

VODAFONE



# Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

## Newsletter

5<sup>th</sup> December 2018

#247

### Where to from here?

By David Kemeys

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



**H**AD NO show of keeping pace with the Shaun Johnson saga last week and to be fair, I am over it. A million things have been written and said, nearly all of it half-arsed.

At the end of the day, he has gone, move on, right or wrong.

Will I be disappointed he is not at Mt Smart, yes, but I will still be there.

I am a Warriors fan, not a Shaun Johnson fan.

In fact, I thought he was total rubbish, or at least that is what I will claim now that he is a Cronulla Shark.

Should he one day magically reappear at Mt Smart, I would instantly reverse that stance because he would be one of ours again.

But all we can do know is ponder where to from here.

Given the stage of the pre-season we are at, and the lack of quality on offer, you would have to presume one of the youngsters might be about to be thrown into some very big shoes, because I will tell you this for nothing, the big names touted as being available do not thrill me.

Corey Norman...that's a no. He has a record for getting himself into bother that makes it most unlikely we would go there.

Te Maire Martin...that's a no. I didn't have much faith in that line the first time round and he's done nothing to convince me otherwise.

Luke Brooks, Kodi Nikorima and even discard Ata Hingano have all been talked about, and are all about as likely as us winning the title next year.

Footy general manager Brian Smith, who has taken a bit of a pasting in some circles for his perceived role in the Johnson exit, at least came out this week and said coach Stephen Kearney was okay with staying in house.

That can only mean promoting from within, and there are some likely candidates, not least Chanel-Harris-Tevita, who is a young man with oodles of talent, of Hayze Perham, who is too.

It will be a huge ask if we go that way because they are both still very young and inexperienced, especially at NRL level, and no one is going to cut them a bit of slack while they find their feet.

What we do have is Blake Green. He has the miles and experience to help whoever gets the job.

*Continued on next page...*

We also have new signing Adam Keighran, but he's also hardly match hardened.

On the other hand, all players start somewhere, and I have always been a believer that good enough is old enough.

You think there are any arguments at Newcastle that Kaylan Ponga is too young?

You think there were any arguments that Simon Mannering was too young a hundred years ago?

Smith could not have been any more emphatic.

"We're not pursuing anyone," he said.

The other thing is that what I have outlined, is quite a narrow view. It is a straight-out replacement when there are other options within the squad.

Peta Hiku would not let us down in the halves, and even Tohu Harris has played there.

On the plus-side, whatever Johnson was getting paid it was not chump change and that money could be invested in other areas.

Almost every fan has their pet hate, mostly not enough tough as teak go-forward forwards, or that centre has been an area of concern since Noah built the ark.

What I believe will happen is that we will see the Warriors attempting various combinations and solutions in pre-season, and that we might have to watch a very unsettled halves pairing in the early games of the season.

### **But Then Again...**

Having said it is time to move on, there was one piece that can't go unremarked on, and it was by my old colleague Dave Long, who I have said before, is a good bloke.

Just because he writes things you mightn't agree with, doesn't make him a monster, but I thought his piece that Shaun Johnson couldn't handle playing for his future at the Warriors next season was a bit tough.

Here's a scenario for you Dave. The boss of the paper comes to you and says, you're a good writer but you're not worth what we are paying you, so you can go and get a job elsewhere, or take a massive pay cut.

I'm willing to bet you are not going to be best pleased.

Also you're Welsh, so you're a tight bastard...I know this because I am too – Welsh and tight.

Later on in Dave's piece he says that the club never intended for Johnson to not be there in 2019, offering as proof that club bosses would never have let Mason Lino go if that was the case.

Which is fine logic, but you could just as equally argue that it illustrates that our management team did not think this through at all.

But well done Dave for reminding us of Cameron George's first interview when he took over, when he said there would be no excuses at the club anymore and everyone would be held accountable.

You can build a decent list of those who have seen the door since.

Like I said, I'm over it.

Only time is going to tell who was right, and even then there will be endless debate.

# Sir Peter Leitch honoured at Kiwis Reunion

By Brooke Hurdell

NZRL

Sir Peter receives his pounamu taonga from league legend Stacey Jones on behalf of the NZRL.

**H**E'S KNOWN to most as 'The Mad Butcher,' but what many may not know about Sir Peter Leitch, is just how much he has done for rugby league and the sport's community in New Zealand.

It's hard to remember a Kiwis Test match where Sir Peter Leitch wasn't present and when it comes to Warriors games, he's basically a walking billboard who pulls people from all walks of life into the game to get a taste of being a part of the rugby league whanau.

Many can recognise the unique ability rugby league has to unite and empower communities, and those people who make that possible very rarely want the accolades to show for their hard work. Sir Peter Leitch is one of those special people who inject rugby league with life and purpose but he is quick to point out that he "doesn't do it for the awards."

At the Kiwis reunion recently, NZRL Chairman Reon Edwards presented Sir Peter Leitch with a special recognition pounamu taonga to honour his tireless contributions to rugby league that dates back to the 1970s.

"Sir Peter has touched the lives of so many people within the NZRL community,"

"Whether it's assisting league communities with fundraising or helping individuals who may not otherwise have the resources to reach their goals, he generously gives his time and money to support those in need without expecting anything in return and has done for many years," Edwards says.

Leitch began his association with league through the Mangere East Hawks in Auckland during the 1970s before becoming involved with NZRL, the Kiwis and

Warriors.

He was NZRL patron from 2011 to 2017, manager of the Kiwis' successful 2005 Tri-Nations campaign and the Warriors have even retired the No. 19 jersey in his honour.

It's safe to say his efforts go beyond the usual life membership criteria, his kind gestures purely done for the love of rugby league and its people.

"My newsletter (Mad Butcher's Club weekly newsletter) has been going for almost 20 years now and just like everything I do, it's for the game and the people within it,"

"I was humbled to receive the pounamu in front of the 2018 Kiwis team and a room full of Kiwis legends that have also given their lives to the game," Leitch says.

His passion for rugby league is infectious and New Zealand Rugby League wishes to thank Sir Peter Leitch for all that he has done for the game of rugby league in New Zealand.



Sir Peter says a few words after the presentation. Watched on by Stacey Jones and NZRL Chairman Reon Edwards.





**R**UGBY LEAGUE people were happy to see Graham Annesley rejoin the NRL. The former Titans CEO has been back at the game's coalface for about five weeks and he brings a lot of experience and knowledge to his role as Head of Football. Born in Sydney in the late 1950s, Graham began refereeing as a 13 year old with the Parramatta District Referees Association. He served the Parramatta referees as secretary for two years and then as President for four years and was made a Life Member in 1984. From 1982 until 1997, he controlled 244 NRL first grade games as well as Test matches, State of Origins and final series games. During his refereeing days, he worked with several large and prestigious companies such as McWilliams Wines, the TAB and the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority.

He joined the NSW Rugby League in 1995 as Director of Football and the next year he was instrumental in the introduction of the video referees system. When the NRL was formed in 1998, Graham began as the Chief Operating Officer and worked tirelessly in this position until 2011. Because of his high integrity and morals, many people were keen to see him enter politics. He stood for the seat of Miranda in the NSW government and just a week after winning the seat, with a 71 percent two part preferred majority, on 26 March 2011, he was given the job as Minister of Sport. As he has done throughout his working life, Graham committed himself fully to his Ministerial duties but found there were many aspects of political life that were not to his liking. So he resigned on 28 August 2013. The NRL decision makers were quick to offer him the position as CEO of the Gold Coast Titans and he said at the time, "I am going back to the sport I know and love." He was with the Titans from late 2013 until the end of the 2018 season.



Already he has made an impact in his new position. "Like many others in our game and just as importantly our fans, I was worried about what was happening in the first few months of the season just finished," he said. "From the opening whistle there seemed to be a succession of penalties, a warning and then a player was sin-binned. In many cases this was the pattern for the referees, rather than managing the game. Our game is about the referees allowing the events in a match to unfold and then reacting accordingly. We must stop the nitpicking." Just a couple of weeks ago, Tony Archer, who has been the referees boss for five years or so, was redeployed to a position in another NRL department and will now concentrate on working exclusively with the next generation of referees in a development role.. Bernard Sutton, who is the senior referees manager, will now report directly to Graham, who will sign off on everything and anything concerning match officials.

Graham stressed that his responsibilities lie with what happens on the field. He added that, apart from the beginning of the 2018 season, he believed that the game was in good shape.

"The Competition Committee met two weeks ago and they are very aware of every aspect of our sport," he explained. "This Committee comprises such people as Mal Meninga, Ivan Cleary, Paul Green, the Commissioners and NRL executives. They know what is needed and they are quick to provide ideas and advice."

Graham pointed out that the success of the women's game in so short a time, was a real positive for Rugby League. He said that it provides an option to see more and females involved in our sport. He also added that he was a big supporter of the Vodafone Warriors.

"I have no doubt that the NRL needs the Warriors," he emphasised. "I have a strong view about this. Their results this year were good, while the brand of football they play is attractive to League fans everywhere. The more success they have the more popular our game becomes."

*Continued on next page...*

*Continued from previous page...*

When asked about Valentine Holmes decision to leave the Sharks and try to make it in the American NFL, he said, “ This is out of my area, but I do believe that in some ways it is a great complement to our game and our athletes. We are producing players of great talent and skills, which interests other sports. “

Steve Mitchell has been appointed as the new CEO of the Titans. The 49 year old will begin this job in February next year. For the past eight years or so he has worked as a sports administrator. From January 2011 to January 2016, he was the General Manager Commercial for the North Queensland Cowboys and then when he left Townsville, he did the same job for 20 months with the Melbourne Rebels Rugby Union club. In August 2017, he was appointed as CEO of Touch Football Australia, based in Canberra and it was from this role that he was made Titans boss. From February 1999 he was Commercial Manager of the Seven network based in Townsville and while in North Queensland, he completed an MBA from James Cook university. He has also completed a Masters degree in Sports Administration from Deakin University.

Congratulations to the Australian team for winning the Women's World Twenty/20 title at Antigua in the West Indies on Sunday morning 25 November, Australian time. Australian opening bat and wicket keeper, Alyssa Healy, won the Player of the Tournament Award and also scored the most runs with 225. Sunday 25 November was a big day for Alyssa and her husband Mitchell Starc, who was a late call up for the Australian Men's Twenty/20 for the match with India at the Sydney Cricket Ground in the third of the three game Twenty/20 series. The couple were married in April 2016 and both are close to their 29th birthdays. Starc turns 29 on 28 January, while his wife celebrates her 29th birthday 55 days later on 24 March. Before being called up for the third Twenty/20 game, Starc had not played a Twenty/20 International since September 2016 in Sri Lanka. The match on 25 November was his 143rd game for Australia in all three forms of cricket (45 Tests, 75 ODIs and 23 Twenty/20 Internationals). His wife, Alyssa, has played 156 matches for Australia (3 Tests, 61 ODIs and 92 Twenty/20 Internationals).



**Available At:**

<https://shop.warriorsstore.co.nz>



**SUPERSTORE**  
OFFICIAL TEAM STORE



By John Coffey

## Maybe Johnson Should Wear Number Six

Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

**O**NE OF the frequently heard predictions during the Shaun Johnson transfer saga labelled him a near certainty to win an NRL Grand Final wearing the number seven jersey of just about any Australian club he chose to play for. Some pundits claimed it was a no brainer Johnson would sizzle on a weekly basis once he slotted in behind a forward pack spearheaded by the likes of Cronulla Sharks enforcer Andrew Fifita.

Steady on there. Four of New Zealand's finest halfbacks of the last 30 years, Gary Freeman, Clayton Friend, Stacey Jones and Johnson himself, have had extensive careers in what is now the NRL premiership without enjoying a lap of honour on Grand Final Day. Nor has the current Kiwis Test scrum-half Kodi Nikorima, although, at 24, he must share with 28-year-old Johnson the ambition of doing so.

No Kiwi has worn the number seven jersey in a champion team. The closest are two Grand Final winners wearing six. Maybe it was an omen Kiwis coach Michael Maguire switched Johnson from scrum-half to stand-off outside Nikorima for the recent Tests in Britain. Should Johnson stay in that role at Cronulla with former Warriors team-mate Chad Townsend or coach's son Kyle Flanagan at seven?

Benji Marshall dazzled in the number six jersey when West Tigers beat North Queensland Cowboys in the 2005 Grand Final and Kieran Foran emulated him when Manly Sea Eagles beat Johnson and the other Warriors in 2011. However, Motu Tony (Warriors in 2002), Foran (Manly in 2013) and Te Maire Martin (Cowboys in 2017) were Kiwis five-eighths to suffer the heartbreak of losing Grand Finals.

Only three New Zealanders have played scrum-half in Grand Finals – Freeman for Balmain against Canterbury-Bankstown in 1988 (lost 24-12) and against Canberra Raiders in 1989 (lost 19-14), Jones for the Warriors against the Roosters in 2002 (lost 30-8) and Johnson for the Warriors against Manly in 2011 (lost 24-10). Jones scored one of the most spectacular solo tries ever but it was all downhill after that.

Freeman came closest to breaking the number seven hoodoo at his second attempt. Balmain led Canberra 12-2 at halftime in 1989 and only a field goal rebounding off the cross-bar and a desperate ankle tap prevented the Tigers from taking a winning advantage in regular time. Instead, one of the greatest Grand Finals went into extra time and the Raiders added a field goal and a try after the 80th minute.

As to that argument about how a couple of powerful props are all Johnson needs to slip on a premiership ring: well, they didn't come any more intimidating than Freeman's bookends, Steve (Blocker) Roach and Paul Sironen. Nor has there ever been a more devious dummy half than Benny Elias or a fitter and more skilful loose forward than Wayne Pearce. Balmain had it all, except for the trophy at fulltime.

Premierships aside, the most prominent Sydney-based Kiwis halves experienced rocky roads on their "journeys". Freeman made a total of 151 first grade appearances for Balmain (1988-91), Eastern Suburbs (1992-93), Penrith (1994-95) and Parramatta (1996) after having served his junior and semi-professional apprenticeships with Northcote in Auckland and Kent Invicta and Castleford Tigers in England.

*Continued on next page...*



*Continued from previous page...*

His demise at Balmain in 1991 followed the club controversially hiring former Wallabies coach Alan Jones and Jones signing another rugby union recruit, Brian Smith (no, not that Brian Smith). Freeman was dropped to reserve grade, moved to Easts and brilliantly won the Dally M Medal in 1992. After his Roosters exit caused an uproar Freeman responded by becoming Penrith's 1994 Player of the Year.

In 1996, during the Super League War, Freeman transferred to fierce rival Parramatta. He started out as Eels captain, only for the leadership role to be passed to fellow Kiwi Jarrod McCracken in mid-season. After 45 Tests Freeman had been usurped in the Kiwis team by Jones during the 1995 World Cup. But "Whiz" will always be in the conversation when we debate our country's very best halfbacks.

Friend was a contemporary of Freeman and another brilliant performer at international level. However, his first grade career with North Sydney was limited to 68 games from 1986 to 1989, despite being Dally M Medal runner-up in 1987. Norths were tagged the "Bad News Bears" as they found new ways to lose matches and fall just short of reaching Grand Finals despite boasting a really gnarly forward pack!

Like Freeman, Friend came through the grades in Auckland (Manukau) and honed his skills with a minor British club (Carlisle). After finishing at Norths he teamed with Olsen Filipaina to win a Metropolitan Cup (Sydney second division) for Ryde-Eastwood. Friend went back to Carlisle and then Whitehaven, made a remarkable Kiwis comeback in 1991, and signed off with Counties Manukau in the 1996 Lion Red Cup.

But the hardest task given any New Zealand half relocating to Sydney was Parramatta's Auckland representative, Stuart Galbraith, in 1992. Another Northcote product, Galbraith was tossed the jersey worn for the previous 15 seasons by legendary Peter Sterling, hero of four premiership triumphs over a glittering 227-match career. Hard? It was an impossible task because Sterling was simply irreplaceable.

Galbraith had also delved into England's lower divisions with Chorley and Rochdale Hornets in a bid to make the big step to professional football. At the Eels the poor bugger did as well as anybody could have expected in making 38 appearances through to 1994 before hanging up his boots at the age of 27. Over the last 24 years Parramatta has tried dozens more would-be "new Sterlings" without finding one.

## Nine Kiwis From Cronulla

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)



**S**HOULD SHAUN Johnson be chosen to extend his international career in 2019 he will become Cronulla-Sutherland's tenth Kiwi. While the list is reasonably small, it includes some of the biggest names of their respective eras extending back to the 1970s. Conversely, one of Cronulla's Kiwis did not actually get any game time and another's tenure in the New Zealand jersey was cruelly ended after only four minutes.

The Cronulla Kiwis roll of honour, with their years at the Sharks, is: Richie Barnett (1994-98). Gerard Beale (2015-17), Luke Covell (2005-10), Sosaia Feki (2013 to present), Tawera Nikau (1995-97), Jeremy Smith (2011-12), Dane Sorensen (1977-83 and 1985-89), Kurt Sorensen (1979-83 and 1985), Nigel Vagana (2004-06). Notably, Beale and Feki were in the Sharks' only premiership winning team in 2016.

First, the hard luck stories. Feki (Kiwi number 788) is still one of the sharpest wings in the NRL but he did not make the playing 17 during the Kiwis' victorious 2014 Four Nations campaign. At that time all players included in tournament teams received Kiwis numbers. Feki represented Tonga both before and after that disappointment. He has scored 58 tries in 126 NRL games since debuting in 2013.

*Continued on next page...*

Covell (Kiwi 738), also a wing, was chosen for the 2007 Centenary Test against Australia in Wellington and the subsequent tour to Britain. Sadly, he dislocated a shoulder in the fourth minute of his debut and also missed the trip. While Covell admitted to lacking pace, he still scored 55 tries for Cronulla in his 131 games. Fluent goal-kicking enabled him to compile a total of 1090 points for the Sharks and Wests Tigers.

Although he was one of our finest loose forwards of all time Nikau (Kiwi 614) played only the last of his 19 Tests while at the Sharks, against Australia in 1997. He was otherwise unavailable for international selection from 1994. Nikau fashioned an outstanding club record in both Britain and Australia, highlighted by his inspiring performance for the Melbourne Storm in their 1999 Grand Final triumph.

Formerly with the Broncos and Dragons, Beale (Kiwi 767) played four of his eleven Tests from Cronulla. In the last of them he broke a leg against Samoa during the 2017 World Cup. Now with the Warriors, this reliable centre or wing toured Britain after the 2018 season but was not used in any of the three Tests, a fate which also befell him in 2015. But he has played in three Four Nations tournaments.

Barnett (Kiwi 664) sprang to prominence as a high-leaping wing for Cronulla in 1994 and played eleven Tests from the club before transferring to the Sydney Roosters as a centre or fullback until 2000. By then he had taken his Test tally to 27, making the fullback role his own and captaining the Kiwis in the 1999 Tri-Nations and the 2000 World Cup. He ended his professional career at London Broncos.

Christchurch-born backrower Smith (Kiwi 742) played in four Grand Finals for Melbourne and St George Illawarra for two wins before arriving at Cronulla in 2011. From there he made the last six of his 23 Test appearances until injuries intervened. Smith will always be remembered for scoring the first Kiwis try in their sensational 2008 World Cup Final victory and was twice NZRL Player of the Year.

The elusive Vagana (Kiwi 672) bows only to Manu Vatuvei as a New Zealand Test and NRL try-scorer. Mainly a centre, Vagana played in the Kiwis backline from fullback to stand-off and starred for the Warriors, Warrington, Bulldogs, Cronulla and Souths in a distinguished career. He played the last 17 of his 38 Tests from the Sharks, one as captain, and shared in the 2005 Tri-Nations triumph in Britain.

Rugged prop Dane Sorensen (Kiwi 520) was our pathfinder to Cronulla in 1977 and played through to 1989 (with the exception of the 1984 season at Easts). He created a record of 216 appearances and is still fifth highest on the club's all-time list. Sorensen debuted for the Kiwis from Auckland in 1975 and would have played many more than 18 Tests had overseas-based players been available from 1980 to 1982.

Blockbusting backrower Kurt Sorensen (Kiwi 524) played for the Kiwis from Auckland at 18 in 1975. After the 1977 World Cup he sat out a season when the NZRL refused him a clearance to join Dane at Cronulla. It took a change of international eligibility rules in 1983 for them to return to the Kiwis. Kurt played 11 Tests as a Shark before moving to Widnes in 1986. In all, he appeared in 27 Tests until 1989.

Even though there was no television coverage, the Sharks enjoyed a strong New Zealand support base because of the Sorensens -- despite the club not releasing them for international duty until rule changes forced them to. Kiwis were scarce in the then Sydney competition. Fittingly, in his current role as a club director, original Cronulla Kiwi Dane Sorensen is still there to welcome newest Kiwi recruit Shaun Johnson.

---

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



Facebook



Instagram



Twitter



# Christmas cheer with Kidz First

Vodafone Warriors players revelled in the festive spirit with Kidz First Children's Hospital patients at the annual Christmas party at SKYCITY on Sunday. Great to see the Warriors supporting this great cause.







## Meet RTS this Thursday

Come down and meet Vodafone Warriors captain and 2018 Dally M winner Roger Tuivasa-Sheck along with other Vodafone Warriors this Thursday between 6-8pm as they takeover Sylvia Park.

There will be plenty of activities for the whole family to enjoy and spot prizes up for grabs - you can even get your Christmas shopping sorted early with our range of 2019 merchandise and memberships.

### Vodafone Warriors Sylvia Park Takeover

6-8pm, Thursday December 6

Sylvia Park Shopping Centre

(outside the Hoyts entrance)

## OFFICIAL 2018 KIWIS RANGE



NOW AVAILABLE



<https://www.iscsport.com/our-clubs/nz-rugby-league>





**MAD  
BUTCHER**

NEW ZEALAND'S BUTCHER  
*Since 1971*



# **The Mad Butcher** **CHRISTMAS** **Cooked Hams Range**

**Whole & Half  
Cooked on the  
Bone Hams**

**FROM**

**\$9<sup>99</sup>**  
kilo

**Semi Boned  
Champagne  
Hams**

**ONLY**

**\$12<sup>99</sup>**  
kilo

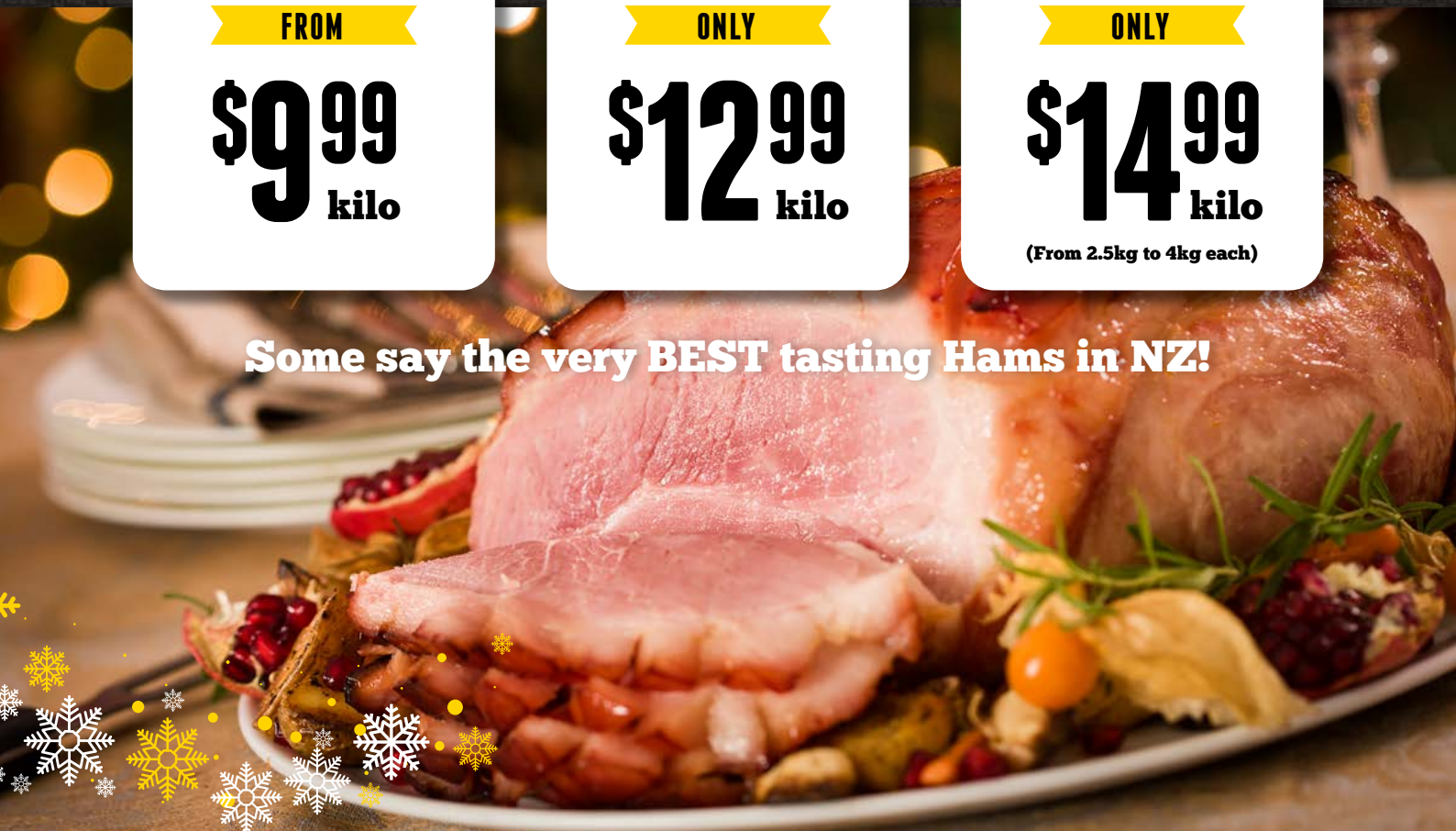
**Easy Carve  
Boneless  
Hams**

**ONLY**

**\$14<sup>99</sup>**  
kilo

(From 2.5kg to 4kg each)

**Some say the very BEST tasting Hams in NZ!**





# MEDIA RELEASE



## DOWNER RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 9S SYDNEY 2019

**T**HE NRL and the RLIF have announced that the Downer Rugby League World Cup 9s Sydney 2019 will be staged featuring 12 nations playing over the course of two days at the new Western Sydney Stadium next October.

The tournament will be held on Friday, October 18 and Saturday, October 19, 2019, and will feature men's and women's tournaments.

Twelve teams in the men's competition and four teams in the women's tournament will compete across 28 matches and 12 hours of action.

The Downer Rugby League World Cup 9s Sydney 2019 was officially launched today by NSW Minister for Tourism and Major Events the Hon Adam Marshall, NSW Minister for Sport and Western Sydney the Hon Stuart Ayres, NRL CEO Todd Greenberg and RLIF CEO Nigel Wood at Western Sydney Stadium.

"The Nines concept has been a great success and this is the obvious next step – Nines at international level," Mr Greenberg said.

"The best players in the world will be on show in this unique concept over the course of two days at the brand new Western Sydney Stadium. This will be the typical fast-paced and free-flowing action which the Nines brings but with the added international flavour.

"The whole week will be a celebration of Rugby League in western Sydney, with a number of community initiatives planned.

"The benefits for the game are enormous. It will be an exciting and innovative tournament for our fans and it will also help to develop international Rugby League.

"It will be a fantastic way to showcase the game and I'd like to thank the NSW Government and Destination NSW for their support, as well as to the RLIF for their strong belief in this concept."

The NRL will work with the RLIF on the finalisation of the participating nations for the tournament.

Mr Greenberg also acknowledged Downer, naming rights partners for the tournament, having previously been supporters of the NRL Nines concept as well as Kangaroos-Kiwis Test matches.

Mr Wood said Sydney was a fantastic location for the World Cup 9s concept to be showcased.

*Continued on next page...*

*Continued from previous page...*

“The shorter form of Rugby League provides us with an exceptional competition to attract new fans, players and commercial partners to the sport across the world whilst appealing to our current supporter base and partners who love the speed and excitement of Nines,” Mr Wood said.

“The RLIF has the mission to showcase rugby league to the widest audience possible and through initiatives such as this, we are supporting that mission.”

Kangaroos Coach Mal Meninga said the event would be an important concept to grow the game globally.

“I have no doubt that World Cup 9s will be a great way to expand the game at an international level,” Mr Meninga said. “I’m a real advocate for this concept based on what it can do for the international game.”

Mr Marshall said: “I am thrilled that Sydney will be the first city in the world to host the Rugby League World Cup 9s, which is expected to attract more than 13,300 overnight visitors to Sydney, injecting approximately \$11 million into the NSW economy.”

Mr Ayres said: “NSW is the home of Rugby League in Australia and Western Sydney Stadium will provide the best sporting experience for fans anywhere in the country, making it the perfect location to host this event.”

The NRL has also announced that FOX Sports would be the official broadcast partner of the Downer Rugby League World Cup 9s Sydney 2019. FOX Sports will broadcast every men’s and women’s match live nationally across the two days of competition.

“A World Cup in the Nines format is certain to deliver incredible entertainment for NRL fans. FOX Sports is thrilled to play a role in the continued growth of international rugby league and we look forward to working with the RLIF to provide coverage of all games in the Tournament,” Head of FOX Sports Peter Campbell said.

The Downer Rugby League World Cup 9s Sydney 2019 has been secured for Sydney by the New South Wales Government.

Tickets will go on sale next year. But supporters can register via a waitlist at <https://www.nrl.com/waitlist/>

**Want to go to Skycity New Zealand Breakers game this Sunday at Spark Arena? We have a red hot special offer for you check out the ad below!**

Advertisement for a basketball game between the Skycity NZ Breakers and the Sydney Kings. The ad features a yellow banner at the top with the text: "Want to go to Skycity New Zealand Breakers game this Sunday at Spark Arena? We have a red hot special offer for you check out the ad below!". Below the banner is a promotional graphic. On the left, it says "THIS" in a stylized font, followed by "SKYCITY nz breakers" and "VS" and "SYDNEY KINGS". The date and time are "SUNDAY 9 DECEMBER" and "Spark Arena, 2PM". The "SPECIAL OFFER" is "BLUE/BRONZE TICKETS JUST \$10 (SAVE UP TO \$12.50)" with the "PROMOCODE: MADBUTCHER". On the right, there is a photo of two players: one in a blue Breakers jersey (number 10) and one in a purple Kings jersey (number 6). The background of the ad is a basketball court.



**J**OSEPH PARKER'S QUEST to return to the top of the world heavyweight boxing rankings will begin at Christchurch's Horncastle Arena on Saturday, December 15, his first fight on New Zealand soil in 18 months.

The former WBO world heavyweight champion faces the formidable American, Alexander "The Great" Flores who has an exceptional record of 17-1-1, his only loss to Former IBF heavyweight champion Charles Martin, a fight he took on only two weeks' notice.

With an 80% knockout rate, the American is seizing the opportunity to end Parkers career and make his way to the big time – for Parker this is a MUST WIN to stay in the mix!

The action packed card features an impressive line-up of local and international professional fighters:

- Undefeated heavyweight Junior Fa (15-0) – Parker's former amateur rival, ranked #10 WBO, will square off against the imposing, Argentinean southpaw Rogelio Omar Rossi .
- Canterbury star Bowyn Morgan current IBO Asia Pacific super welterweight champion vs Fijian Sebastian Singh
- The inspirational David 'Brown Buttabean' Letele faces Former Warriors hardman Manu Vatuvei as he makes his professional boxing debut.

- New Zealand Cruiserweight showdown - David Light (NZ #1) - Former Commonwealth silver medalist, takes on "Buster" Lance Bryant (NZ #2).

- Megan McLennan faces current NZ Muay Thai champion Michaela Jenkins in a five-round professional contest for the PRO Box NZ Woman's Welterweight Championship.

Guests will be treated to a night of explosive boxing action and the opportunity to see Joseph Parker in the flesh.

Be quick to secure your place at Parker vs Flores:

- General Admission tickets start from \$39 from [www.ticketek.co.nz](http://www.ticketek.co.nz).
- Corporate Hospitality packages available to host your colleagues, clients, family or friends from [www.ducoevents.com](http://www.ducoevents.com)

**Nothing beats being there LIVE!**





**SIMON MANNERING'S  
BOOK "WARRIOR" NOW  
ON SALE AND IN LEADING  
BOOKSTORES AROUND THE  
COUNTRY.**

**A MUST READ FOR SPORTS  
FANS**

**AVAILABLE IN DYMOCKS IN  
AUSSIE AND ONLINE AT  
<https://www.mightyape.co.nz/>**

## **WE GET EMMA A MAD WARRIORS FAN TO REVIEW SIMON'S BOOK**

**I** WAS AS surprised as anyone to hear that Simon Mannering was publishing a book about his life as a Warrior. Knowing that Simon is never one to grab the limelight or want the focus to be on him, I was very interested to see what he had to say.

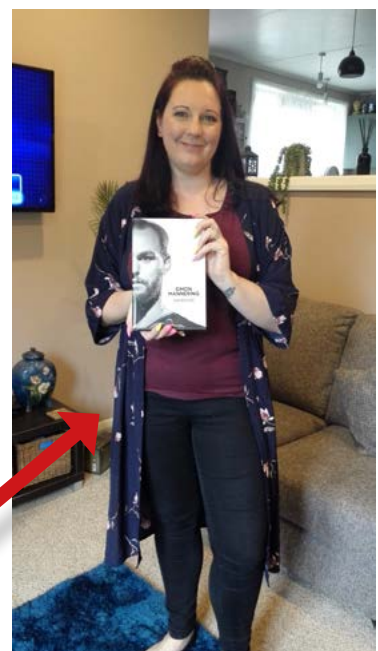
The book gives a fantastic insight into what it's really like to live and play in the NRL. To read about the struggles that Simon went through during his career is really eye-opening and something I had no idea about until I read this book. The tales of injuries & sickness, wins & losses, massive highs & dramatic lows has me looking at the life of an NRL player in a whole new perspective.

The fact that Simon has the guts to tell everyone about the physical, mental & emotional pain he put himself through has made me respect him even more than I already did as a player & leader and that is what has made him one of the greatest Warriors of all time.

This book was a pleasure to read & I can highly recommend it to anyone who needs some inspiration in their life.

Thanks for the memories Simon!"

-Emma Harper, Warriors Supporter & Mt Smart Faithful.





# 2019 HERITAGE JERSEY



**OFFICIAL TEAM STORE**  
[warriorsstore.co.nz](http://warriorsstore.co.nz)





# Our Wedding

## By Phillip Borell

I was 12 years old in 1995. This was the year that my love affair with the Warriors began. Seven years later, when I was 19, the club made our first Grand Final in 2002. Nine years later, I was fortunate enough to travel to Sydney with a bunch of mates to watch, live and in person, our second attempt at an NRL Premiership. Fast forward to 2018 and I'm now 35 years old and this past weekend became the proud husband of my best friend Stephenie.

I realise that throwing my wedding into this story might not seem, at first glimpse, to fit into a lifelong obsession with the Warriors, but stick with me and you'll see the connection.

One of my best mates wife, Fiona, is an amazingly talented cake maker. Now, when Steph and I first started seeing each other, Heperi and Fiona got married. Fiona made their cake. I remember seeing the cake and turning to Steph and saying "If we ever get married, I want a Warriors cake." A couple of years ago when I proposed, I reminded Steph that "Hey, remember I get a Warriors cake ay?"

Anyway, on Saturday the 1st of December 2018, my dream of having a Warriors wedding cake came true. I know there are probably wives out there that would never let their husband have a Warriors cake, but I consider myself pretty lucky to have Steph and her ability to recognise that before her, my love was pretty much dominated by OUR club.

Something that made it even more special was when Sir Peter Leitch, aka The Mad Butcher, aka Butch, aka one of the most humble, caring and genuine blokes around commented on a photo of my cake on instagram wishing my wife and I well. This made my day. But, it didn't end there. He asked for my phone number. And, I gave it to him. Well, I tried. But my fingers let me down and I gave him the wrong number. But, that didn't put him off, he messaged me and told me I got the number wrong. So, we amended that, and next thing I know I'm talking to the man himself over the phone in my lounge in front of my whānau and friends.

While I had the opportunity I figured I should take the time to remind the bro (because we're bros now) that he was actually the reason I was able to go to the grand final in 2011. Living in Chch we'd had a pretty rough year, and myself and some bros had gone over to Melbourne for the semi against the Storm. Now, when we won that game we realised that we needed to find some more money and find a way to Sydney. One of my groomsmen this weekend, Big Phil, his father emailed the Butch and told him about a group of mates from Christchurch who would sell their first born (not actually) to get to the game. The bros response to him was "You tell them if they can get to Sydney, I'll get them into the game." So, the next thing we knew we were flying to Sydney and picking up our grand final tickets from the mad butchers hotel lobby. I can't thank you enough for that bro. With what, for you, was just a simple act, you left a lifelong impression on us. The man. Thank you for making our marriage start off in the most perfect way, and thank you for everything you have done for rugby league! I can't wait until the next time we meet and hopefully we can share a beer and discuss The Warriors' next grand final, and our first premiership!





# NEW ZEALAND RUGBY LEAGUE MUSEUM

## WATCH PREVIOUS KIWI GAMES IN FULL

Check out our catalogue of games.

## HISTORY OF RUGBY LEAGUE IN NZ

Player information, Roll of Honour & Legends of League.

## MEET THE KIWIS

Interviews like you've never seen before with Kiwi league stars.

## PLAYER MEMORABILIA

Trophies, medals, photos & much more!



**VISIT:** League House, 7 Beasley Avenue,  
Auckland, NZ (Right next door to Mt Smart Stadium)

**PHONE:** 09 525 5592

**EMAIL:** [museum@nzrl.co.nz](mailto:museum@nzrl.co.nz)

**THE RUGBY LEAGUE  
MUSEUM SOCIETY**  
*of New Zealand*

[www.nzrlmuseum.co.nz](http://www.nzrlmuseum.co.nz)





**Incorporated within  
the business is the Gary  
Clarke Rugby League  
Museum.**

**If you are ever in  
Christchurch this is a  
must see - contact Gary  
for a tour.  
0274 145 460**

## **EXPERIENCED PLASTIC MOULDING SPECIALISTS**

Custom Injection Moulding, Compression Moulding, Injection Thermoset  
Engineering Handles & Knobs, Melamine Tableware, Screen Printing, Pad Printing



**Get a quote  
or make a  
booking today**



When the Mad Butcher  
goes to Waiheke Island  
he prefers to travel  
with SeaLink!

## **Your link to Waiheke and Great Barrier Islands**

SeaLink\* ferries have been carrying vehicles, passengers and freight to Waiheke and Great Barrier Islands since 1960.

We welcome foot passengers, or take your car for an island road trip.

For your freight needs, enquire about our versatile SeaLink Logistics fleet.

Get in touch with our friendly team to book your travel and transportation around the Hauraki Gulf.

**0800 732 546 info@sealink.co.nz www.sealink.co.nz**

\*Formerly Subritsky





# Auckland's Original Female Referee Honoured With Lifetime Membership

Petrece Kesha says she enjoys being out "in the thick of the action" on game day.

By Jackson Thomas

Article Courtesy of Stuff.co.nz

**S**HE HAS long been a trailblazer for women wanting to break into the world of high level rugby league, and Petrece Kesha has had her efforts recognised with a New Zealand first.

After more than 20 years with the whistle, Kesha became the first woman to be made a life member of the Auckland Rugby League Referees' Association.

When she started calling games in 1992, she was the first of only two women refereeing the 13-a-side game in Auckland. Now there are more than 12 "and counting".

She has managed finals, tournaments and copped her fair share of verbal sprays from the sidelines.

But Kesha said being recognised by her peers made all the early rises and rainy Saturday morning runs worth it.

"It's been quite mind blowing actually. When I think of all the incredible life members, it's a pretty spectacular group," she said.

"Being the first woman is very cool. It's a real honour."

Her first game went by in a blur and from that first blast of the whistle, Kesha was hooked.

Since her first match, the now-community relations manager for the New Zealand Warriors, has been in charge of close to 1000 games - with plans to add more to the resume before hanging up the boots.

"Eventually I'll have to step aside and let the next generation, who are so talented, take the reins. But I'm still loving it and I still have goals I want to achieve," she said.

Kesha's main goal is pretty simple, she wants to see more women pursue refereeing and more appointed for women's matches.

"It would be great to see more women in the middle for women's games. It's a bit disappointing when you see a man refereeing a women's game when I know there are people like Kasey Badger out there who are more than capable."

Badger, who is one half of the NRL's officiating power couple, together with husband Gavin, is knocking on the door of becoming the first woman to referee a men's NRL match.

She has been a touch judge several times but is yet to be appointed the main job.

However, Kesha believes it is a matter of when, not if, for Badger and several other women referees looking to break into the professional ranks fulltime.

"Referees now have amazing opportunities, there is a real pathway now for woman which is awesome," Kesha said.

Auckland Rugby League Referees' Association president David Pakieto said making Kesha a life member was "a no-brainer", given her commitment and service to the organisation.

**Check out Allergy NZ's December newsletter to learn more about this great cause: <https://mailchi.mp/allergy/allergy-today-xmas-issue-packed-with-allergy-tips-treats>**



GET READY FOR GAME DAY!

## TARANAKI MASTERS LEAGUE

### TOURNAMENT HICKFORD, BELL BLOCK NEW PLYMOUTH

To register a team or for more  
information please contact :

Sam 0274485358

Walter 0274364743

or via FB page

Masters Rugby League - TARANAKI

**March 9, 2019**

**First games start @10am**

Beautiful game of rugby league played by warriors of yesteryear , going to be a great day so come along and have a watch



Last night I did a quick trip to Waiheke of course on @sealinknz this was the sunset on the return trip



If you wish to **subscribe** to the newsletter go to:  
[www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz](http://www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz)

## Our Sponsors

**A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTING BRANDS!**

I would like to thank our sponsors for enabling us to bring you the newsletter without ever having to sell an ad.

