



# Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

21<sup>st</sup> December 2015

# Newsletter #104

No advertisements are paid for in this newsletter.

Merry  
Christmas  
and a  
Happy New  
Year

from the Newsletter Team



Sir Peter Leitch



David Kemeys



Hayden  
Woodhead



John Coffey



John Deaker



Ben Francis




Barry Ross



## Pair Destined For All Stars


**V**ODAFONE WARRIORS captain Simon Mannering and new signing Roger Tuivasa-Sheck have both been selected by Wayne Bennett in the World All Stars team to take on the Indigenous All Stars at Suncorp on February 13.



Tuivasa-Sheck is at fullback and Mannering in the second row in a line-up that also includes Sam Burgess, Cameron Smith, Paul Gallen, Martin Taupau, and Robbie Farah.

Indigenous All Stars coach Laurie Daley and World All Stars Wayne Bennett named their teams, with both expecting the match to be one of the best in the six years of the match.


Sam Burgess (World All Stars) and James Roberts (Indigenous All Stars) have been included in their respective squads, subject to finalising NRL contracts before the match is played.



Daley said his team would again be headed by Johnathan Thurston and Greg Inglis but would also include emerging stars including Chris Grevsmuhl and Jack Wighton.

Tickets are on sale now at [www.nrl.com/tickets](http://www.nrl.com/tickets).

Indigenous All Stars: Greg Inglis, Alex Johnston, Will Chambers, Blake Ferguson, Dane Gagai, Ben Barba, Johnathan Thurston, Ryan James, Nathan Peats, Sam Thaiday, Greg Bird, Joel Thompson, Chris Grevsmuhl. Bench: Andrew Fifita, Wade Graham, Tyrone Peachey, James Roberts, Tyrone Roberts, Ray Thompson, Jack Wighton.



World All Stars: Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Semi Radradra, Jarrod Croker, Josh Morris, Antonio

Winterstein, Gareth Widdop, Trent Hodkinson, James Graham, Cameron Smith, Paul Gallen, Tyson Frizell, Simon Mannering, Sam Burgess. Bench: Tom Burgess, Kane Evans, Robbie Farah, Lachlan Maranta, Nene McDonald, Trent Merrin, Martin Taupau.

## NSW Cup Starts On The Road

Away games against Illawarra and Wests Tigers have been confirmed for the opening two rounds of the Vodafone Warriors' 2016 New South Wales Cup campaign. Like the NRL team, the Stacey Jones-coached side won't play at home until the third round, when it meets the Newtown Jets at Mt Smart on March 20, followed by a clash against the Wyong Roos on t Smart No 2 on March 27.


Two more road trips follow, giving the Vodafone Warriors four away games in the first six weeks of the season, but they have back-to-back home games against the Mounties and Panthers to wind up their regular season.

Draw for March-April: March 5, Illawarra (A), March 12 Wests Tigers(A), March 20, Newtown (H), March 27, Wyong (H), April 3 Wentworthville (A), April 10 North Sydney (A), April 16, Newcastle(H). April 24 weekend - bye

## The Way Forward

There has been plenty of reaction to the NRL blueprint to take the game forward over the next decade. The plan, drawn up by the head of game strategy and development Shane Richardson is designed to improve player welfare and pathways, upgrade and strengthen the second tier and assist in protecting elite players from burnout.

The strategy will reduce costs for clubs, grow the game and provide



a new level of awareness regarding player welfare.

Richardson said league had an opportunity to extend its reach beyond its current footholds to country Australia, affiliated states, New Zealand, the Pacific and ultimately internationally.

He said the strategy takes a 'whole of game' approach to the challenges of the future.

The key recommendations include:

- 
- Increasing the size of NRL squads to 36 players – including six rookies.
  - Restricting players from making their NRL debuts until the year they turn 19. No player to be signed with an agent until he is 17 - and contracts for these players should be for a maximum three year term.
  - Restructuring the National Youth Competition into a State based under 20 competition.
  - Introducing rookie contracts for the start of the 2018 season with each club allowed to sign three rookies each year on two year contracts.
  - Revamping and upgrading the State League into a Platinum League to spread the footprint of the competition into all the areas that play rugby league.
  - Easing player welfare by considering additional leave, creating a formal international window over an eight year period and reducing the number of five day turnarounds.
- 






## New Role For Robson

New Vodafone Warriors signing Jeff Robson and team-mate John Palavi are among the NRL State of Mind ambassadors for the 2016 season.


Now in its third year, the NRL State of Mind programme aims to encourage players, clubs and communities to speak up and seek help if they are experiencing any form of difficulty or difference in their mood.



The ambassadors have all nominated themselves for the roles because they want to assist with the programme.

NRL head of community Adam Check said the programme would evolve further next year with the support of the code's partners.

"Together, our partners and ambassadors have spent time listening and actively participating at community and club forums," said Check.



"To have a self-nominated ambassador at every club next year goes to show how serious our game, our players and our clubs are about mental wellbeing as part of their culture."

In addition to new ambassadors, the NRL State of Mind programme retains 10 incumbent

ambassadors from 2015, Palavi being one of those (Ben Henry also served as an ambassador this year).

After extensive consultation with coalition partners and junior clubs, an NRL State of Mind grassroots programme has also been developed and will be delivered to select junior clubs throughout 2016.


The aim of the programme is to:

- Reduce the stigma around mental health within clubs and communities
- Increase mental health literacy across grassroots rugby league clubs
- Stimulate help seeking behaviours among club members and communities

## New Deal Reached

BioCeuticals has been signed as the Vodafone Warriors' official supplement supplier for the next two seasons. BioCeuticals is best known for delivering high-quality, evidence-based health and sports supplements including the IsoWhey brand, which uses the highest quality ingredients including cold-filtered whey protein from grass-fed New Zealand cows.

Vodafone Warriors head of athlet-



ic performance Balin Cupples said he is excited to have BioCeuticals onboard. "IsoWhey Sports nutrition is unmatched in its ingredient quality and its science," he said.


## Fancy Being In A Photo!

Ever imagined sitting in the front row of the Vodafone Warriors' official NRL team photo? Well this is your chance! Three lucky members will have the opportunity to sit front and centre of the team photo when it's taken on January 13. Sign up as a member today and you'll go into the draw.

Members must be available at Mount Smart Stadium between 12-1pm that day. The lucky winners will be contacted in the New Year. Good luck!

## Grab A Child's Membership

Looking for the ideal Christmas present for a sports-mad kid aged 15 and under? Then the Vodafone Warriors have a 2016 child membership for just \$49. It gives young fans a seat at all 11 of the club's NRL games at Mt Smart next season - that's less than \$5 a game.



For more information contact [memberships@warriors.kiwi](mailto:memberships@warriors.kiwi) or call on 0800 839 839.



## Sir Peter's prize for Vodafone Piggy-Sue Christmas!

Vodafone are saying thanks to their customers this Christmas by giving away a bunch of great prizes. There is even a chance for you to win lunch at Waiheke and an afternoon of kayakaing with your old mate... me!



Eligibility applies.

If you're a Vodafone customer, go to [www.vodafone.co.nz/prize](http://www.vodafone.co.nz/prize) to enter



# 50

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# Three World Cup Spots Remain

By John Coffey QSM



**E**VEN THE assistance of two Cantabrians could not boost Canada to victory over the United States in the 2017 World Cup play-offs in Florida. Jamie Lester, who has done so much to lift rugby league in his adopted country, was Canada's assistant coach and former Canterbury RL general manager and Junior Kiwis team manager Duane Fyfe helped keep the players hydrated.

But the United States Hawks – coached by highly successful Leeds Rhinos mentor Brian McDermott – retained their World Cup status with a 34-24 win over the Canadian Wolverines in the deciding match. Earlier, the Hawks had beaten Jamaica 20-14 and Canada and Jamaica had drawn 18-18. The Americas round-robin was the most keenly contested of the three qualifying tournaments so far completed.

McDermott made a couple of vital positional changes, notably moving Los Angeles-born Danny Howard, who plays for NSW Cup club Wentworthville, from centre to second-row. Howard responded with three tries. Desperate to make a World Cup debut in 2017, Canada led 18-14 at halftime but finally succumbed despite the Hawks being reduced to 12 men for the last 48 minutes by an ordering off for dissent.

Eleven countries have now qualified and three spots remain open for the fifteenth World Cup, to be held in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea late in 2017. Apart from the three host nations, the others already certain of a start are England, Fiji, France, Lebanon, Samoa, Scotland, Tonga and United States.

Captained by former Kiwis forward Sika Manu, Tonga beat Cook Islands 28-8 in a one-off shootout at Campbelltown, Sydney, in October. The same month Lebanon travelled to Pretoria to decisively win back-to-back games over South Africa by 40-12 and 50-16. All eleven qualifiers have previous World Cup experience, strife-torn Lebanon having made its sole appearance in 2000.

Still to be resolved is the European group, with three to qualify from the final six contenders. Latvia was first to drop out, losing to Spain. In October, Malta, Greece and Ukraine were eliminated. The six survivors are Ireland, Italy, Russia, Serbia, Spain and Wales. They play off in October 2016. Serbia and Spain have not previously played in a World Cup.

Papua New Guinea was belatedly granted World Cup co-host status, a decision which should have all sorts of benefits for the game in that country and the tournament proper. Three zone games will be held in PNG, which means the Kumuls will not again be tossed into the same group as the big three, Australia, England and New Zealand, as they were in 2008.

It has often been written that PNG is the only country which has rugby league as its national sport, and now it has the facilities to live up to that boast. The time-honoured but dilapidated Lloyd Robson Oval in Port Moresby has been demolished and is being replaced by another stadium on the same site. In typical PNG fashion, its capacity will be “somewhere between 15,000 and 25,000”.

When the Australian President's XIII made its annual visit to Port Moresby in September they played the Kumuls at the new Sir John Guise Stadium, built for the Pacific Games in July and home of the PNG Hunters team in the Queensland Cup since August. Apparently 18,000 tickets were sold for the 15,000 seats. Such is the enthusiasm for rugby league, both of the new venues would sell out in minutes, but the Kumuls can only play in one at a time!

The appointment of Mal Meninga as Kangaroos coach dashed PNG hopes of enlisting him for the World Cup. Meninga has regularly taken the President's XIII to Port Moresby and is as much a hero there as he is in Queensland or Canberra. Don't be surprised if PNG offers the job to Wayne Bennett, who was alongside Stephen Kearney when the Kiwis won the 2008 World Cup. After all, Bennett's brother, Bob, is a past PNG head coach.





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**Membership information and sign up here: [nzrl.co.nz](http://nzrl.co.nz)**

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The Vodafone Warriors  
Sir Peter Charles Leitch - KNZM, QSM**



# Kane Williamson's Finally Appreciated Following a Magical 2015

By John Deaker



**F**OR YEARS now most cricket lovers in New Zealand have had a good idea of how good Kane Williamson is and his potential to leave a legacy as our greatest batsman of all time. 2015 was the year that non-cricket followers in New Zealand and people around the world finally woke up to how special he is. In typical Williamson style it wasn't because of a few sensational innings or moments of brilliance – it was because of the consistent form Kane showed day-in-day-out with the bat in both the long and short forms of international cricket.

Williamson's test performances in particular captured headlines this year because of the phenomenal consistency and class he obtained. When he went past the 1000 run mark for the calendar year against Sri Lanka he was averaging around 100 for the year. Brendon McCullum had 'only' averaged 72.75 for the 2014 calendar year when he set the record of 1164 test runs by a Black Cap during a year.

Scoring big against the Australians - including 140 and 166 in the two tests - helped considerably with Williamson obtaining a lot more respect around the world. Rarely ( if ever ) has a New Zealand cricketer received such high praise from every member of Australian television's commentary team – particularly while playing in a losing side!

To be fair to the people that only woke up this year to how good Kane is they have an obvious excuse ; the numbers he was racking up until two years ago didn't do justice to his phenomenal talent and potential. By the end of 2013, after three years in international cricket, he was still only averaging 35.88 in tests and 35.41 in one-dayers.

Fast forward to the current day and his run-scoring the last 2 years mean that his career average is 49.16 in tests and 48.02 in one-dayers. What has also been pleasing to watch improve has been his strike-rate in both forms of the game. His 84.19 strike rate ( per 100 balls ) in one-dayers reflects the fact that without bashing the ball he's able to score quickly in the 50 over format by working the ball round the field and playing classical cricket strokes. Strike-rate statistics are much less relevant in tests – but even so, as his batting has developed you tend to find more and more that he scores at close to a run-a-ball through long periods where he hasn't even attempted to accelerate the pace of his innings.

Kane Williamson's production of runs in 2015 can give us a better appreciation of what Sir Donald Bradman achieved over the length of his career. Modern-day greats like Brian Lara, Sachin Tendulkar and Ricky Ponting have come and gone and not achieved anything close to the test average of 99.94 that Bradman retired with. What he achieved was so untouchable that it's logical to question how he could practically have achieved such an amazing record. Put simply, Bradman just achieved similar consistency to what Kane has achieved this year – but for the full length of his test career.

Consistency in any area is established by having great processes and a stable enough mind-set to stick to those processes. Kane's mental discipline and understanding of his game is his X-factor – even more so than his great natural ability and passion for cricket.

Williamson possesses all the traits that the current Black Caps players like to pride themselves on – and his modest demeanor is undoubtedly a trait that helps endear him to New Zealand fans. Kiwis love the cult hero figures like Brendon McCullum and even Jesse Ryder - but many of them appreciate even more the Kane Williamson style ( similar to Richie McCaw's ) of letting their performances and actions do the talking.

Like McCaw, Williamson has tremendous respect for the game he plays and the people involved with it. Also, like Richie, it's well known that a key reason for Kane keeping his feet on the ground has been his family's constant support and steady influence.

Williamson has already been groomed to take over from Brendon McCullum as captain of the Black Caps and with McCullum likely to retire during the next year Kane will be asked to step up sooner rather than later.

Williamson's is likely to be a very different style of leadership from McCullum's – but one thing's for sure after the year he's just had : he can't hide from the spotlight any longer anyway - everyone now knows he is a gem of rare quality and barring serious injury he will undoubtedly go on to rewrite all of New Zealand cricket's major batting records.



Kane Williamson

# Thank You to All The Readers

By Ben Francis



**W**HAT AN exciting year it has turned out to be for sports and for myself. Last week I wrote about some of the great sporting moments of 2015 and it was hard to leave some off (Bradford City beating Chelsea in the FA Cup, The All Blacks and the Rugby World Cup) Our international teams and athletes did our country very this year and even our athletes in our national and regional did our provinces proud also. This year living in a small town, I learnt lots about small town sports and what I believe to be the real meaning of playing your chosen sport for your local club. I spent time around some different clubs in various sports and I loved every moment of it.

The biggest thing for me this year was getting the opportunity to write for you guys, It only feels like a matter of weeks ago I was speaking to Sir Peter for the first time and he asked if I wanted to contribute to his weekly newsletter, writing about what is going on in Northland Sports and anything else which I have taken interest in. Getting this opportunity is one I will forever be thankful for. My first article was published in Newsletter #59 and now we are in issue #104. It has been an unforgettable experience contributing to the newsletter for people all over the world to read.

We have plenty of great sport over the Summer, Cricket, The Darts World Championships is back on, Football, Basketball, Tennis and many more great games we all love. While we have the great sunny weather, I encourage everybody to get outside and have fun, Play some backyard cricket, touch rugby, go to the skate park. It's all about having fun. The great thing about sports whether we are just following a team or out at the park playing with mates, it brings people together from all over the world and all walks of life. That is the true beauty about sports, and that is why I love watching and taking part in sports.

Lastly I hope everybody reading this has a happy and safe Christmas, New Years or even a birthday, and I will be back in 2016 telling you more about Northland sports and many more great things.

# Touring at Christmas Time

By Barry Ross



**T**HIS TIME of the year reminds me of the long tours of days gone by when New Zealanders and Australian teams endured freezing conditions and no contact with their loved ones, as they endeavoured to win the series in France. Captained by Canterbury's Pat Smith, the 1947/48 Kiwi team to England and France came within one point of winning the three Test series against England, beat Wales and drew the two Test series with France.. They played 35 games in total and were delayed by more than two weeks before they left Auckland because of problems on the waterfront. They spent a cold Christmas day in an average Paris Hotel and just three days later, on 28 December 1947, beat France 11-7 in the first Test. This was New Zealand's first ever Test against the Frenchmen. They had to overcome language problems, the Paris Transport system and the some annoying French officials. New Zealand half, Jimmy Haig, missed the team bus to the Parc Des Princes Stadium and had to rely on public transport. When he arrived, he had more problems entering the ground as he didn't have a ticket. New Zealand 11 ( Jack Forrest, Ron McGregor, Len Jordan tries; Warwick Clarke goal) beat France 7 ( Andre Calixte try; Puig Aubert goal and field goal). The crowd was 15,000.

The long tour and all the travelling caught up with the Kiwis in the Second Test at Bordeaux on 25 January 1948. Before a crowd of 22,000, France won 25-7( Rex Cunningham try; Warwick Clarke 2 goals). The New Zealanders had left Auckland on 14 August 1947 and didn't arrive home until early March 1948. Clarke from Auckland was the top scorer on tour with 138 from 24 games. Captain Pat Smith, with 28, played the most matches, Auckland's Len Jordan, with 19, was the top try scorer.





Manu, Steve, Ali and Ben outside Steve Price's shop.



NRL squad and surf life savers after the morning session.



Marata and David carrying the boat back to the surf club



Boys carrying the boats to the water.



Warm up run before the session.



Erin in the run swim section.



Jono leading his race.



Ryan finishing the surf ski race



Race to the finish line.



Shaun, Jazz, Sol and Bodene leading the race.



Dress up after dinner on the last night of camp.



Staff super hero's



More from the dress up night.



Winners are grinners, with the Mad Butchers trophy.



The Samoan boys at the culture night in camp.

# Merry Christmas from the Vodafone Warriors



To members and fans,

**W**ISHING YOU all a very safe and happy Christmas. We can't wait to see you all again in the new year.

From all of your Vodafone Warriors team.

**Andrew McFadden**



**Hi Butch**

**J**UST WANTED to wish all the newsletter readers a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Hope everyone enjoys their time off over the break.

Also looking forward to the pre season game down in Nelson in February. Should be great for the area and I know they'll enjoy having the team down there.

Look forward to catching up in the new year.

**Simon.**

**Captain of the Vodafone Warriors**



**Hey Butch...**

**H**HEY WARRIOR Nation Family, RTS here wanting to wish you's all a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year. Thank you for welcoming me into your mighty club. Feeling the love from the members at the Members Xmas BBQ & also from the lovely messages I have been receiving on social media. Very excited to wear the VF Warriors Jersey & for the 2016 NRL season to begin, I hope you are too.

**Roger Tuivasa-Sheck**



**Hi Everyone**

**I**KNOW THIS year didn't turn out the way we all wanted on the field but we have made some good progress off the field that should see us in a strong position from next year and beyond to reach the heights we all want.

We have significantly improved our roster and Cappy and the team have been working really hard during the pre-season to improve every aspect, we have resolved our ownership issue and now Eric is the sole owner which will remove any distractions that we have had over the last few years and Eric is certainly focused on doing everything we can to obtain that elusive success and lastly we have made significant

progress re maintaining Mt Smart as our home for a long time to come.

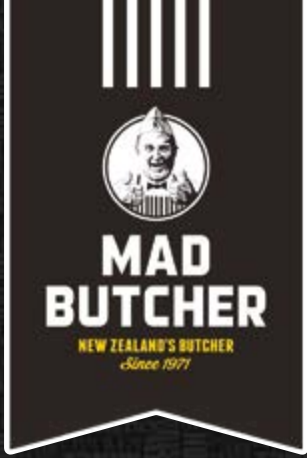
We are certainly looking forward to next season with high expectations, so make sure you all become Vodafone Warriors members and join us for all the excitement.

Before then everyone at Vodafone Warriors wishes you and your families a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2016.

**Best Wishes**

**Jim Doyle**





# MAD BBQ TEES

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**MAKE A STATEMENT WHEN YOU'RE SIZZLING THIS SUMMER WITH ONE OF THESE CHEEKY LITTLE (OR BIG) TEES.**

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# Seasons Greetings from Readers

## SOUTH ISLAND RUGBY LEAGUE KIWIS ASSOCIATION

**J**UST A quick note to wish Sir Peter and his TEAM a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year, and thanks for the very informative and always interesting newsletter throughout the year.

We were elated to learn that our Vice Patron and legend, the 1951 - 1961 kiwi, George Menzies, who suffered a bad fall last weekend, has this day received new hip for Christmas.

**Bill Whitehead QSM**  
Secretary Manager



## Christmas Greetings

**T**HE BUTCHER said to me the other day, "Mate, you are so bloody quiet that a lot of league fans think you're dead & to be fair after all the shit you used to throw at the game they're not crying in their beer!" Nice fellow that Butcher. Well I'm far from dead. This year I have travelled a lot & have been out of Auckland for 4 months. I have kept right out of the media & have no regrets about retiring. Most league fans thought I should have retired years ago anyway.

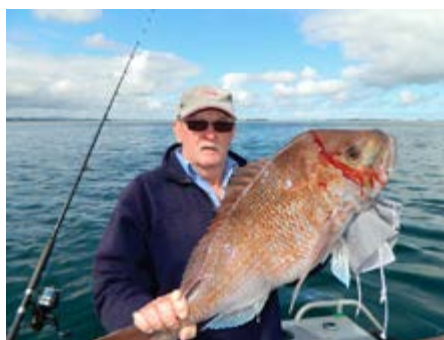
To you all a very merry Christmas & a good time with your family. Congratulations to all involved with this newsletter. It is clearly the most read League newsletter in the world.



**Murray Deaker**



Kelvyn wanted to share his big day out fishing with us all! As well as show off the size of his catch.



Support our sponsors as they help support this newsletter.

# Dates for Vodafone Warriors Fans to Mark in Their Diaries

- **4th February:** League 4 Life summer fundraiser at Ellerslie Racecourse check out [www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz](http://www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz) for more details.
- **6th & 7th February:** Dicksmith NRL Auckland Nines
- **13th February:** Vodafone Warriors trial in Whangarie against the Gold Coast Titans
- **20th February:** Vodafone Warriors trial in Nelson against the St George Illawarra Dragons
- **5th March:** Vodafone Warriors first game of the NRL season in Sydney against the West Tigers
- **20th March:** The Vodafone Warriors first home game of the year against the Melbourne Storm
- **16th April:** Vodafone Warriors V the Bulldogs in Wellington Westpac Stadium
- **1st May:** Vodafone Warriors V Penrith Panthers in Christchurch AMI Stadium
- **14th May:** Vodafone Warriors V Canberra Raiders in New Plymouth Yarrow Stadium
- The weekend of the 1st to 4th September the Vodafone Warriors last home game of the season against the Parramatta Eels.



## Interested in Going to the Vodafone Warriors vs Titans?

**I**F YOU are interested in a complete package (bus – hotel – hospitality) to see the mighty Vodafone Warriors take on the Gold Coast Titans in Whangarei then email Alex Smits. Get in quick... limited spaces available.

[Click here to email.](#)

**TOLL STADIUM, WHANGAREI** **SATURDAY 13TH FEBRUARY**

**VODAFONE WARRIORS VS AQUIS TITANS**  
5:30pm kick-off

1:00pm Swords Academy v Vodafone Warriors Academy  
3:00pm Vodafone Warriors NSW Cup v Vodafone Warriors NYC

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW! [www.eventfinda.co.nz](http://www.eventfinda.co.nz)**

## Win Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines Passes

Just get a mate to subscribe to the Mad Butcher Club Newsletter by emailing: [stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz](mailto:stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz), make sure they mention your name and you'll be in to win a double pass\*.

Terms and conditions: One entry per person. Competition closes Thursday 21 January at 11.59pm and will be drawn on Friday 22 January, 2016.



# Join us for a fantastic day at the track

On Saturday 20th February 2016  
at Auckland Racing Club, Ellerslie



Invites you to

Join us from 11.30am in the Guineas Room, where you will be treated to drinks on arrival and a delicious buffet lunch, plus much more. Witness the extravaganza of horse racing including the prestigious Avondale Cup and Avondale Guineas races. Enjoy a great day, while fundraising for Macular Degeneration New Zealand and their work in the Macular Degeneration community.

We would like to offer you the opportunity to purchase a table for 10 people.

**The table of 10 sponsorship package is priced at \$1,250 (incl. GST) and includes:**

- Table in the Guineas Room for 10 guests, including drinks on arrival, buffet lunch, afternoon tea and cash bar
- Entertainment throughout the day including tipsters, jockeys, celebrities and unique experiences
- Opportunity to display product and branded pull-up banners in the Guineas Room for the day
- Free parking

**Individual tickets are available for \$140 per person.**

**As a special addition this year we offer two unique experiences:**

- Experience the commentary box
- Experience the race start

\$100 for a group of four people to either option. Order now to be on the Inside!

***1 in 7 people over 50 will get Macular Degeneration.***

All funds raised on the day will gratefully go to support the Macular Degeneration community.

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If you wish to take up this opportunity, please contact Phillippa Pitcher on  
0800 MACULA (622 852) or email [events@mdnz.org.nz](mailto:events@mdnz.org.nz)

# RLWC Qualifiers

## Americas: Game 3, Usa 34 Canada 24 – Report

**T**HREE TRIES from Danny Howard and another superb performance by skipper Mark Offerdahl saw the USA become the eleventh nation to qualify for the 2017 Rugby League World Cup, after they beat Canada 34-24 in a wonderful winner-takes-all clash against Canada at the Hodges Stadium, Jacksonville, Florida.

The Hawks qualify for their second successive World Cup, after making the quarter finals in 2013, new head coach for the qualifying series, Brian McDermott, ending a sensational season with a further triumph, having taken Leeds Rhinos to a domestic treble.

McDermott switched Los Angeles-born Danny Howard to the second row from centre, where he had played in the narrow win over Jamaica in game one, to team up with brother Steve and it proved to be a masterstroke, as did moving Ryan Burroughs to full back when Corey Makelim was sent off for dissent just after the half hour.

Burroughs' superb linking runs from the back continually pushed Canada back after they threatened to create history by reaching the World Cup for the first time, the Wolverines leading 18-14 at the break, although eventually beaten by eight tries to four.

Hooker Ryley Jacks, who persisted despite injury and also crossed for three tries, and his brother stand off Rhys - along with 'the Sheriff' Jamie Kelly - were superb for the visitors, who were looking for their fourth successive win over the Hawks.

But, late on, when chasing the win they needed after drawing with Jamaica, Canada were undone when forcing passes that didn't go to hand.

"The performance was right up there in terms of courage and determination," said McDermott. "It wasn't the flashiest performance ever, there were one or two things we needed to be better at, but after having a man sent off at the back end of the first half to then get over a very competitive Canada just shows how much determination and desire the players had.

"I'm immensely proud, we qualified for the World Cup which was the first objective but it's been a really enjoyable camp for the last two weeks and the players have given absolutely everything.

"Canada are a good team and we were worried at 18-all. They've already beaten America twice this year

and we were under no illusions how good they were going to be. The whole second half was a real worrying time and they deserve a lot of credit as well."

In 25 degree temperatures, the first half followed the pattern of the first two qualifiers, with plenty of endeavour on defence, some spilled ball due to over-eagerness and penalties given away at the play-the-ball.

As they had against Jamaica, USA started strongly to take an early lead; Taylor Alley stepping over at the end of the first set of the game, a repeat one, and Taylor Howden - who posed a threat throughout - crossing on the left inside the opening nine minutes, both conversion attempts missed.

Canada hit back well, Rhys Jacks and Steve Piatek combing to put Kelly over, Piatek goaling and the same combination looked to have worked again soon after but the final pass was ruled forward.

The Wolverines did take the lead in controversial fashion in the 32nd minute, Ryley Jacks burrowing over from close in despite Makelim's protestations that he had got under the ball which resulted in him being marched from the field by official Robert Hicks.

Piatek goaled and the visitors led, but only briefly, Burroughs making a surging run from the back and Danny Howard ploughing over, Howden - one of four kickers used by the Hawks - with the only successful home conversion to make it 14-12.

There was still a sting in the tail to end the half, on the final play, a beautiful chip over by Rhys Jacks bamboozled the home defence, Ryley running on to it to step Burroughs and go over by the posts, Piatek with the extras.

Again the USA began a half strongly when the teams re-emerged, Howden powering over in the corner on a last tackle powerplay after the ball had been switched expertly from left to right, to level.

Steve Howard was held up and Rhys Jacks broke clear in response but his pass only found touch, Kristian Freed then kicking a 40-20 from which Central Florida Warrior Alley bustled his way over for his second score. Offerdahl made a clearing run but the Canadian defence held but they couldn't halt Burroughs on a 50 metre charge which set the position for Howard's second try out wide.

*Continued on next page...*

As Canada seemed to tire, Burroughs crossed in the 63rd minute but again the goal was missed that would have given the Hawks a three score lead.

The Wolverines regathered their own short kick off and Ryley Jacks again made them pay from close in, Piatek's goal from in front making it 30-24.

Alex Boyd was held up as the Canadians looked to level and Roman Lowery diffused a Rhys Jacks kick to the corner as the 12-man Hawks were stretched.

Canada tried a chip over but Rich Henson cleaned up and Burroughs dropped a high kick on the last, but again the USA defence held when the final pass out wide went into touch.

With the last minute approaching, Danny Howard went on a run up the left hand side and forced his way over for the celebrations to begin. Offerdahl took the final conversion attempt from touch, but the ball drifted wide.

"That was the toughest game I've ever played," he said. "To play 50 minutes with 12 men, it was a ridiculous effort from the boys. If we could kick goals it might have been a little bit easier for us! I'm so proud of them, I've never been involved in anything like that and now we've got 2017 to plan for.

London Bronco Offerdahl added: "I put the victory down to the work we've done in the week and the game-plan we had. At times we went away from it and that's when we started to concede points but when we went back to it everything worked out. We had to dig in - there were forwards playing more minutes than they are used to and wingers having 20 or so scoots for the game."

Understandably, with what was at stake, there were tears from both sides when the hooter went.

Canada coach Aaron Zimmerle commented: "There were periods in the game where it was our opportunity to take control of the match but credit to America they really stood up.

"Some of their go-to players were able to pull out the big plays when needed, they capitalized well late when we were trying to force the issue and made an error. But, as this whole tournament has showed,

every time we're down and out, we find a way to claw back into the game."

Canada co-captain Piatek noted: "I would like to congratulate the USA for their victory. We worked very hard and to even be involved in the World Cup qualifiers themselves was a sign of how far we have come. We have four years now to take the sport in Canada to new levels and we'll be ready to try to qualify again."

#### USA 34

Corey Makelim, Taylor Howden, Taylor Alley, Ryan Burroughs, Roman Lowrey, Rich Henson, Matt Walsh, Nick Newlin, Kristian Freed, Mark Offerdahl, Danny Howard, Casey Clark, Steve Howard

Subs (all used): John Purnell, Andrew Kneisly, Sam Carson, Luke Barron

Tries: Alley (2, 53), Howden (9, 44), Howard (36, 58, 79), Burroughs (63)

Goals: Kristian Freed 0/2, Taylor Howden 1/4, Matt Walsh 0/1, Mark Offerdahl 0/1

Sent off: Makelim (32 - dissent)

#### CANADA 24

Robin Legault, Billy Gemmell, Jonathan Cregg, Rick Schouten, Adam Timler, Ryley Jacks, Steve Piatek, Louis Robinson, Rhys Jacks, Tom Dempsey, Christian Miller, Steve Bouchard, James Kelly

Subs (all used): Matt Wyles, Enoch Wamalwa, Daniel Blasco-Morris, Alex Boyd

Tries: Jamie Kelly (19), Ryley Jacks (32, 40, 66)

Goals: Steve Piatek 4/4

Half time: 14-18

Penalty count: 6-8

Referee: Robert Hicks (England)

**Story by: PHIL CAPLAN RLEF MEDIA OFFICER**





# At Andy's Burgers in Sky City Opening Last Week



At the opening of Andy's Burgers & Bar at SKYCITY with SKYCITY Breakers Jordan Ngatai, Reuben Te Rangi, Aaron Young and Dillon Boucher.



I loved my burger.



DJ's General Lee and Thane Kirby entertained the crowd.



L-R - Glenn Critchley Commercial Manager - Bianca Bush Events & Entertainment Manager - Lisa Dalton Ticketing Coordinator - David Camps Merchandise Manager - Bodie Friend Digital Comms Coordinator



Graeme Woodside (CEO), Claire Gard (National Operations Manager) and Carol Roche (Event and Promotions Manager) from the Prostate Cancer Foundation at Andy's Burgers & Bar - Skycity.



At the opening of SKYCITY's new restaurant- Andy's burgers & Bar with SKYCITY Breakers player- Alex Pledger his partner Bailie Wilson-Yates and SKYCITY's corporate Event Manager- Lizzie Leuc.



Josephine Kinsella GM And Mike Pero at opening function andys burgers and bar skycity.



Everyone enjoyed their burgers.





# Newsletter 25-Christmas Edition

## Wellington rugby league coach Darryl Marino appointed to Black Sox softball staff

Hutt Valley sports stalwart Darryl Marino could be doing double duty next year as he strives to fit his Wellington Orcas rugby league coaching commitments around his new role as Black Sox softball assistant coach.

Softball New Zealand have confirmed Marino, a former Black Sox outfielder, will assist head coach Mark Sorenson through to the 2017 world championships in Canada.

Marino is also the head coach of the Orcas representative rugby league team in the national provincial premiership after guiding Hutt Valley club Randwick to three club premiership titles.

He took over the Orcas' reins in 2015 on a two-year contract.

Marino, whose son Bronson plays for the Orcas and the Hutt Valley men's softball team, hinted he would like to continue coaching the Orcas. "But I don't know the full [Black Sox] programme yet. We're still working through that to see if it's going to fit in."

The national rugby league premiership runs from late August to early October, before the start of the domestic softball season. The Black Sox traditionally tour North America during the New Zealand winter.

Sorenson was reasonably confident an accommodation could be reached to allow Marino to fulfil his Orcas commitments.

Juggling coaching duties is nothing new for Marino, who was head coach of the New Zealand boys development team for the last two years and was a Junior Black Sox assistant coach from 2006 to 2008.

He has also coached his Cardinals club side and Hutt Valley junior and senior representative teams and was enlisted by Sorenson last season to coach a team at the Black Sox trial series in Hamilton.

Marino, who toured North America with the Black Sox in 1995, said the assistant coach job was "a great opportunity to work with such a talented group of people, both the coaching staff and the world-class athletes that are involved in that squad."

"I see this as a real exciting challenge in my coaching career. I have a passion for softball and I'm well aware of the legacy of the Black Sox."

It's also an opportunity to extend his association with Sorenson, who he first played with "30-odd years ago in the Cardinals under-15 team".

"We get on pretty good. He was arguably the best player in the world in his time. I know how organised and well-planned he is and his softball knowledge is great."

Sorenson agreed he and Marino "go back a long way". "Darryl's someone that you know



has impeccable standards and values. He's a really loyal guy and that's a quality you want in that role.

"He's done his time in the [softball] coaching ranks and has been a successful league coach."

Sorenson insisted Marino had to go through the usual "robust recruiting process". "He had to apply, like everyone else, and was interviewed, not only by myself, but by our high performance manager Darren Smith and then a representative from High Performance Sport New Zealand."

Marino is already familiar with some of the current Black Sox players, who were part of the

2008 Junior Black Sox team he helped coach. Brothers Ben and Thomas Enoke, Nik Hayes, Joel Evans, Campbell Makea and Jovaan Hanley have graduated from the junior ranks.

Sorenson was grateful that the Black Sox have had continued funding approved by High Performance Sport New Zealand.

He said they were considering a couple of invitations to play in either Europe or South America next winter.

- Stuff

Visit us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wellington-Rugby-League/149807975039915>



Congratulations to Karl & Geneva on their arrival of baby Karl, born 7th December 3.23pm Hutt Hospital weighing 7 pound 8 ounces.



Congratulations to Wayne Barton becoming a Grandad this week.



Congratulations to Bronwyn & George Jahnke our friends at Total Touch on the arrival of their daughter Kiana

The Hunters would like to acknowledge and congratulate Shawn Gielen-Relph on his graduation from Otago University this weekend. Shawn has completed a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery and is officially a Doctor. He has been a part of the Hunters for the past 3 years - turning up in 2013 to be a part of the Premiership winning side and a great player and role model for new players ever since. Well done Shawn - you have made yourself, your family and all of us at the Hunters very proud! We wish you all the best of luck as you start your career in Rotorua.



**Wellington rugby league would like to wish our league community a wonderful & safe Christmas. See you all in 2016**





## WRL Board farewells...



### Mark Feary

Mark has been a part of the WRL governance board for over 9 years firstly as the clubs representative when a new board and district governance was shaped coming out from NZRL administration.

He provided the all-important link between the independent board and the clubs representing the grassroots views.

When the new NZRL Zone structure came into being in late 2010 Mark again put his name forward and became one of 2 rugby league knowledgeable directors.

Mark served for 5 years on the Zone board and was chairman for the 2014 season when Tim Gibson moved up to the NZRL Board. He resigned in March of 2015 but continued to offer support to the new chair over the first months of his tenure.

We acknowledge and thank Mark for his time and guidance of the WRL and wish him and his family well for the future.

### Stella Teariki

Stella was first seconded to the WRL Zone board in 2011 where a gap was identified from a grassroots and junior club perspective. She has served for 4 years and has offered great guidance to the board and staff during this time.

Along with being Chair of the St George Dragons for 3 years Stella was also on hand to help with volunteer roles from gates to food prep and managed the 15s Orcas at the inaugural tournament week in 2013.

Stella was awarded the WRL Volunteer of the Year in 2012 & 13 and was the NZRL Female Volunteer of the Year in 2012.

We acknowledge and thank Stella for her time and guidance of the WRL and wish her and her family well for the future.



## Hunters working in the community



The VUW Hunters are living examples that rugby league is "more than just a game".

Last weekend the new Club Captain Barney Kuki-Wikitera organised a working bee at the Wellington Womens Boarding House.

Help was needed to give the place a spruce up and around 20 of the VUW Hunters players, coaching staff, partners and supporters turned up.

3 bedrooms were painted along with a big tidy up of the grounds, fences mended and lots of other little bits of maintenance were carried out.

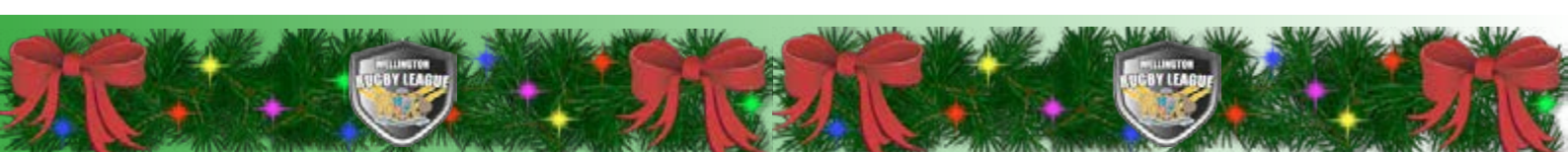
All the paint was donated by either the team or Dulux and having Rodger on hand to do the painting down low and big Cam to reach the high stuff, without a ladder, not a spot was missed.

This initiative was about the club giving back to the community and helping those that need a hand. "The Wellington Women's Boarding House provides low-cost, temporary housing for women on low incomes or in transition. For more than twenty years, it has been home to women who need a safe place to stay, often at a difficult time in their lives. Our vision is that every woman in Wellington has a safe and comfortable home that enables her to meet her needs.

The house depends on volunteers and donors who give generously to provide a safe home for women in need."

To find out more <http://wwbh.org.nz/>

Great work HUNTERS!



## U21 Tag World Cup winners



I'll never forget walking around at the opening ceremony. We were waiting to march on next to the New Zealand Tag Black teams. Big congrats to the team Undefeated at a World Cup and beating Australia in their own back yard all the way from little ol' Porirua. There were

no answers for our brick wall defence. The difference between us and everyone else was everyone died for the line and had each others backs no matter what. Discipline and 100 Mana pulled us through the last couple days with niggles creeping in. Congrats also to Supercoach Sam Atoni. Most successful tag coach/administrator in New Zealand being part of 3x Consecutive National titles, a Trans Tasman series win and a World Cup. Also a big thank you to Nellie Oloapu-Atoni who along with Sam held the fort down looking after and putting up with the lot of us. There is a lot of behind the scenes things that no one else sees these two do... Id also like to acknowledge the other Supercoach Mike Finau who kick-started it all back at our first Nationals in Orewa. Discipline, Defence and Structure teaching us all his sets that have proved to be successful time and time again.

Its been a long couple of days but its been an awesome experience. Was hard to stand aside and watch but loved every minute of it regardless.

Sheldon Akavi

## NZRL Award Finalists Released

Congratulations to our Wellington players and volunteer who are finalists for the NZRL 2015 awards.



### Junior Player of the Year

Nelson Asofa-Solomona (Melbourne Storm)



Daniel Levi (Newcastle Knights)



### 18s Player of the Year

Tarquinn Alatipi (Porirua/Wellington)



### Male volunteer of the year

Simon Itula (Wainuiomata/Wellington)



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EARLY BIRD PRICE \$55.00 STANDARD SEATS UNTIL 31 DEC 2015

**ELVIS IN THE GARDENS**  
**SUNDAY 13TH MARCH 11:30-6:30 PM**

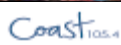
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**& NZ PERFORMERS**



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# Well, that's one way to move a house...

This happened a few days ago in Bucklands Beach.



## We are taking a well deserved break....

This is our **last newsletter** for the year. We will be back on the **13th January 2016** with all our regular contributors and the content you love. Send us a couple of your favourite holiday photos to [Sir Peter Leitch](#) or [Hayden](#) and we will put them in our first newsletter of 2016.



If you wish to **subscribe** or **unsubscribe** please email Stephen Maier at [stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz](mailto:stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz)

## Our Sponsors

A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORSHIP PARTNERS! Without our sponsors' fantastic support the Mad Butcher Club wouldn't be as great as it is. If you get the opportunity to support them please do whenever you can.



## The Newsletter Team

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



**Sir Peter Leitch**  
Editor



**David Kemeys**  
Editor at Large



**Hayden Woodhead**  
Graphic Designer



**John Deaker**  
Correspondent



**John Coffey**  
Southern  
Correspondent



**Barry Ross**  
Australian  
Correspondent



**Ben Francis**  
Northern  
Correspondent