



Sir Peter Leitch's
MAD BUTCHER CLUB
AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS



Newsletter

13 FEB 2014
#06

Good on ya, Shaun

Halfback **Shaun Johnson** has committed his long-term future to the **Vodafone Warriors**, and that is fine by me.

Other clubs, as well as rugby, were interested in the 23-year-old, but he has signed through to the end of 2017 season.

Johnson seemed pretty happy about it all himself, telling the Warriors website: "It's been a huge last few days sorting out my future. I absolutely love being at this club, living in Auckland and being close to family and friends. When I signed my last contract I said I wanted to repay everyone who has supported me, and the same applies even more now."

Vodafone Warriors head coach **Matthew Elliott** was just as chuffed: "The fact we've extended the contract is enormously important. Shaun is an exceptional footballer and athlete. He's also represents the club well and is critical to where we're going this season and beyond." Shaun has come a long way fast. Did you know for instance, that since establishing himself in the first-grade side he has played in all but two of our last 61 games..

Sevens sojourn

Though the generosity of JA Russell, the big electrical firm, I was able to attend the **Wellington Sevens**, and let me tell you it was some party.

They really looked after us, with the **NZ Women's 7s** team there, **Tony Veitch**, **Grant Fox** and even the man himself, **Sir Gordon Tietjens**.

It was quite an experience and the costumes were magnificent but there has been some poor press around the behaviour of some of the crowd, and understandably so.

I certainly saw a few people who might have had a few too many, and although the vast majority of the crowd were just having a good time, it was not always a good look.

There is nothing wrong with having a drink, and I am no angel, but the organisers and the authorities are going to have a look at the issue and rightly so. It would be a huge shame if what is a magnificent event suffered because of the actions of the minority.

It's like my dear old mum used to say, there is always a small group who spoil it for everyone.

Bring on Wigan

I'm away to Hamilton on Wednesday to see the boys take on the **Wigan Warriors**.

It's a great chance for all sports fans to grab their only opportunity to see a leading English Super League team in action, and there are tickets available through **Ticketek**.

On **Thursday** I have the honour of attending the **Halberg**

Sports Awards, which I am looking forward to very much. But the drawback is that I will miss the **Mighty Mangere East Hawks** hosting the **Penrith Panthers** at Walter Massey Park.

The club has all sorts of things arranged, from a free bouncy castle to a sausage sizzle – and all sponsored by **Burger King**. It's a great chance to get along and meet some stars, and to register to play for the **Mighty Hawks**.

Nines fever

Of course come Friday there will be only one thing on my mind, the **Dick Smith NRL Nines**. The event begins with an official player welcome at Aotea Square on Friday from 12.15-2.30pm, and I will be there with bells on.

The Nines themselves kick off on Saturday at Eden Park, and I have to say this is surely one of the biggest league events put together anywhere in the world.

All 16 NRL teams together in New Zealand for the first time, two nine-minute periods in 31 games featuring 250 or so of the game's best from all the clubs, playing for \$2.6million in prize-money.

It's like an entire NRL season condensed into a weekend, and I can't wait.

There are some exciting things planned, so to check it all out more thoroughly visit **www.aucklandnz.com/nrlaucklandnines**.

With 90,000 fans expected across the two days, you would be crazy to try and drive to the ground, so check out **www.ateed.co.nz** for details of the free public transport available to all ticket-holders.

And despite everyone saying it is a complete sell-out, my understanding is that there are a few tickets available, so keep on hitting **www.ticketek.co.nz** to check that out.

Move over Wellington, your days in the sun courtesy of the Sevens are numbered. Us leagueies will show you how to behave and still have a great time. Bring it on. See you at Eden Park.



Vodafone Warriors Players Left to Right: Suaia Matagi, Sione Lousi (Captain on the day), and Konrad Hurrell. All smiles at the pre season trial.

North Harbour Trial

Tuimoala Lolohea's first half double was the highlight, but an inexperienced **Vodafone Warriors** side couldn't withstand Gold Coast's second half effort, losing 36-18 on Sunday.

At least we got through it injury-free, which is better than in previous years, when we lost both **Jacob Lillyman** and **Sione Lousi** in the opening trial.

We were at a big disadvantage in terms of NRL experience, and we fielded perhaps the least-experienced group of players in our history. The elder statesmen were **Konrad Hurrell** with 37 NRL appearances and Lousi with 31. On the other side of the ledger, our oldest player was **Dominique Peyroux**, and he is just 25.

Lolohea went 50 metres for his first try, then did the same thing again, as if to prove it was no fluke.

Afterwards coach Matt Elliott said the defeat wasn't unexpected given the gulf in experience., but he was happy with halfback **Mason Lino's** display, and having Lousi back after a year out.

Cakewalk for Juniors

In the early game the Vodafone Junior Warriors trounced Auckland Fox Memorial champions the **Point Chevalier Pirates** 72-18 in an NYC trial.

Auckland Nines

Important Information

To ensure you have a great weekend, here are some tips on how you can make the most of your experience and some rules of play that must be adhered to.

Tickets:

You will have received your tickets via post. If you purchased via Ticketek and have not received your tickets (or arranged a venue pick up) please contact them on **0800 TICKETEK (842538)**. If you purchased via us, please contact **nicky@duco.co.nz**. Your ticket will indicate the best gate to enter for your allocated seating.

There are a few tickets still available so if you have a friend who's yet to buy their tickets, send them to Ticketek.

Note: You will have two separate tickets for the event. Each ticket is only valid for the day shown on the ticket, one for Saturday and one for Sunday. Access will be denied if you do not have the correct day's ticket. Please ensure you check your tickets before leaving home. If you do not hold a valid ticket upon entry you will be denied access.

Public transport:

Travel on Auckland Transport Special Event services to and from Eden Park is included with your Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines match ticket. Please present your ticket upon boarding. For more information go to **<http://www.maxx.co.nz/info/events/dick-smith-nrl-auckland-nines.aspx>**. Please note that alcohol must not be consumed on public transport at any time and you will be asked to dispose of any alcohol before boarding.

Event entry conditions:

Gates open at 10:30am on both days. Make sure you check your ticket for details on which gate to enter. Please note – no ticket, no entry;

- ***There will be zero tolerance for intoxication.*** Those who arrive at the gates intoxicated will be refused entry into the event, and patrons who become intoxicated, will be told to leave the venue for the rest of the day. Blow on the pie, go slow on the beersies and stay at the games;
- There will be free water available throughout the venue. Please make sure you stay hydrated and weather smart by bringing sunscreen, sunhats and a jacket if required;
- If you have purchased tickets to the family zone, please note this is an alcohol free zone and no alcohol may be consumed in this area;
- Keep your kids safe in a crowd. Write the contact phone number for an attending adult on their inner forearm and write your block and seat number on a wrist band or similar. If they can't find you, tell them to find a Police Officer to help;
- Ensure valuables are secure at the game. Don't leave bags unattended;

- If you are travelling by car make sure it doesn't become an opportunity shop for thieves. Lock valuables like iPads, mobile phones, sun glasses and sports bags away out of view, take them with you or leave them at home;
- A liquor ban will be enforced in the neighbourhood surrounding Eden Park;
- No commercially bought food (e.g. McDonalds, KFC, Burger King etc) may be brought into the venue, but you are welcome to bring small amounts of non-commercially produced food for personal consumption.

Walking route to Western Springs:

For those of you attending Rapture 2014 - Eminem at Western Springs on Saturday 15 February, a walking route between the two venues has been set up. The walking route will take you from Eden Park up Bond Street to Great North Road, then turn left onto Great North Road and continue to the Western Springs Stadium. Security, toilets and waste bins will be provided along the route. A liquor ban will be in place along the route.

Meet the teams:

Take the opportunity to meet all 256 players from 16 NRL teams before the Tournament and head to the Team Welcome at Aotea Square at 12pm (for a 12.15pm start) on Friday 14 February. There will be signing opportunities, giveaways and a live performance by The Royal Family. Free entry. For more information visit the Facebook page.

Become an Eden Park Member with Benefits TODAY!

Buy a membership at New Zealand's most iconic stadium and watch the most exciting games LIVE in 2014! Whether you like rugby league, rugby union, football, or cricket; it's all there at Eden Park! Get the best seats in the house, preferential seating for extra guests and access to premium hospitality in the private members lounges!*

BUY an Eden Park Membership, before the end of February, and you go in the draw to win a prize pack to see the Vodafone Warriors vs Dragons on 15th March 2014 with corporate hospitality to the value of \$1,000!*

Annual membership starts for as little as \$795. Click here for further details: **<http://edenpark.co.nz/membership/become-member/>**

*For details regarding Eden Park membership options please refer to their website. Draw will take place on March 1st 2014 and winners notified by post.

We look forward to seeing you at the Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines, and thank you for supporting this event.

Some pics from the Sevens!

Some extremely happy *Cowboys* fans. I gave them a bit of a burst for not wearing official *Vodafone Warriors* jerseys!



LEFT TOP:
Ruth Spooner was more than happy to have her photo taken with Sevens' legend, Sir Gordon Tietjens in the J.A. Russell box.

OPPOSITE TOP:
Me with Steve Tew of the NZRU. Steve used to play League for Universities.



LEFT BELOW:
Musician Jason Kerrison keeping the crowds happy in the J.A. Russell box.

OPPOSITE BELOW:
I was extremely honoured to be presented with this great framed set of miniature Winfield Cup 1995 RL Club Car Collectables by this fine gentleman, who had come all the way from Tauranga.



Celia Rochford from Hokitika. Big league fan... Kim Batchelor from Harihari. Big rugby fan. In the J.A. Russell box.



Raewyn, Jason and Nigel at the Sevens.



Mike and Sarah Barr celebrating their 17th anniversary! In the J.A. Russell Rugby Sevens lounge. Congrats, guys!



Craig and Nicky Dunn, at 7s at the J.A. Russell box. Big league fans from Hornby Panthers.



We were very privileged to have the Black Ferns come into the J. A. Russell Lounge at the Wellington Sevens.



Caught up with my mate Tiki Tanne who sung at the Wellington Sevens.

The FAKE Mad Butchers from Pukekohe at the Wellington Sevens.



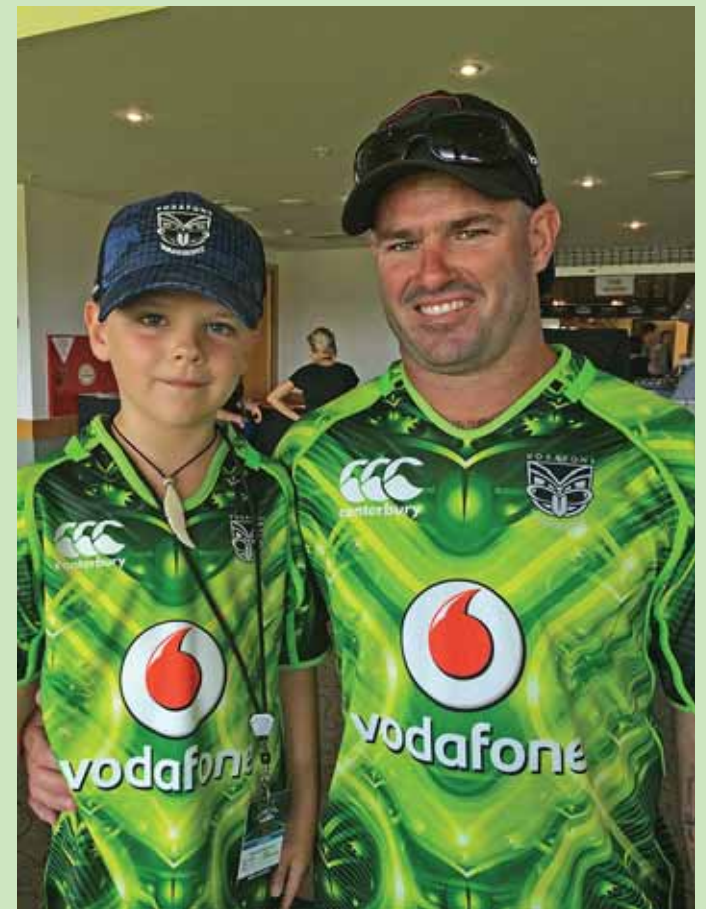
Some pics from the Trials!



The lads were flat out signing autographs for adoring young fans!



When the boys weren't playing their time was taken up doing PR duties!



L to R: Jules from Dargaville, Sunyong from Sydney, Warren from Rotorua and Gareth from Murrays Bay: all at the Vodafone Warriors pre-season game.

Roger from the Rock radio station with his wife and mother in law at the pre-season game.

Ryder and dad, Glen Donovan, in their new Vodafone Warriors Canterbury jerseys at the pre-season game.



Titans coach, John Cartwright, wanted a photo with the Butcher – Yeah right!



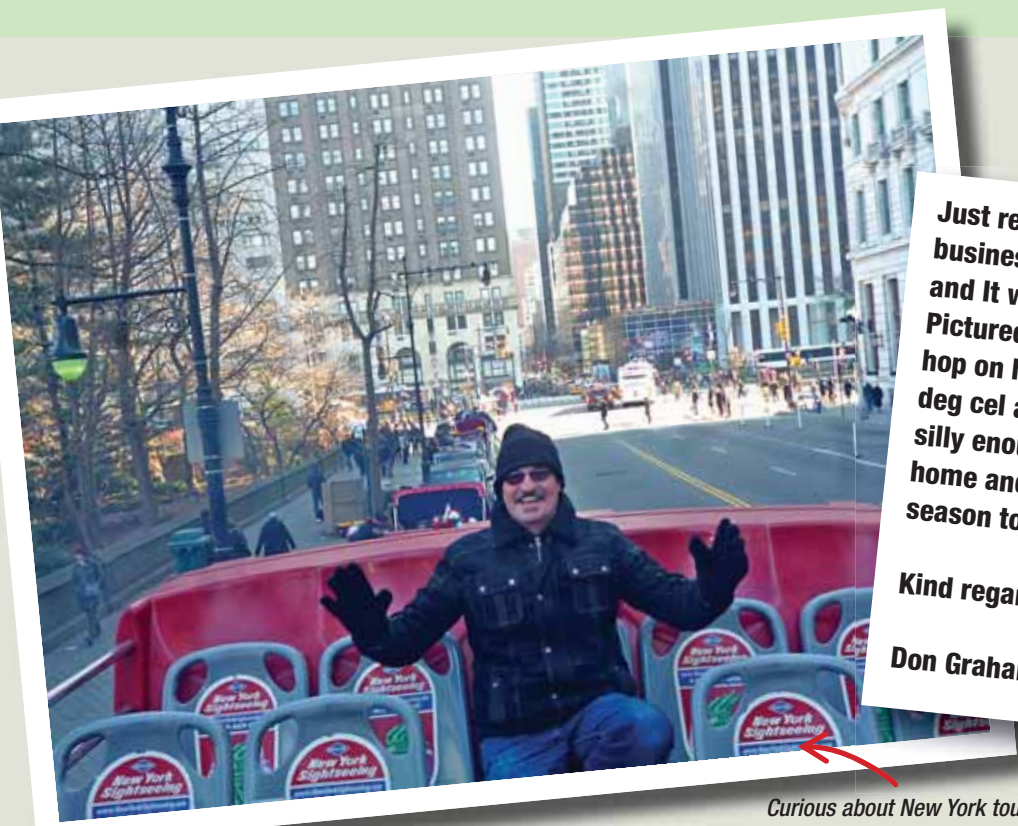
Loyal as they come - Dan Burton, Membership Manager for the Vodafone Warriors, even turned up with a broken foot!



The staff from the Vodafone Warriors were out in force at the pre-season game. Here are some of the boys.



Me and the boys (L to R) Kevin Locke, Sam Tomkins and Thomas Leuluai.



Just returned from 3 weeks on business in the USA and Europe and It was so bloody cold mate. Pictured is me on the New York hop on hop off bus. It was -3 deg cel and I was the only one silly enough to sit up top! Back home and can't wait for the season to start!

Kind regards.

Don Graham

Curious about New York tours? Check out...

<http://www.newyorksightseeing.com/>



PHOTO COURTESY AUCKLAND TRANSPORT

Me, Reuben, and Sam Thaiday from the Brisbane Broncos at the Kingsland Railway Station.

The winner of the tickets to the Nines and signed ball, is Christie McNeil Melville from Kelston!

Because of the amount of entries we received, I have decided give out **2 Consolation Prizes of 2 Tickets to any Warriors game in NZ** and the winners are **Mike Makaua**, and **Dan McCallion**. They will receive a double pass to the game of their choice.



LAST NIGHT AT THE TRIALS

The coach, Matthew Elliott, flanked by 2 knights; Sir Owen Glenn and Sir Peter.

Two legends of our game, Kris Radlinski who played for Wigan and England & Andrew "Joey" Johns, Newcastle Australia, NSW and more; and two top guys!



The fans came in all ages, last night. Love this photo!



The Mount Smart Joker at last night's trial is looking forward to the Dick Smith Auckland NRL Nines



Love to see the little fans!



Young Mason Tonks, our recent new signing from Leeds in the UK, was stoked to meet rugby league legend, Andrew "Joey" Johns last night.



Bruce and Tony caught up with rugby legend Steve Price, last night.



Our new signing from the Sharks, Jason Bukuys, who hails from Fiji, with his family last night.

I will be on **BREAKFAST TV**

**in the morning with
Sam the Weather Man, live from the
NRL Dick Smith Auckland Nines,
where we will be interviewing
the odd player and officials.**



**AND DON'T FORGET!! TOMORROW IS
YOUR ONLY CHANCE TO SEE
THE NRL SQUADS AT
AOTEA SQUARE!**



AUSTIN POWERS (the impersonator) rocked the J.A. Russell people away at the hotel after the game. If you're looking for someone to rock your party, this guy is your man! He was something else!

Yeah, BABY!

**Don't forget to send us
your NRL Auckland Nines
pictures!**

**NO MORE THAN
3 PHOTOS
WITH CAPTIONS!**

Hope you are enjoying the newsletter. If you would like to receive the newsletter directly please email Amelia at **meelz_79@hotmail.co.nz** Or if you would like to **unsubscribe** please email **Amelia** and she will delete you from the list

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Here are the team that help me make the newsletter each week. Between us we make the newsletter happen - and like everything it is a team effort.



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