but the run metres were almost identical at 1043 to 1041. The Warriors created four of the six line breaks in the match, made 234 tackles to their opponents' 240, and committed only eight of the 21 errors in the match. The penalties went the way of the Roosters 8-5 and both coaches used only six interchanges.

Hooker Krystal Rota topped the tackle counts with 35 and Sarina Clark (93) made the most metres for the Warriors. We saw plenty of traditional rugby league, refreshingly free of the NRL-developed wrestling tactics around the rucks. There was certainly no shortage of full-on collisions or unbridled enthusiasm from both teams, though some polish needs to be applied to the tactical kicking.

The Warriors probably snuck up on the Roosters – as well as the Fox commentators. Both Sydney teams, the Roosters and St George Illawarra Dragons, received plenty of news media coverage leading up to the kick off. The Brisbane Broncos would have been similarly hailed by the Queensland newspapers. Now they have chalked up their historic win the Warriors have forewarned their other rivals.

A few rules have been tweaked for the women. Halves are of 30 minutes instead of 40, there are 10 interchanges instead of eight, and 40/30 kicks have replaced the 40/20 kicks from the men's game. The NRL has maintained its policy of two referees and golden point will be played if scores are level after regulation time. The NRLW Grand Final will be played alongside the men on September 30.

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## **Read this! The Warrior Women's Disastrous Plane Ride to Sydney**

**W**E WERE meant to land in Sydney on Friday evening but due to the storm we ended up in Brisbane. We hovered over Sydney hoping that the storm would pass but with Sydney Airport closing we had no choice but to land in Brisbane. Arrived much later than we were scheduled to and in a different city but that didn't matter because we were all safe. Ended up having to wait for our bags for an hour once we landed but managed to squeeze in a bit of stretching and recovery. Our manager Liz Ah Kuoi and Carmen Taplin did such an amazing job working with the hotels and airlines to sort everything so we as players did not have to worry about a thing. Arrived at our hotel in Brisbane at about 12:30am, looked straight at the room service menu and checked into our rooms. With all 18 girls and staff calling in to order their dinner there was a bit of a wait so ended up eating at 1:30am. Awake again at 4:30am checking out and leaving for the airport. Managed to close our eyes on the plane but knowing it was game day the excitement started to take over. Arrived in Sydney at about 9:30am, travelled to Olympic Park and sat down as a team for breakfast at 11:30am. The one good thing about all of these little obstacles along the way was that we didn't have the time to sit around and think about the game so as soon as we arrived at the stadium we were as ready as we could have been. Such a great team effort and we are all already looking forward to next week.

**Vodafone Warriors Women's team play this Saturday at 7.10pm NZ time against the St George Illawarra Dragons**

**Sky will be showing the game!  
Check your guide for details!**





**Thanks for the  
memories Simon!**



# Down But Not Out

By David Kemeys

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



**W**ELL HERE is a column I did not want to write.

I was hoping it would be along the lines of a great hard-fought win over Penrith, but it is not to be.

What has caught my attention is the negativity of the reaction, which is to be understood in the immediate aftermath of the game.

But what I don't get, and never have, is why rugby fans have to belittle league fans, and why us league lovers are just as bad.

Some people like rugby, some like league, some enjoy both, others like netball, basketball or golf and darts.

Whatever, it's all good.

But there is an inescapable reality at work. Rugby has the All Blacks, and they are always going to be a yardstick the Warriors – however unfairly – are going to be measured by.

In many ways that is a good thing, because you want to be measured against the best, but it is also grossly unfair in other ways.

The ABs are enjoying a golden age – and long may it continue.

That doesn't mean the Warriors falling at the first finals hurdle means league fans are settling for mediocrity as one writer put it.

In the last what seems like forever, we have endured season after season of mush.

What we have had this year is an enormous improvement.

Is being eliminated a disappointment, sure.

But I enjoyed going to a match where we might win, and generally could at least expect a decent effort.

It's a bit like saying when Japan beat South Africa at the Rugby World Cup that they had no reason to celebrate because they couldn't go on with it.

In reality it was our best campaign since 2011, and that matters.

Are there glaring deficiencies? I am inclined to think so, but I also believed I have seen enough to make me think we are headed in the right direction at last.

Could be naive, who knows?

We played 24 games for a 15-9 win loss record, our best since Adam was a lad.

I would prefer more consistency certainly. And I'd prefer Mt Smart to be a fortress. The trouble with that is that every club that comes here has to lift itself once a year to make the trip. We have to do the reverse maybe 12 or 13 times.

But overturn a few of the Mt Smart losses and continue with our newfound ability to win on the road, and a much better result would be possible.

We have improved markedly on defence – despite the blowouts – and more than once won games we should not have on the back of it. That's been unheard of for a long time.

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None of which should mean we are exempt from criticism, and I am sure Blake Green and Shaun Johnson would be the first to admit they did not have their finest outing for us on Saturday night. That does not make them total rubbish, which some seem to think.

There were mistakes aplenty but we won as a team all year, and it is unfair to lay the blame for our loss on a few players. We lost as a team too. That's just life.

What is of more concern is that we may not have a lot of room under the salary cap to improve our squad. That is going to put a lot of pressure on some of the younger players to do even more – and the older horses to go round again.

I could snip bits of the articles that have appeared, ranging from sacking Johnson to an almost complete clear out, but you know what, we still will have lost on Saturday.

### **Deal With It.**

At the risk of sucking up to Pete, he puts it well when he says win, lose or draw, the Warriors are our team. You ride the lows, you celebrate the highs.

We are going to have to wait for a title but considering everyone said we would get the wooden spoon this year, I think I'll give 2018 a solid pass mark. Let's hope we can build on this season.

### **Go Well Simon**

Not a great way for our former skipper Simon Mannering to go out, but it would be remiss not to honour the 301-game legend of our club.

He says he's leaving while we are headed in the right direction.

"It is a good experience for the guys playing finals footy because lots of them have never played it and hopefully they can learn something. They're heading in the right direction and there's still plenty to work on. I'm sure they'll carry that into next season."

Imagine what he must be going through after 13 years at the club.

"I've been lucky man to have been at the club for so long. It's sad to be finishing but I'm excited for the next part of my life."

While Mannering is taking a break before deciding what he's going to do, he has already said he would be keen to take on a mentoring role with younger players.

That would be fine by me.

### **A Little Bit Of History**

It's not all doom and gloom and you better file this one away in your sporting memory for the old pub quiz. Warriors' winger Hilda Mariu created history with the first ever women's NRL try.

So did the team by winning 10-4 win over the much-fancied Roosters.

The Dragons and Broncos stand between them and the Grand Final on September 30. It's a round robin, with the top two sides making the final, so go girls!

It was all the more credible given the side didn't even make the ground until late, because of a lightning storm.

"t was very intense, there was no resting," hooker Krystal Rota said afterwards. "It was a very physical."

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## **Want to be in the Stacey Jones lounge at the Trans-Tasman Showdown?**

We've got an exclusive ticket offer for members of the Mad Butcher's Newsletter below.

At Mt Smart Stadium on Saturday 13 October, you can be part of history as the Kiwis, Kiwi Ferns and Junior Kiwis take on their Aussie rivals at one blockbuster event.

It's been four years since the Kiwis took on the Kangaroos on home turf, so don't miss the chance to be there alongside Sir Peter Leitch.

To secure tickets to the STACEY JONES lounge, click on the Ticketek link below:

<http://premier.ticketek.co.nz/shows/show.aspx?sh=KIWISKAN18&eg=MADKIWI&ep=MADKIWI>



# HOW BLUE WILL YOU DO?

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PRINCIPAL SPONSOR







By **Barry Ross**  
*Australian Correspondent*

# Proud

Simon Mannering thanks the crowd after the Warriors go down to the Panthers. Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

**T**HE WARRIORS can be proud of their efforts in 2018. Sure they would have wanted to have gone further in the final series but despite the loss to Penrith in Sydney on Saturday, they never gave up. They had to make 347 tackles compared to Penrith's 286, which is 21 percent more than the Panthers. Also the Warriors tackle efficiency was 90 percent while the Panthers were only 83 percent effective. The loss of Roger Tuivasa-Sheck after 27 minutes was a big blow to the New Zealanders. Let's hope he is ok to take his place in the New Zealand team to play Australia on 13 October. But many good things came from this season for the team and it set the scene for another successful year in 2019. David Fusitu'a's 23 tries was a product of the entertaining football played by the team. Simon Mannering leaves the game with 301 first grade matches to his credit. Rugby League and the Warriors will miss you.

The Fox TV commentators for Friday's Melbourne-South Sydney game suggested that the referees, Ashley Klein and Adam Gee, were treating this game differently than what had been the case for most of the season. The two officials were not too good with the control of the offside situation and this was not a good thing for Souths' talented attacking backline. The referees did not appear to be strong in the red zones, while they have certainly blown many penalties close to the trylines during the year. Rules should not change during the end of season playoffs. Only 11 penalties were awarded during this game, while there were 17 during the Warriors match, 15 at the Roosters-Sharks clash and 16 in Brisbane. In the Warriors game, Solomone Kata was penalised for incorrectly playing the ball. Technically this was correct, as he was facing diagonally towards the corner post. But in the other three games, similar situations occurred but no penalties resulted. Consistency is what fans and players want from the whistle blowers but this often doesn't happen. In the four playoff games on the weekend, kickers were continually put on the ground after they had kicked the ball. While players are entitled to go through with their tackles if they begin them while the kicker still has possession, penalties should follow for late tackles.

Most of the match reports of the Roosters 21-12 win over the Sharks have reported that James Tedesco was better than his opposing fullback, Valentine Holmes during the match. Tedesco certainly played well but so did Holmes, who ran for 323 metres compared to the Roosters fullback's 240 metres. Sharks winger, Edrick Lee has been one of his team's unsung heroes this year. Born in Brisbane, he turns 26 next week. He made his first grade debut with the Raiders in May 2012 against Souths and joined Cronulla last year. He now has a total of 89 first games and 47 tries. This season, he has collected 12 tries and a goal from his 17 games. He has averaged more than 120 metres each game for the Sharks and along with 21 year old team-mate, Jesse Ramien, will play with Newcastle next year. Hopefully Ramien will return from several weeks on the sidelines because of a leg injury, against Penrith this Friday night. Ramien has 11 tries from his 19 first grade games.

The Dragons were terrific in their 48-16 win over the Broncos. No-one expected this but all of their players were strong, determined and aggressive throughout the game. So much for those that say Paul McGregor can't coach or that Ben Hunt has been a failure. Hunt's kicking game played a major role in the win and so did the work of the forwards, especially three try hero, Tariq Sims.

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I was certainly envious when I saw the crowds for the Aussie Rules playoff games on the weekend. The AFL are at the same stage of their season as the NRL and in their four playoff games, they had a total attendance of 283,149 for a match average of 70,787. A breakdown of these four games saw 91,446 turn up on Thursday night at the Melbourne Cricket Ground to see Richmond beat Hawthorn. On Friday, again at the MCG, 91,767 watched Melbourne defeat Geelong. Then at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday, 40,350 were there to see the GWS Giants crush the Sydney Swans and soon after on Saturday night, over in Perth, 59,585, were in attendance for the West Coast Eagles victory over Collingwood. The total Rugby League attendance for the four games on the weekend was 106,358. There were 17,306 at Melbourne on Friday, 17,168 at ANZ Stadium for the Warriors match on Saturday, 24,588 at the Roosters-Sharks fixture on Saturday and in Brisbane on Sunday, 47,296 turned up. That is a match average of 26,590.

Congratulations to the Wallabies for their 23-18 win over South Africa at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium on Saturday night, before a crowd of 27,849. It was the Australians' first Test win following four successive losses (two against Ireland and two against the All Blacks). Playing his 36th Test for the Wallabies, 28 year old second five, Matt Toomua, did well scoring 13 points from a try, two penalties and two conversions. Toomua is married to dual international, Ellyse Perry, 27, who has represented Australia at soccer and has played 186 games for Australia in all three forms of cricket. She has a highest Test score of 213 not out from her seven Tests, while she was also a member of Australia's 2010 Twenty/20 World Cup winning team in the West Indies and the 2013 Australia ODI World Cup winning team in India. The couple were married in December 2015 and Ellyse was in Brisbane on Saturday night to enjoy her husband's success. With Matt playing with Leicester in England and Ellyse having commitments all around the world, the couple are often apart. While on the subject of rugby, I was happy to see Shannon Frizell, 24, join his adopted brother, Tyson, 26, as a rugby international. Born in Tonga, Shannon made his first starting appearance for the All Blacks in Nelson on Saturday and now has two Tests to his credit. Tyson, who was born at Wollongong, 80 kms south of Sydney, represented Australian Schools at rugby as a centre on the 2009 tour of Britain and Ireland. After changing to Rugby League in 2010, he now has played 10 Tests for Australia, five Tests with Wales, eight State of Origin games for NSW and 135 first grade games with the Dragons and the Sharks. He had a dominant game for the Dragons in their great win over the Broncos in Brisbane on Sunday and this completed a successful and memorable weekend for the Frizell brothers.

The General Manager of the USA Champion club, the Baptist Health and Jacksonville Orthopaedic Institute Jacksonville Axemen, Drew Slover, would welcome any young man wanting to join his club for the 2019 season. The Axemen won this year's American Championship at North Florida University Rugby Field on 25 August when they defeated the Brooklyn Kings 58-16. The club is on Facebook and Twitter.



The banner features two players in action. On the left, a New Zealand player in a black jersey with 'IRTEK' and '778' on it is holding a rugby ball. On the right, an Australian player in a green jersey with a yellow 'V' is also holding a rugby ball. The background is dark with green foliage.

**TRANS-TASMAN TEST**

**SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER**  
MT SMART STADIUM

**NEW ZEALAND v AUSTRALIA**  
**3 TESTS 1 DAY**  
**IT'S TIME**

**GET TICKETS**





By Miles Davis

# Season End

Adam Blair and Agnatius Paasi thank the crowd.  
Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

**T**HE FINAL whistle has just blown on the Vodafone Warriors 2018 season and already the knockers and doomsayers are on the rampage. Statements like – the team dropped their bundle, they have no spine, they always let us down. Now I don't deny that it is disappointing to go out of the finals at the first hurdle but please let us keep some perspective.

I had high hopes that the lads would go deep into the finals and I was very confident they could beat the Panthers. Of course I am disappointed but I have managed to sit back and view the season as a whole rather than base my opinion on one game.

Let us first look where they came from. Last season saw the Vodafone Warriors win just 7 games. The club went out and recruited players they thought would strengthen their squad but even the most ardent fan would have thought it would take time for them to bed in and to have a significant effect. Who in their right mind would have imagined the team would more than double their wins from last season? Some people point to inconsistency of performance on occasion throughout the season but you ask fans of any other NRL club and they will tell you they had the same concerns about their team. If you take a look at the final table the Vodafone Warriors were just one win from the top.

From a results perspective alone it was an impressive season let alone if we factor in the immediate impact of the new signings. Blake Green gave them a steady hand on the tiller. Adam Blair and Tohu Harris gave them muscle and leadership up front with Harris in particular being a revelation (how he was missed when out injured).

Their arrival also re-invigorated many of those already at the club. Isaac Luke was back to his best, wingers Ken Maumalo and David Fusitua also blossomed with Fusitua topping the NRL try-scoring charts with an impressive 23. Shaun Johnson also appeared to have more freedom to express himself with Blake alongside him. Those who are bagging Johnson for the loss should be ashamed of themselves. Granted he didn't have his best game of the season but that could also be said of many of his team-mates. For some bizarre reason there is a segment of the New Zealand sporting public that hold Johnson solely responsible for any loss that the Vodafone Warriors have. Of course he is a key player and a match-winner but these players do not operate as a lone wolf who can miraculously float a sinking ship. Stars like Johnson have the ability to turn tight matches into victory with their brilliance. It is a rare feat when one individual can compensate for a team that has lost its way and is being outplayed. And let's be honest, after going down by 10 points early on the Panthers grew stronger and stronger as the game went on and were undoubtedly the better side on the day.

Another reason to be excited was the continued growth of Roger Tuivasa-Sheck as a captain. His form is now undoubtedly back to its best with his injury woes well behind him but his leadership and example on the field is also lifting his team. There is no doubt in my mind that the Vodafone Warriors prospects against Penrith took a downward turn when he was forced from the field.

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A win against Penrith and most of the knockers would have been reasonably happy with 2018. Let's not get down over one loss and let all that has been positive this season go out the window.

I am sure the players will be downcast today and realise that they came up short at the crucial moment. I am also sure that they will regroup and come back stronger next season. And they will need to as they have now raised expectations of their fans who will be dreaming of greater things in 2019.

Whilst I expected the Vodafone Warriors to win I had no such hope for my beloved Dragons. I had spent the week on radio telling anyone who would listen that the Dragons had lost their way over the last couple of months and would get a hiding up at Brisbane. After all we had suffered the same fate the last 10 times we had travelled up there and that was even when we were playing well.

It was with zero hope that I sat down to watch the game on Sunday (more out of a sense of loyalty than any expectation I would have a moment of enjoyment out of the 80 minutes). What transpired would be one of the most outstanding displays of Dragons football I have seen in years. It was right up there with our demolition of the Roosters in the 2010 Grand Final.

To have achieved such a huge win, 48-18, was one thing but to do it while losing the services during the game of James Graham, Jack De Belin and our superstar stand-off Gareth Widdop (not to mention Paul Vaughan who was absent from the start) was a miracle on a par with Lazarus (and I don't mean Glen).

Truth be known I was in a state of shock by the end of the game and had to check the result this morning to make sure it hadn't been a dream.

It is hard to see the Dragons getting past the Rabbitohs especially with the injuries to our star trio but this time I shall not be writing them off until the final whistle. And whatever happens the Brisbane result means I am once again a contented Dragon.

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**M**Y FRIEND Paulette and myself attended the Hope Walk in Timaru on Sunday to remember those lost to suicide. It was organised by Micelle Cogger who is the KTL ambassador for Mike King who came down to Timaru to bring awareness to mental health.

We all wore yellow and it was a great turnout of around 200 people which is good for Timaru. There was a small auction and I purchased a beautiful painted bill board which I gave to one of our Mental Health and Addiction drop in centre's to brighten their walls.

What an awesome man Mike King is and his Team.

Peter Herron from Timaru







By Shane Hurndell  
Hawke's Bay Today  
Sports Reporter

## Magpies Rule Cup Championship

**PARTY TIME** Hawke's Bay Magpies rugby prop Joe Apikotoa celebrates his match-winning try against the Bay of Plenty Steamers on Saturday night. PHOTO HAWKE'S BAY TODAY

**T**AKE A bow Mark Ozich and Josh Syms!

Hawke's Bay Magpies rugby team's head coach Ozich and assistant Syms are doing a top in their first season in charge of the Mitre 10 Cup Championship outfit. After four rounds the Magpies hold a seven point lead on the points table with 17, six more than recorded during the Magpies entire 2017 campaign.

Saturday night's 29-28 win against Bay of Plenty at Napier's McLean Park was achieved without captain, Maori All Black and Highlanders hooker Ash Dixon who is unavailable for the remainder of the season with a knee injury. The Magpies played the second half without captain for the day, Hurricanes No 8 Gareth Evans who collected an eye injury in the first half, and Chiefs lock Michael Allardice who was vomiting with a virus and couldn't continue in the second 40.

"I couldn't be happier with the way the boys hung in there. You can't fake a team's togetherness and these boys are doing everything we are trying to build. Look at the impact our young boys delivered off the bench," Ozich said afterwards.

Nineteen-year-old hooker Kianu Kereru-Symes, who captained the national title-winning Hastings Boys' High School team last year, Baby Blacks loosie Will Tremain, lock Geoff Cridge, prop Joe Apikotoa, who scored the matchwinning try, and second five-eighth Pasquale Dunn all impressed with their impact.

With the MacRae-Shelford Bay Cup in the trophy cabinet after the weekend's win the Magpies have every right to approach Thursday night's Ranfurly Shield challenge against Waikato in Hamilton with confidence.

While the Magpies were in celebration mode there was plenty of hurt and dejection within the camps of other Hawke's Bay rugby teams. The Napier Boys' High School 1st XV lost their National Top Four final against St Peter's College of Auckland 31-28 in Palmerston North after leading 21-0 for most of the first half.

St Peter's captain and No 8 Niko Jones was outstanding in the Blues champions comeback against the Hurricanes champions. He is the son of All Black legend Sir Michael Jones and he deserves all the comparisons which are being made between himself and the old man.

I saw Sir Michael play at the Northern Region under-18 tournament in Dargaville in the early 1980s and he was just as dominant at this tournament as his son was at the weekend's. With their win St Peter's College also captured the Moascar Cup which NBHS had taken off Christchurch Boys High School two days earlier with a 31-12 win in their semifinal. The Moascar Cup is the "Ranfurly Shield" of New Zealand Secondary Schools rugby.

The Hawke's Bay Tuis suffered their first loss in the Farah Palmer Cup women's NPC when beaten 31-12 by the Otago Spirit in Dunedin. A poor first quarter during which 19 unanswered points were conceded was a key factor in the Magpies downfall.

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The biggest blow to Hawke's Bay rugby at the weekend was the Hawke's Bay under-19s 90-0 loss to Bay of Plenty at their national tournament in Taupo which continues until Saturday. Four members of the Magpies squad were in the under-19 team and it will be a huge concern to Bay rugby officials if they don't improve on this margin in their remaining games.

There was no play in Hawke's Bay's rugby league competitions last weekend as wet weather made the Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park grounds unplayable.

**The New Zealand rugby league Kiwi Association is organising a reunion on 14 October the day after the test match at Mount Smart Stadium for more details contact Ray Haffendon rayhaff@xtra.co.nz or 0274537720**

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# RIP: John Charles O'Sullivan

By John Coffey QSM

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



**T**HE LATE John O'Sullivan's international rugby league career spanned the first half of the 1970s but was bookended by injuries. His debut as a raw 21-year-old on the 1971 Grand Slam tour of Britain and France was delayed while he recovered from a pre-tour facial injury; four years later a failed medical ruled him out of the northern hemisphere section of the home-and-away World Championship.

O'Sullivan's belated start to the 1971 tour, debuting at fullback in the fourth match at Widnes and then in the centres against Castleford, left him behind in the contest for Test positions. It is history now that they became the Grand Slam Kiwis by beating Australia, Great Britain and France in the one year, and O'Sullivan did his bit with 13 non-Test appearances in every backline position except scrum-half.

He made his Test debut in Australia in 1972, replacing stand-off half Dave Sorensen during the first Test and starting the second in the centres. There were no international fixtures in 1973 but O'Sullivan played in all three home Tests against the 1974 Great Britain Lions and in four southern hemisphere matches (against Australia in Australia and France, England and Wales at home) of the 1975 World Championship.

Among his most memorable appearances for Auckland were victories over Great Britain in 1974 and Wales in 1975, while at club level his star-studded Ponsonby side dominated the major competition trophies in the early 1970s. The 27-21 victory over Sydney club Cronulla-Sutherland, when O'Sullivan was one of the Ponies' try-scorers, was hailed as the greatest club game seen at Carlaw Park.

O'Sullivan transferred to Wellington in 1976 and joined the Upper Hutt club. His presence lifted the Tigers to challenge traditional powerhouses Petone and Randwick and he was Wellington's captain-coach in 1977 and 1978. After returning to Auckland in 1979 he completed his playing career with original club Northcote. He served as a New Zealand selector from 1991 until 1993.

## The passing of John Charles O'Sullivan Kiwi #493







# FIGS

## FORMER INTERNATIONAL GREATS

ACN: 620 542 243

ABN: 68 620 542 243

PO BOX 835, COOLANGATTA, QLD 4225

### FIGS Mission Statement

The Former International Greats – FIGS - Organisation was formed to fill a void created when the NRL and ARL decided to abandon supporting the traditional Kangaroo Reunions. The organisation wants to continue the tradition of recognising and supporting the history of the International game of Rugby League whilst supporting the growth of the International game.

### Objectives of the FIGS

The objectives of the FIGS are:

- To support and organise one FIGS Annual Reunion
- To support former Internationals who have fallen on tough times with health or financial burden
- To aid and mentor up and coming International Rugby League Players
- To raise funds for designated, men's wellbeing charities specialising in the treatment and research of Prostate Cancer and Dementia
- To actively mentor Indigenous people and communities
- To work collaboratively with other organisations within Australia who have similar purposes in order to promote these objectives.
- To apply the income of the Company solely to promote the above purposes and
- To do all such acts as are incidental and conducive to the furtherance of the above objectives.

### History

In March 2017 four former internationals - Keith Campbell, Bernie Lowther, Larry Corowa and Geoff Starling were having lunch and were discussing how disappointed they were that the NRL had stopped inviting the other nations to the Kangaroo Reunions. They decided to canvas the popularity of them organising a reunion for all the nations to get together annually on the Gold Coast.

The positive response from many former internationals meant that they felt obliged to organise the initial Reunion and set about seeking sponsorships to assist in making it a reality. A working party was organised and a plan made to have the 1st reunion to be held at the Kirra Hotel, Kirra Beach on 22nd September 2017.

This group then implemented the formation of the FIGS (Former International Greats) as a Charity to help and keep in touch with all Former International Greats

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The first reunion at Kirra Hotel had over 200 people attend and it was a huge success. After that event it was decided to have a Christmas function at The Dolphins Hotel, Tweed Heads on the 17th December 2017, with the aim of thanking everyone for their support. Once again that proved to be a huge success.

Since then support has been growing and fund-raising activities have begun. Friday and Saturday afternoon raffles have become popular with many local FIGS and supporters attending at the Dolphins Hotel.

A committee has now been voted and finalised for 2018. The current positions are:

- President: Keith Campbell
- Vice President: Bernie Lowther
- Directors: Larry Corowa, Geoff Starling, Bob Honan, Chris Close and Tommy Bishop
- Secretary/Treasurer: Wayne Gallard
- Media Manager: Graeme Laurence


The committee is planning on 2018 being more successful and anyone interested in sponsorship there are various packages available. Please also remember you do not have to be an International to attend any of our functions or join the Facebook page. Our supporters are just as important to us and we welcome you to our functions.

We will keep you posted throughout the year of the functions to come and if you need to contact us please leave a message on Facebook and we will respond.

Our Facebook Group Page can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/167872180664214/about/>

**FORMER INTERNATIONAL GREATS** 2nd Annual Reunion on Friday 21st September 2018 – all Former Internationals are free and any supporters \$80/head for an awesome afternoon of meeting with former greats of rugby league!

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# Third-time lucky for Kelston Boys' High School

By Brooke Hurdell

NZRL

**I**T WAS a third-time lucky fairy-tale ending for Kelston Boys' High School who were crowned National Secondary Schools title winners at Pulman Park on Friday. The boys in red finally put the heartache of 2016 and 2017's finals losses behind them, sealing a sweet 16-14 victory over St. Paul's College.

Kelston Boys' High School captain, Kadiyae Ioka was named MVP of the Premiership final and was pleased his team could get the win to round-off his final year at the tournament as a year 13 student.

"For two years now we've come up against Southern Cross Campus in the final and been runners-up. This year we can finally take the shield home,"

"It's been one of the best weeks of my life. Our team have really bonded and this tournament is always an amazing experience but this one has to be the best yet," he said.

However, Ioka was the first to admit the match was no easy win.

After several minutes of back and forth, St Paul's College put first points on the board, a reward for their composure and power up front in the first 10 minutes of the game. Their promising start was matched by Kelston when half Konrad Tu'a dummied to take a try for himself, which unlike St Paul's first try, was converted successfully.

Kelston drew strength from their two-point lead which was bad news for their opposition whose energy tanks were depleting by the minute. The score remained unchanged, Kelston going into the halftime break up 6-4.

The second half seemed to deal blow after blow to St Paul's as their metres gained were more often than not, doubled back by the skillful maneuvers of Kelston's halves and wingers.

St Paul's looked set for a change in momentum only three tackles into their set when Kelston's left winger, Raymon Tuaimalo Vaega intercepted the ball running 50 metres to touch down near the posts.

A heavy percentage of possession had Kelston get across the line minutes later too, the scoreboard reading 16-4 after a successful conversion.

But, St Paul's weren't down and out yet. The footwork of Sione Moala punched a hole in the Kelston defence to send his teammate Jonah Polota-Kopa over the chalk. Moala then converted taking the score to 16-6.

Minutes away from the final whistle, the Polota-Kopa try proved to be the spark they needed. Powerhouse Antonio Aufai bulldozed through the Kelston defence to send his supporters into hysterics, all they needed now was a successful conversion to take Kelston to golden point.

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The unthinkable happened though – the ball bounced off the post with a sigh of relief heard from the Kelston camp. At 16-14 on the final whistle, Kelston were finally victorious.

A new winner also rose to the top in the Development Grade final with Howick College defeating Onehunga High School in their final, 16-10.

Premiership Final MVP: Kadiyae Ioka

Development Final MVP: Dray Roberts

Premiership Results:

1st/2nd Kelston Boys' High School 16 St Paul's College 14

3rd/4th Rotorua Boys' High School 4 Mt Albert Grammar School 26

5th/6th Wesley College 20 Manurewa High School 18

7th/8th Manukura School 16 St Thomas of Canterbury 20

9th/10th Southern Cross Campus 28 Westlake Boys' High School 20

11th/12th Otahuhu College 24 Tokoroa High School 22

13th/14th Whangarei Boys' High School 16 James Cook High School 30

Development Results:

15th/16th Howick College 16 Onehunga High School 10

17th/18th Whangaparaoa College 20 Papakura High School 26

19th/20th Manawatu College 24 Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate 26

21st/22nd Naenae College 44 Haeata Community Campus 21

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# Nick Willis-5th Avenue Mile

By Paul Mulvaney

**W**HAT AN exciting time for sport; the All Blacks, Warriors, Serena Williams, Nick Willis, Jenny Simpson, World Rowing championships & Coaster's PB.

AB'S adequate in Nelson yet displayed their depth. Argentina showed a lot of pluck. At this stage it is hard to imagine any team in the world bettering them.

Warriors over the divide improved yet stumbled at the hurdle; Take a look at the inaugural Warriors Women also on the road won their historic first game in the premiership.

In 1995 the Auckland Warriors (now NZ Warriors) took three games to win their first match.

Serena Williams was upset by officialdom & a competitor; three code violations spoiled the spectacle. The special moment should have been Naomi Osaka's who dominated Williams.

Having been a senior grade cricket umpire she needs to realise the rules apply to everyone until they're changed.

She has had so much success during her career her record on four separate occasions in the role of loser is not good. By now she should be able to be gracious in defeat.

On Sunday four-time winner Nick Willis in New York was beaten narrowly into second place (3.54.2) in the rain (attachment shows it) by a younger 1.44 800 metres British athlete Jake Wightman.

US local athlete Jenny Simpson won a sixth consecutive mile; seven altogether.

Elsewhere also on Sunday at the Great North Run in Tyneside NE England New Zealand's Jake Robertson ran a PB 59.57 half marathon to finish behind Sir Mo Farah.

Jake's previous best was 60.01. He joins twin brother Zane as both are sub 60 minutes. Zane holds the National record of 59min 47secs.

They have earned the distinction of being the fastest twin half marathoners of sub one hour in history!

Rowers in Plovdiv, Bulgaria stepping up in readiness for their finals. Robbie Manson looks sharp.

In Dunedin West-Coast born athlete Jared Monk based in Dunedin (Hill City Club) ran the NZ Half marathon in 4th place in a PB 1hr 10.15.

On 16/9 the NZ mountain running team are in Andorra. Promising seventeen year old junior Ben Williams (Greymouth) is part of the nine-member team.

---

**Good luck to the All Blacks who are  
playing South Africa this Saturday in  
Wellington!**



**Also good luck to the Silver Ferns who play England in  
Auckland this Saturday**

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

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