



Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

17 February 2016

Newsletter #109

No advertisements are paid for in this newsletter.

Pre Season Win!

Watch out Nelson, the Mad Butcher and Vodafone Warriors are coming to town this Saturday.



Manu Vatuvei takes a breather during the Vodafone Warriors' pre-season trial win over the Gold Coast Titans.



New Vodafone Warriors signing Issac Luke in action against the Gold Coast Titans.



Vodafone Warriors forward Raymond Faitala-Mariner runs in to score his third try.

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.co.nz

THERE IS no other way to begin this week's newsletter than by expressing our heartfelt sympathy to our friends in Christchurch. What a trial it must be to suffer through yet another big earthquake, almost five years to the day since the 2011 quake that caused such destruction and mayhem.

We are thinking of you all.

We Salute You Brendon

Okay, I admit it, what I know about cricket is not much! But I know any man who plays 100 consecutive cricket tests for the Black Caps deserves our admiration. If he ever wants to be my special guest as a VIP at a Vodafone Warriors match, he need only call.

Sure he got a duck and 10 in his 100th outing, and it would not have been what he dreamed of, and the Black Caps got soundly thrashed.

But he has another chance to go out in glory in the second test of the series at Christchurch. I for one certainly hope he has a big finish, because he has done so much to lift the profile of the team and the game of cricket in New Zealand.

Well done Brendon.

Go the Breakers

I take my hat off to The Breakers. If only the Vodafone Warriors showed the kind of consistency that our basketball team competing in the Aussie league does.

They beat Melbourne to secure the fourth spot in the play-offs, then beat them again in a dead rubber, with the final four all locked up.

They face Melbourne on Thursday night in Australia, with a second game at Vector in Auckland next Saturday. The decider, if needed,

will be back in Melbourne the following Friday.

But here's my tip – The Breakers 2-0.

Off To Whangarei

I must say I had a very pleasant drive on Saturday, chauffeur driven by Vodafone Warriors boss Jim Doyle up to Whangarei.

It was a great opportunity to check what he has planned for the club in 2016 and I have to say I was very pleased with what we talked about, and I feel 2016 is going to be a good year for the mighty Vodafone Warriors.

We drove up to Toll Stadium to watch the Vodafone Warriors versus the Gold Coast Titans trial and it was great to catch up with all the fans, and a real plus was that it was a beautiful night and the wonderful people of the north made us very welcome.

Next Stop Nelson

This Thursday my mate Dexter and I will be heading to Nelson for the Mike Pero Battle of Trafalgar at Trafalgar Park on Saturday night, when the Vodafone Warriors will take on the St George Dragons.

That's going to be a fantastic night of rugby league in Nelson, with Simon Mannering returning home to play in front of his local – and loyal – fans.

Simon was a good rugby player, turning out for Nelson College's First XV, and playing club rugby for Riwaka, before being spotted and convinced to try his hand at league.

But before that, on the Thursday night, the players have the homecoming charity evening. To find out more about that go to

www.Trafalgar events.co.nz/charity-dinner.

I do know it is going to be a great night, with the Vodafone Warriors team all there, and I will be interviewing some of the players.

It's not too late to get tickets for the homecoming charity event or for the game on Saturday.

I'm looking forward to meeting all the Warriors fans and the people of Nelson.

Coach Will Send A Signal

I have it on very good authority that Vodafone Warriors coach Andrew "Cappy" McFadden will name his strongest possible side for the game in Nelson. It will be as close to our NRL starting line-up as possible, so if you want a good pointer as to how we will go this season, don't miss this weekend's match.

Good First Up Hit-Out

Our new signing Issac Luke, veteran Manu Vatuvei and comeback second-rower Ben Henry all came through their first appearances unscathed as we overcame the Gold Coast Titans 40-18.

The trio all came off before half-time – as planned – but each made a strong contribution.

There was much to like across the park, especially when you consider we finished with a team dominated by players still NYC-eligible or only just out of it.

Two of them, Bunty Afoa and Semisi Tyrell, scored four of our seven tries.

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We looked aggressive from the start, Raymond Faitala-Mariner going across in the opening minutes after a strong carry from Manu, and getting a double soon after.

Luke was having a big impact, with his work out of dummy half and with his carries up the middle, Manu was showing no signs of taking it easy after his shoulder surgery.

Coach-for-the-day Andrew Webster changed his starting big men – injecting Upu Poching, on-trial James Gavet and NYC-eligible Bunty Afoa from the bench – and Afoa went over soon after.

The changes kept coming to our combinations and the Titans began to work their way back into it, but in the second half Faitala-Mariner rumbled in for his third try.

Centre Tyrell went in for our fifth and soon it was Afoa's turn, set loose on a 30-metre run.

The Titans hit back but we finished well, Tyrell's second try giving us a comfortable win.

Experience Counts

Experience won over youth when a New South Wales Cup selection won 40-12 over a NYC combination in a trial at Toll Stadium. The young NYC side opened brightly, wing Lewis Soosemea getting a try in the corner.

The NYC side put some more sharp sequences together but the NSW team went back-to-back through back rower Pat Siple and left wing Mose Esera.

Straight after halftime, teenager Eddie Wulf – who's in the NYC squad this year – hit the line at

pace to score the NSW Cup team's fourth try.

The youngsters stuck to it though, getting back-to-back tries of their own to Soosemea wide out and then hooker Sheldon Pitama.

But the old heads blew it out towards the finish, getting tries to centre Daniel Liddicoat, two to

Rota, and one for hooker Jethro Friend.

Academy Side On Scoring Spree

A Vodafone Warriors Academy side recovered from 12-0 down to pile on 11 tries in beating the Northern Swords 56-16.

The match showcased the talent coming through our development system – although they didn't start well, the Swords getting two converted tries inside the first eight minutes.

But when the Academy got time on attack, centre Preston Riki – signed from Northland – went over.

Fullback Mark Graham got the second and just after halftime we hit the lead, Cameron Iopu going over. Wing Kaleb Trask got the ball down superbly to stretch the advantage to 18-12, before Iopu got his second.

Trask made it three tries in quick succession, and a personal double, popping up on the right edge.

Romia Roi took plenty of defenders over for our seventh try, and John Latu powered through for number eight.

Fair play to the Swords, they finally got some joy when Wiremu Greig intercepted and scampered 35 metres to score, probably to the biggest cheer of the game.

But centre Riki scored his second,

giving us a shot at 50. It duly came up when Naitoa Kairau latched onto a loose ball and grabbed a second try right on fulltime.

It's A Baby Boom

There has been something of a baby boom at the club. Simon Mannering and his partner Anna have added a second son to the family. I am told Jack is not as big as his brother, but if he has Simon's courage, and Anna's looks, he'll be good as gold.

And prop Ben Matulino and his partner Courtney are also new parents, with the birth of a son, while wing Manu Vatuvei has added another daughter to his family. He and partner Jen now have four girls.

Our Aussie imports have been chipping in to. Ryan Hoffman and his other half Mel celebrated the arrival of their second child, a little girl, and Matt Allwood and his partner Nikki trumped them all, and I have to say twin girls should keep him on his toes.

Jacob Lillyman wasn't going to be left out, and he and partner Tui-Kaye have also been blessed with a little girl.

Rounding it all out, Thomas Leuluai and Natalie are also sporting a new addition, a little girl.

Crikey, I am running out of Mad Butcher dolls!



Mike Pero

BATTLE OF

TRAFALGAR



VERSUS

SAT 20th
FEB 2016



THIS
SATURDAY
DRESS UP AND WIN

THE BEST DRESSED DUO WILL WIN A TRIP FOR TWO FLYING AIR NZ TO AUCKLAND STAYING AT SKY CITY HOTEL WITH TICKETS FOR TWO TO THE APRIL 9TH WARRIORS V SEA EAGLES GAME.

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New Look Spine for Nelson Trial

THE VODAFONE Warriors are set to have their new-look spine on show for the first time when they face St George Illawarra in their second and final NRL trial at Nelson's Trafalgar Park on Saturday (5.00pm kick-off).

Head coach Andrew McFadden hasn't yet revealed his starting line-up for the Mike Pero 'Battle of Trafalgar' but has confirmed his intention to field Kiwis Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Shaun Johnson and Issac Luke at fullback, halfback and hooker with ex-Cronulla veteran Jeff Robson partnering Johnson in the halves.

"It'll be exciting having the chance to see our new spine in action for the first time," said McFadden.

"Issac had his first hit-out against Gold Coast in Whangarei after missing the NRL Nines and now we have the chance to put the combination of our spine players together.

"As well as those four players we have nearly all of our front-line players available for what is a really important trial for us."

McFadden has highlighted the intense competition for spots in the outside backs and in the front row.

Manu Vatuvei, Blake Ayshford, Solomone Kata, Tuimoala Lolohea, Konrad Hurrell and Jonathan Wright are all in the squad to travel to Nelson while the front row options for the trial include Ben Matulino, Jacob Lillyman, Albert Vete, Ligi Sao, Sam Lisone and Charlie Gubb plus James Gavet, who has been on trial during the preseason.

Apart from Luke, Vete, Sao, Gubb and Gavet, other players backing up from the trial in Whangarei will be Ben Henry, Ata Hingano and Matt Allwood.

The match will have special significance for captain Simon Mannering who, heading into his 12th NRL season, is eyeing his and the club's first-ever appearance in his home town.

"It's terrific for Simon that he has this chance to play in front of family and friends at home for the first time in his career," said McFadden.

"It's special for us as a club as well taking NRL football to another part of the country. We're all looking forward to it."

The Vodafone Warriors arrive in Nelson on Thursday afternoon. They have a training run at Trafalgar Park on Thursday while they will also make some community appearances.

As well as the trial in Nelson, the Vodafone Warriors will field four teams in other trial matches at the Luke Tipene Celebration Day at Harold Moody Reserve in Glen Eden on Sunday.

A Vodafone Warriors 18s side will take on a Glenora Bears 18s line-up (11.15am kick-off) while there'll be another trial between the Vodafone Junior Warriors and a Vodafone Warriors selection (1.00pm kick-off). The final game on the programme pits the club's New South Wales Cup squad against New Zealand Maori. The day starts with an official opening at 9.45am.

Vodafone Warriors Team:

MATT ALLWOOD
BLAKE AYSHFORD
JAMES GAVET
CHARLIE GUBB
BEN HENRY
ATA HINGANO
RYAN HOFFMAN
KONRAD HURRELL
SHAUN JOHNSON
SOLOMONE KATA
THOMAS LEULUAI
JACOB LILLYMAN
SAM LISONE

TUIMOALA LOLOHEA
ISSAC LUKE
SIMON MANNERING (c)
BEN MATULINO
NATHANIEL ROACHE
JEFF ROBSON
LIGI SAO
BODENE THOMPSON
ROGER TUIVA-SHECK
MANU VATUVEI
ALBERT VETE
JONATHAN WRIGHT

MIKE PERO

'BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR'

VODAFONE WARRIORS

v

ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA

Trafalgar Park, Nelson

5.00pm Saturday, February 20

Warriors Pre-Season Due to Heat up in Nelson this Week

By John Deaker



A **DISTINCT INCREASE** in intensity should be a feature of this week's pre-season trial in Nelson between the New Zealand Warriors and the St George Illawarra Dragons. Both squads are coming off trial matches last week where a lot of experimentation took place. The clash in Nelson comes only two weeks out from the start of the regular season so you'd expect both team's coaches will look to stick with more experienced and settled lineups throughout this week's match.

Simon Mannering's return to the region where he was brought up is being billed as the feature of the match, but fans will have plenty of other players of interest to keep an eye on. This includes many of St George's players like Benji Marshall and Jason Nightingale. Their two ex-Warriors' Siliva Havili and Russell Packer are also both dynamic players with international experience and big points to prove to their coach Paul McGregor.

Benji Marshall will relish the return of Gareth Widdop to the St George squad this week. Widdop's direction he gives the Dragons and his combination with Marshall was badly missed during their 18-14 loss to South Sydney in the Charity Shield at the weekend.

The Warriors' own star playmaker Shaun Johnson played no part in the 40-18 trial victory over the Titans at the weekend so the locals will no doubt be hopeful that means he'll need plenty of game-time this week.

Even many of the key players who did play in Whangarei will be expected to up their workload this week, including Issac Luke who played his first 32 minutes in a Warriors jersey before sitting out the rest of the match. Manu Vatuvei was another who only played 30 minutes last week and would be expected to want some more 'match-miles' in his legs this week.

The match in Nelson is due to kick-off at 5pm on Saturday the 20th of February and a curtain-raiser at 2.30pm will be played between the Tasman Titans and the West Coast Chargers.

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Successful Week Of League in Whangarei

By Ben Francis



THE EVENT Northlanders have been waiting for finally took place over the weekend as the NZ Warriors played the Gold Coast Titans at Whangarei's Toll Stadium, in front of 8000 spectators. The Warriors won the match 40-18. New signing Issac Luke played his first match for the Warriors whilst Ben Henry and Manu Vatuvei made their long awaited return from injuries. Other first grade players who took part were Ken Mau-malo, Matt Allwood, Albert Vete, Charlie Gubb, Ligi Sao & Raymond Faitala-Mariner. It was both clubs first hit out of the pre-season before the regular season kicks off on March 4th

This was the fourth time Toll Stadium had hosted a NRL match. They also hosted the Kiwis v Samoa Four Nations match back in 2014 which the Kiwis won 14-12.

For Northland this match between the Warriors and Titans was more than just a game, it was about getting out in the community and trying to grow the game. Both teams shot out in the community and took part in numerous events which included coaching sessions, Under 18s training hosted by Tony Iro and Duane Mann, School and Hospital visits by both clubs, open training sessions at Toll stadium the day before hand and many more activities.

In the two curtain raisers before the game, the Warriors NSW Cup selection squad beat a NYC combination side 40-12 and the Warriors Academy beat the Northern Swords Academy 56-16. The Titans have one more hit out before the regular season when they take on the South Sydney Rabbitohs in Pizzey Park QLD, while the Warriors travel to Nelson to play the Dragons at Trafalgar Park.

It was a very successful week for both clubs promoting the great game in Northland. Myself and many others can not wait for the NRL or even international Rugby League come back North.

In the future I would like to see the Penrith Panthers play the Warriors in Whangarei due to the Northland players they have in their squad, they have some of the best Northland League talent and for the players and their families I think it would be great to see them come to Whangarei to play the Warriors.

If you would like to get in contact with Rugby League Northland or find out how to register to take part of be involved with Northland Rugby League head along to www.northernswords.co.nz



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.co.nz



Supporting the Luke Tipene Trust Fund "Helping Others"

Luke Tipene



Celebration Day

THIS SUNDAY

21 February 2016

Glenora Rugby League Club

Harold Moody Reserve, Glendale Rd, Glen Eden

9.45am—Official Opening

Kids activities, entertainment & auction for The Luke Tipene Trust Fund

10.00am—Glenora Premiers v Bay Roskill Premiers

11.15am—Glenora Bears 18s v Vodafone Warriors 18s

1.00pm—Vodafone Junior Warriors v Vodafone Warriors Selection

2.45pm—NZ Maori v Vodafone Warriors NSW Cup

For information on how you can support please contact:

Sean Wilson - 027 271 2714

#LUKETIPENECELEBRATIONDAY

World All Stars v Indigenous All Stars a Treat!

By Barry Ross



HOW GOOD was the World All Stars-Indigenous All Stars clash on Saturday night! Very physical, low error rate and quality running football were on the menu in an extremely high standard match. It is a credit to both teams and both coaches that they put on such a great game so early in the season and in the heat of a Brisbane summer. Warriors men Konrad Hurrell and Ryan Hoffman certainly contributed to the World team's 12-8 win. Konrad's effort in scoring the game's first try in the 32nd minute, when he powered his way over through at least three defenders, was awesome. Still only 24, this strong running centre will add a lot to the Warriors this year. He now has scored 41 tries in his 72 first grade games at the end of the 2015 season. In 16 games last year, he made 1,327 running metres and 106 tackles. That is a match average of 83 metres and about 7 tackles. Konrad has played 4 Tests for Tonga.

Although he is now 32, Ryan is still one of the most consistent forwards in the NRL. He had his usual busy game for the World All Stars. He made his first grade debut way back on 20 April 2003 for the Storm against Manly and since then, has played 257 first grade games and scored 62 tries in these matches. This coming season will be Ryan's third with the Warriors and he has played 36 top grade games, scoring 6 tries. His stats for the Warriors in 2015 indicate just what a valuable player he is. In his 12 games, he ran for 1,954 metres and made 360 tackles. That is an average of 163 running metres and 30 tackles each game. These are outstanding numbers. He suffered a calf injury midway through the season, which kept him on the sidelines for several games. In 2011, Ryan had a season with the Wigan Warriors, where current South Sydney coach, Michael Maguire, was head coach. He played 35 matches with Wigan, scoring 10 tries. On 27 August 2011 at Wembley Stadium, in front of 78,482 fans, he was a member of the Wigan team who won the Challenge Cup Final, beating the Leeds Rhinos, 28-18. Ryan has also played 6 Tests for Australia and 11 State of Origin matches for NSW.

Injuries have already caused clubs some problems this year. Manly coach, Trent Barrett, wasn't too happy with his club's injury toll at the Auckland Nines and other clubs have also suffered major problems. St. George/Illawarra signed big prop, Mose Masoe (198 cms and 126 kgs) from St. Helens to add some much needed size to their forward pack this year. But

he suffered an ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) tear at training in early February and will probably miss most, if not all, of this season. The Cowboys' 26 year hooker/halfback, Ray Thompson, broke his ankle while training with the Indigenous squad for Saturday night's game in Brisbane. He could be out for around 14 weeks and this is a major blow to the Cowboys. The Titans Greg Bird suffered a nasty knock below his eye while making a front on tackle in the All Stars game on Saturday night. Nothing has been reported about this at the time of writing, but he could have problems playing in his team's first competition game, against Newcastle on Sunday 6 March on the Gold Coast.

Many Australians believe most of the fifty-fifty calls from the referees go the All Blacks way in every game against the Wallabies. They certainly can't believe this is the case in cricket tests between the two countries. A huge error from English umpire Richard Illingworth in the final over of the first day of the Test in Wellington, cost New Zealand 232 runs. Australian batsman, Adam Voges shouldered arms when Doug Bracewell was bowling the last over of the day. The ball bowled him and Voges should have been on his way with a score of just seven, rather than the 239 with which he finished. But the umpire had called no-ball and so he was not out. This was an extremely bad and costly mistake. It is a huge embarrassment for cricket's officials and adds to the bad deal the Kiwis received in Adelaide last November from video umpire, Nigel Llong. The on field umpire had given Australian tail ender Nathan Lyon not out after an appeal for a catch in slips. Brendon McCullum referred the decision to the umpire and the replay, seen by thousands on TV, showed he was out. But in a farcical result, Llong stayed with the on-field umpire's call. Lyon was on 0 at the time and went on to score 34 and put on a 74 run partnership with Peter Neville. This meant the Australians went from a sizeable first innings deficit to a good lead. This had a major bearing on Australia winning this Test and winning the series two tests to nil, instead of finishing one test all.

There is a call from some in Australia to move away from the Royal family and form a Republic. This sentiment is not so strong in New Zealand. But after the two English umpires, Illingworth and LLong did the dirty on the Kiwis, maybe this will change.

Lop Sided Scores Likely in "World" Series

By John Coffey QSM



THEY SAY a poor dress rehearsal is a good omen for a stunning opening night. If that was true, then English Super League clubs Leeds, Wigan and St Helens will be too strong for their respective Australian NRL rivals, North Queensland, Brisbane and Sydney Roosters, in three high profile encounters this weekend. But, as they also say, yeah right!

Leeds and North Queensland, the respective 2015 Super League and NRL champions, clash in the World Club Challenge match on Monday morning (NZ time 8am). In the supporting World Series fixtures St Helens hosts the Roosters (Saturday 9am) and Wigan is at home to Brisbane (Sunday 9am). All three games will be shown on Sky Sport 2.

Benefiting from home ground advantage, British clubs have enjoyed considerable success in the past, but there was often a feeling the Australians were still in pre-season trip mode. Despite Broncos and Kiwis forward Alex Glenn dropping the "pre-season" line on arrival at Heathrow last weekend, the Aussies have clearly taken a far more serious approach in recent years. In 2015 South Sydney hammered St Helens 39-0.

By winning the Championship, Challenge Cup and minor premiership trophies last season Leeds gave every impression of being a potential world champion club. But off-season retirements cast some doubts, and the depressing results and injuries suffered during the first two Super League rounds, have torpedoed any confidence the Rhinos are worthy opponents for Jonathan Thurston's team.

Leeds licked its wounds after an opening 12-10 home loss to Warrington. But last weekend the Rhinos were humiliated 56-12 at lowly Widnes, which is coached by former Auckland Warriors forward Denis Betts but is not rated as even a top-eight play-offs contender. "We weren't good" was the incredible understatement of Leeds coach Brian McDermott after the club's worst start for 16 seasons.

Since the summer retirements of captain Kevin Sinfield and long-serving forwards Jamie Peacock and Kylie Leuluai, Leeds has lost new captain and playmaker Danny McGuire plus wing Tom Briscoe, fullback Ashton Golding and second-rower Carl Ablett to injuries. New hooker Beau Falloon and experienced forward Jamie Jones-Buchanan are also sidelined and few if any of the walking wounded are

expected to return this week.

The Cowboys, on the other hand, are the only NRL club not to have farewelled any players of note between seasons. They have a full squad to choose from and a burning desire to earn further honours for their widespread North Queensland fans. We can be sure there will be no "pre-season friendly" thoughts on the minds of Thurston and company.

Meanwhile, St Helens' Australian halfback Luke Walsh gloomily predicted the Roosters would rack up 80 points unless there was a sudden change of attitude at his adopted club. Walsh had just trudged from the field after the Saints were totally embarrassed by the Salford Reds. The struggling Reds ran through for eight tries in their 44-10 walkover, their first win over St Helens for 16 years.

"We just didn't approach the game with the right mind set," said St Helens coach Keiron Cunningham. "I could smell an air of complacency before the game. We'll respond next week. The disappointing thing as coach is I thought I had got some consistency about the place." While Cunningham's crew was suffering its worst performance in memory the Roosters were enjoying a build-up camp in faraway Dubai.

Only Wigan, of the three English clubs in the World Series, has won both of its Super League games. But neither win was convincing. After scrambling to a 12-6 first-up defeat of Catalans Dragons at home, Wigan needed a very late try by Test wing Josh Charnley to escape with an 18-13 victory at Huddersfield last weekend. And that was against a Huddersfield squad without eight regulars because of injuries.

"It's a decent start for us but we understand we need to improve for next week," admitted Wigan coach Shaun Wane. "We played ugly and won. Some of our skill was poor." Wigan has been without the Tomkins brothers, Sam and Joel, because of lingering injuries and has shown little initiative on attack. You can be sure recently-appointed England national coach Wayne Bennett and his Broncos will have no sympathy for a club they beat only 14-12 in the corresponding match last year.

West's Warriors

By Kim Parkinson in the UK

HEADING INTO their 3rd season the UK based WESTS WARRIORS are looking forward to a big year in the London premiership where they hope to improve on last years semi final appearance in the top grade.

Formed in 2014 by rugby league enthusiast and kiwi Kim Parkinson the club is on the rise with visions to help develop local players and re-establish the game of rugby league in London while also giving Kiwis and Aussies the chance to play footy in the UK.

Along with fellow expat and junior kiwi Matt Ashe and from what started as a general conversation as to how they could get travelling Kiwis and Australians to be able to continue to play rugby league while on their O.E they have now grown into one of London's most recognised rugby league clubs.

Social media proved to be a useful recruiting tool and it didn't take long for word to get around that London had a new rugby league team.

In 2014 the team went through their debut season in the Entry League unbeaten claiming the minor premiership and winners cup, but their greatest achievement and a first for any Entry league team was winning the London Challenge Cup final where they were up against London Premiership champions and one of London's most successful clubs The South West Chargers.

On the back of the success from the previous season the Warriors were asked to join the London premiership grade in 2015, club manager Shun Tamura said "the boys knew it would be a massive step up to play premier teams week in week out but as a new club trying to establish ourselves we have to take these opportunities and are up for the challenge"

So good was the interest the Warriors were still able to have a secondary team continue to play in the entry league grade which meant the club could continue to introduce and blood new players into rugby league.

Boasting a playing roster with well over 60 players the future looks bright for this west London club and Coach Kim Parkinson said "Our goal is to give players both experienced and new comers the opportunity to be involved and play rugby league here in west London while also giving the game more exposure not only in the UK but around the world, we have players with no rugby league experience join us at a Thursday training session and then play their first game on the Saturday and as long as they enjoy it and keep coming back we will continue to do what we can to keep the club going"

The 2016 season kicks off in April and if you would like to be involved contact the club at: westswarriors@gmail.com or find them on Facebook at Wests Warriors



If you wish to **subscribe** or **unsubscribe** please email Stephen Maier at stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz

Counties Manukau Ethnic All Stars make the Semi Finals of International Rugby League 9's

IN CHINESE it's GĒGĒ , in Filipino it's KUYA, in Hindi it's BHAAE , in Thai it's PHĪ CHĀY , in Jamaican Patois it's BRODA in English it's BROTHER!!!

“Brothers” - was the team rallying cry of the Counties Manukau Ethnic All Stars as they made their inaugural International Rugby League debut in the 2016 Cabramatta International Rugby League 9's on Saturday the 30th of January.

Counties Manukau Ethnic All Stars participation in this competition has been 3 years in the making. In 2013 the South Auckland League administrators had the foresight to consider how to grow “The Greatest Game of All” in their region and came to realise that the growing Asian and Indian population in New Zealand was an untapped asset!

Counties Manukau Rugby League (CMRL) General Manager Kasey King was given the role to break into these communities.

King soon discovered that even though there was strong popular community support within the New Zealand Asian community for Rugby League and the New Zealand Warriors there was a reluctance in these communities to play “The Greatest Game of All”.

The original perception was that the reluctance came from religious and cultural differences between the new emerging Asian communities and New Zealand mainstream culture.

It was soon discovered by King that the religious and cultural issues was not the problem, but the perceived barrier of physicality. With the communities not wanting to take on “the big Maori and Pacifica boys because of their natural athleticism.”

So King conceived a way of introducing Rugby League into these communities safely by having them play amongst themselves so the concept of the Ethnic League was born under the umbrella of the CMRL.

So 3 years since the experiment began with 3 teams which has now become 4. A combined Ethnic League squad participated in this weekend's Cabramatta International Rugby League 9's as the Counties Manukau Ethnic All Stars (CMEAS) team.

There was tough competition to make this inaugural CMEAS team and those not making the squad but now fanatically dedicated converts to “The Greatest Game of All” put their hand up for the Thailand Rugby League!

In a space of 3 years the fledgling Ethnic Rugby League experiment has contributed 17 Rugby League converts into Rugby League's growing International 9s tournament.

The “Brothers” of the CMEAS flew back to New Zealand with their heads held high, for in their inaugural International Rugby League appearance they have performed above expectations going home after reaching the Semi Final of the Bowl Trophy of the Cabramatta International 9's.

The CMEAS first game in their Pool G was against a team from the suburb of Zetland that play in the tough and competitive South Sydney district competition. With the team impressing against this experienced local side with their strong defence many a time from their own try line denying them any sniff at scoring. And strongly coming back from conceding a try late in the first half with Hamish Lal breaking away from inside the CMEAS own half to score the inaugural historical first points for the team. Strong defence in the second half wore down the Zetland defence allowing John Nicodemus to score the winning try for their inaugural 12-6 victory.

The second match was an International game against Canada. The CMEAS rookie experience in “The Greatest Game of All” was exposed by the more experienced Canadians with the All Stars defence around the ruck and handling errors letting them down for the Canadians to run away with a 24-4 win.

Continued on next page...

In 2014 it was discovered that the Asian community's reluctance to play "The Greatest Game of All" was their perception that the local Maori and Pacifica players were physically bigger and more athletic than themselves.

For 3 years the players in the Ethnic League competition have only been playing amongst themselves so in their final pool game they were up against a team representing their "perceived reservations" the Australian Fiji Rugby League team. But what the All Stars discovered, that once you are on the footy field, after your first hit up and your first tackle you don't worry about the size of your opposition you just get on with playing the game!

The All Stars played out of their skins manning up in defence and taking the ball up against their much bigger opponent and competed as equals. They had the measure of their much bigger and experienced Fijian opponents walking off the field with a credible 3 tries to 5 score line of 12 – 30. The boogeyman had been exorcised, the All Stars walked off the field with their heads held high.

The new found confidence was carried into their quarter final Bowl trophy match against Thailand Rugby League where Filipino Eagles player Odyssey Laderas stating the obvious "we smashed them" with a 30-4 score line.

Unfortunately half an hour before the 4:40pm semi final match against El Salvador the heavens opened up in Sydney with lightning, strong winds and torrential rain forcing tournament organisers to cancel the tournament on safety grounds.

Three years ago the New Zealand Rugby League had the foresight to realise that they needed to tap into their new and growing Asian population and credit goes to CMRL General Manager Kasey King's work that the Ethnic League experiment, has shown that Asian heritage New Zealanders can hold their place as equals on a footy field in "The Greatest Game of All".

More significantly, in 2014 a player stated that GĒGĒ, KUYA, BHAE, PHĪ CHĀY, BRODA, were words he never expected using amongst his new group of Rugby League BROTHERS, because he said that due to religious and cultural differences he would not have even been sitting on the same table as them sharing a meal let alone talking to them. The greatest success story of the Ethnic League concept is that "The Greatest Game of All" has built bridges between all member communities in New Zealand.



CMRL ETHNIC 9s ALL STARS

Cabramatta International 9s, 30th January 2016

Back row: Carmilo Manuyag (Trnr), Andrew Stevenson (Coach), Jasdeep Dhaliwal, Jericho Nicodemus, Joseph Kumar, Bill Chu (C), Dave Dyer, Faraz Khan, Hamish Lal, John Nicodemus (VC), Mike Cudd (Asst. Coach), Marique Mafeking-Brown, Darwin Aquinaldo (Mngr)
Front row: Depak Kumar, Odyssey Laderas, Amoi Sing, Joshua Nicodemus, Jake Cruz, Gerald Christian Tulud

Score Card

Pool G games

CMEAS V Zetland 12 – 6

CMEAS V Canada 4 – 24

CMEAS V Australian Fiji RL
12 - 30

Bowl Quarter Final

CMEAS V Thailand RL 20 – 4

Bowl Semi Final

CMEAS V El Salvador cancelled

THE INITIAL reason for my letter was after reading the story about River Richards and his super photos of all his shirts in newsletter #107

I wonder how many shirts your readers have kept over the years and don't want to let go because of the emotional attachment and experiences we have with our teams and historical special memories

It made me have a look back at my collection of rugby shirts from over the years, both playing and supporting, I have a few all which have a nostalgic significance

Photo left to right top row: Hindley ARLFC, several Wigan Warriors home & away, Great Britain, Wigan and 2 x England shirts

Middle row L-R: Hindley ARLFC, Kiwi All Golds, more Wigan Warriors "THE MAD BUTCHER" in a Vodafone Warriors 9's shirt and the back of Barrow Raiders v Keighley charity kit

Bottom row L-R: Hindley ARLFC, Carcassonne RL shirt, and yes a Leigh Centurions and a Penrith Panthers signed shirt



The Hindley ARLFC with my nickname Dexter on is an end of season prezzie from the team, so Butch you now know more than one bloke called "Dexter"

The Carcassonne shirt swapped with the French club on tour playing us in Wigan

Leigh shirt is my youngest son's 1st team playing shirt from season 2014

Penrith Panther signed shirt brought from OZ by my old mate Bill Ashurst

The Vodafone Warriors 9's Shirt arrived in the post today, so excited to send in this letter and photo below, wish I could've been at the games!

Most Significant Shirt

The shirt with Hankinson no 3 is another of my sons playing shirts, this is a one off and so significant as it's the shirt he wore in the Danny Jones charity game between Barrow v Keighley in 2015. This shirt means so much, we bought it on the night after the game, all the shirts auctioned that night raised substantial amounts for the Danny Jones fund

I think some of the above are the explanations why we don't let go of our old shirts and memorabilia due to all the friends we make through the game, the great times and lasting memories

It makes me I feel proud to be associated with this great game, not to mention meeting people like Sir Peter which is a bonus. Butch mate I owe you, once again totally appreciate your time effort and generosity

Do any of your readers share the passion and enthusiasm as much young River Richards?

Hope the photo brings a smile to your face as it did to mine, Brilliant work Mate thanks again

Keep Well and all the best from the family here in Wigan

Kind Regards, Gary Hankinson



Catching Up With Joseph Parker

IT WAS great to catch up with Joe Parker at my place before he flew back to the USA TO TRAIN FOR HIS NEXT FIGHT HE SIGNED A COUPLE OF GLOVES FOR ME FOR MY CHARITY WORK and him and his dad got dressed up ready to support the #KIWIS later this year.



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



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Awesome Prize Winners



Can't belie I won this Vodafone warriors jersey and bucket hat thanks Carl hall in the UK.



I love my new top I wont in the newsletter. Thanks Alana From Christchurch.



Thanks Butch I am rapped with my jersey I won Regards, Andrew Chapman.

Hi Sir Peter,

Thank you for my consolation prize of a Nines t-shirt and a programme.

My brother is going to be very pleased with his new top.

Warm regards,

Fiona



Sorry Butch but when mokos Isabella, Xavier and Sophia saw me in my cool Warriors jersey and their mum taking photos, they put their gear on and joined in too... Cheers Jeanne.

Hi Pete and team

Thanks so much for the Matt King book which I received today. I have read 64 pages so far and it looks like an amazing story of an amazing young sportsman. Thanks so much- you are an inspiration yourself!

Kind Regards, Liz McDonald

ABSOLUTELY STOKED Butch to win a Nines WARRIORS jersey! Thanks Heaps my friend. Will send a photo in soon proudly wearing it!!

Michael Owen

Hi Peter

Thank you for the Nines program you sent to me – received @ weekend has got very good articles. makes good reading. Going to Warriors game in Nelson on Saturday. Hope all keeping well

Thanks again Paul Larsen, Greymouth



I love meeting Vodafone Warriors fans and I meet some very loyal ones. The other day I meet Hayley in Whangarei, she got this tattoo done as a birthday present to herself. If you can beat it email me at pcleitch@xtra.co.nz



My mate Dexter with Tana Umaga



Very proud moment for Konrad Hurrell as Darren Lockyer presents him with his jersey for the game All Stars game played in Brisbane over the weekend.

If you wish to **subscribe** or **unsubscribe** please email Stephen Maier at stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz

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