

VODAFONE



# Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

3<sup>th</sup> August 2016

## Newsletter #133

### Golden Point Victory Over Panthers



Shaun Johnson scores a golden point try.



Simon Mannering on the run.



Solomone Kata powers through a tackle

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

# All is Forgiven

By David Kemeys

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



**L**AST WEEK I suggested that I did not have much confidence in our recruitment team, even if I did admit that Issac Luke, RTS and others were hardly failures.

Now I think I still might have been being unfair, and that is all because of the performance of one man.

Cast your mind back to May.

Talkback radio was full of callers to air bagging the Warriors Naughty Six, remember?

We needn't go over all that old ground again, but one of those six is the man I want to talk about.

Bodene Thompson.

Tell me he does not make our team stronger, more organised, and less panicked in defence.

Having the former Tiger in the side just makes us look better.

There is no doubt in my mind, which admittedly is hardly the finest league brain in the land, that Thompson adds grit and determination, and more than a little impetus on attack, that we have been unable to replicate during his recent absence.

Is he perfect, no. But who is?

Yes it's hard to forget that he bombed a certain try against the Raiders, but his performances this year have been pretty bloody good.

So to the recruitment team, I salute you for getting that one right.

Don't forget that in May his sister – who I have never met by the way – was forced to take to Facebook, urging people not to write negative comments about athletes on social media, such was the pasting the poor bloke was taking.

I wrote about it at the time. Trisha Cameron impressed me no end when she went into bat for Bodene in the wake of six players being stood down after a night out after we got smacked 42-0 by Melbourne on Anzac Day.

The incident with prescription medicine and energy drinks is now infamous but Cameron wrote at the time that we all understood the nature of bullying, and suggested what was being written was way over

the line.

Cameron said there was a time she believed “sticks and stones” was true. “But words hurt and can and have shown to be able to kill as well.”

She asked people to put themselves in the athletes' shoes and questioned the humanity of people who ridicule them online. “Have we as human beings lost our humanity?” she wrote.

“These individuals put their hearts on the line to play for their club, can go from highly-loved and idolised to getting absolutely slaughtered by their own fans.”

All of which reminds me that surely it could have been easy for Thompson – and others - to spit the dummy and sulk, to lose their confidence, to play in some half-hearted manner.

So congratulations to them all.

We know Konrad Hurrell has been moved on, but the others involved have done everything they possibly could have to redeem themselves.

They have been thoroughly professional and in every case – but especially Thompson's – I'm prepared to say “all is forgiven”.

Just keep performing the way you do Bodene, like it matters as much to you as it does to us mere fans.

Good enough for me.

## Golden Boy

Warriors golden point hero Shaun Johnson reckons he dares not think how the team would be feeling if they had lost to the Panthers.

Which is fair enough, because I can't think how us fans would be feeling either, and it has to be worse for the players surely.

Johnson's try to give us a 20-16 win came with such a roar I thought the roof might get taken off, but it was as much sheer relief as joy at finally winning one.

Three losses in the last four weeks in golden point, and it would have been a frosty drive back to mine if we had gone down again.

*Continued on next page...*

But imagine what it would have done for our confidence if we'd lost.

"I don't know where our heads would be, I don't like to think about it," Johnson said.

Well I will. I think you could have kissed our finals hopes goodbye, and that our confidence would have taken a blow, and one that no side could recover from.

So into the eight we go, with some tough fixtures ahead of us. But it was certainly a win at all costs night at Mt Smart.

"Obviously, we're right in the mix. We want to get better and we want to stay on that path if we want to be a part of September footy."

Having said all that, I have declared before that golden point is a lottery. One point each is fine by me. If two sides can't be separated, so be it.

And the terrible pressure the refs are under has to come into it. The whistle never goes, and it should, because there are so many players off side in golden point that it is a joke.

Mind you, the Panthers were so far outside, it actually made it easier for Johnson to score the miracle try he did on Saturday.

Even Johnson acknowledged it. "I got charged down the play before. Refs don't blow penalties in overtime, so I knew they were going to get to me. You don't expect to score a try from it, but I was glad I could come up with that play."

### **I'm Over Golden Point**

Some excellent work from the Herald's David Skipwith, who posted video online to prove what he was talking about, which was that our eventual win saved the blushes of the refs.

To be fair, they had done nothing to enamour themselves to the home crowd all night, but Skipwith got the footage to show that two penalty-worthy infringements in extra time were overlooked.

I've already said the men in the middle are in a no win situation in golden point. They are going to be crucified if they blow a kickable penalty, but it's all got out of hand.

The refs are turning a blind eye to blatant penalty

offences.

We won, but we are also copping it for poor execution in some quarters, after we blew chances to slot a field goal.

But the Herald video footage from the game shows Penrith – and we all knew it – should have been penalised for offences that twice sabotaged our chances of a one-pointer.

Near the end of the first period of golden point, Albert Vete is five metres out right in front of the uprights. Penrith's Trent Merrin, Leilani Latu and Matt Moylan are all not square at marker, and Latu, Moylan and Tyrone Peachey, wrap up Issac Luke with the ball on the last tackle.

Grant Atkins is less than five metres away and does nothing.

Then, with time almost up, we set for a field goal but James Leuluai is tackled by Latu, who is clearly offside. From the ruck, Panthers hooker Peter Wallace – also offside, charges down the kick.

Atkins is entirely consistent at least – he does nothing.

But the problem is now so bad it is a joke.

Don't believe me: [Click here](#)

### **We've Come A Long Way**

The result on Saturday night finally went our way, and it's interesting to look back, because it does not seem that long ago that we could not have knocked the skin of a rice pudding, let alone knock over another NRL side. But the Panthers win means we haven't been beaten in 80 minutes since losing 38-12 to the Raiders on May 21, and we haven't lost at Mt Smart since our 34-18 reversal to Manly way back on April 9.

I say this with pleasure, because earlier this year one of the league writers said the boys had to learn to win away from home, which I took great exception to, because I could care less if we win at Wagga wagga, I just want Mt Smart to be a place where everyone fears to come.



## McFadden Salutes Tenacity

Warriors coach Andrew McFadden hailed our tenacity, after the Panthers.

He says the results haven't shown how well the boys are going, or playing as a team, And he reckons as we gel more and build momentum, we'll continue to improve.

However McFadden will be bracing himself for more criticism for how he uses his bench.

Having not used Tuimoala Lolohea until the 81st minute of their golden point loss to Manly a fortnight ago, Blake Ayshford was unused off the bench, even in extra time.

But that Warriors coach insists that's simply how their game is planned.

## Johnson And Kata Shine

Johnson is getting all the accolades so it is easy to overlook the stunning play from Solomone Kata that led to the try.

Kata produced a brilliant play, wrenching the ball free one on one to snatch possession with the clock ticking away.

McFadden said Johnson's ability under extreme pressure was well-known, but it was skipper Ryan Hoffman who acknowledged Kata, calling it a "special play".

It was a very good game in our colours from Kata, who ran an impressive 129 metres.

## Where Is Best For Fusitu'a?

He has proved a bit special that David Fusitu'a.

One of the big talking points all week had been McFadden's decision to put Tuimoala Lolohea at full-back and shift Fusitu'a to the centres.

Considering how well Fusitu'a has been going at full-back, it was a brave call.

The doubters have gone very quiet. Fusitu'a got a double and was excellent in defence, not something you say too often about the man he replaced, Blake Ayshford.

That said, to be fair to the Aussie, he has been pretty good all year, and he found himself riding the pine in Lolohea mode – which is say he never got on the pitch.

McFadden copped it big time for leaving Lolohea on the bench until the final minutes of the loss to the Raiders, and he might be getting a few questions again on his bench management.

But back to Fusitu'a, he carried 10 times for 98 metres, so more than held his own in the centres.

"That is why we put him there. I have a lot of confidence in David and he certainly didn't let anyone down," McFadden said. "He has obviously got some real talent but he is playing tough and that is what we are trying to do."

## Fittler Fizzer

Apparently scoring a wizard of a try in the dying seconds of golden point isn't enough to impress league legend Brad Fittler.

Did anyone else nearly choke watching The Sunday Footy Show?

Shaun Johnson might have evaded tacklers left, right and centre, but Brad reckons he does not run the ball enough, with a suggestion that might be because of a lack of bottle.

Fittler took a shot at our No 7, telling his sidekicks Darren Lockyer and Andrew Johns, Johnson needed to "get his jersey dirty" and run the ball more often.

You could be forgiven for thinking that is a bit rich from a man who seldom troubled the dry cleaner himself during his playing days.

"Sometimes he plays off the line a lot. If he comes off with a dirty jersey, I reckon they'd win a lot."

Remember that Johnson, who had suffered a season-ending ankle injury late last year, did cop it big time at the start of this season for not taking on the line enough, though that has died down lately.

It didn't stop Fittler, with both Lockyer and Johns adding their five cents worth – which is about what their opinion on this is worth - agreeing Johnson's strongest aspect of play was his running game, and that he should utilise it.



# Orchids in The Stacey Jones Lounge

As part of the Women in League round all ladies who came into the lounge received a lovely orchid. The orchids were kindly donated by Graeme and Pam Lee (top row, middle picture in pink).



Marilyn Logan with her orchid.



Graeme and Pam Lee. Donating flowers for Sir Peter to give away on the day in the Stacey Jones Lounge.



Dexter with his niece Ivana (with her orchid) and brother Eddie.



Francis Howe, Odette Gaskin and Yvon Lowe (who is off to the UK on the 9th of August) standing with their beautiful Orchids as part of the Women in League round.



Dwaynne and Jo McBride first year lounge members.



Kathy receives her orchid.



Isabelle receives her orchid.



Kiri Edwards with daughter receiving orchids. Left name.



Susan (Bubs) Campbell, duty manager in the Stacey Jones Lounge with her orchids.



Leah on stage with Butch.



Lynn Goldsmith, Stef Goldsmith, Glenda Hust and Christine Leualu.



Chrissie and Shelley with their orchids.



# In the Stacey Jones Lounge



Ali Lautiiti and Charlie Gubb.



Butch and Danny Watson.



Butch and Morgan Baker.



Charlie Gubb with Sir Peter.



Kairangi about to get her orchid.



Cooper Feasey, Silverdale Sea Hawks 7 yrs, 5 try scorer speaks with Butch.



Peter Hay talks to Butch.



Mark Pickles with Butch.



Fleur Finlayson, hairdresser, on stage with Sir Peter.



Monique Reid a regular in the lounge was happy she got a photo with Charlie Gubb and Ali Lautiiti.



Possibly the youngest paid up members of the Sir Peter Leitch club Caleb (5) and Jack (7) Matson from Henderson.



Great to have these two guys in the lounge. Darryl Halligan (former Kiwi) and Richie Barnett (former Kiwi captain).

## More Photos from the Stacey Jones Lounge



Rob wins a TAB voucher 1st try scorer Shaun Johnson a pity it wasn't last try scored!.



The JAPANESE MAD BUTCHER  
Arato Tsujino.



Yuval Eyal and Samuel Pierce are  
Sales Consultants for the Vodafone  
Warriors based in Sydney at ANZ  
Stadium.

## Meeting the Penrith Boys at the Gate



Butch greets the Penrith Boys as they  
arrive at Mt Smart Stadium.  
(L-R) Suia MATAGI, Nathan  
CLEARY, Sir Peter LEITCH, Dylan  
WATENE-ZELEZNIAK.



Nathan CLEARY and Dylan WA-  
TENE-ZELEZNIAK with Sir Peter  
asking for directions..



Nathan CLEARY getting some tips on  
the wind direction at Mt Smart.

SEE HOW THE INTRUST SUPER  
PREMIERSHIP TABLE LOOKS AFTER 21  
ROUNDS



[Click Here](#)







*By John Coffey QSM*

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

## Dene Halatau A Great Team Man

*Dene Halatau during the international rugby league test match, Kiwis v Kangaroos.  
8 May 2009. Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)*

**T**HE SEASON-LONG furore over Wests Tigers coach Jason Taylor and club legend Robbie Farah has overshadowed everything else in the former Balmain and Western Suburbs territory, to the extent that few people have noticed who has actually been wearing the number nine jersey. Until he recently announced his retirement, former Kiwi Dene Halatau was the most anonymous figure in the whole unsavoury affair.

Halatau has never been one to seek or stand in the spotlight. “I’m not a world beater, but I feel I do well enough to be a regular and consistent first grader,” he said when confirming he would be hanging up his boots at season’s end. Halatau has been just that in 243 first-grade matches (only four fewer than the far more celebrated Farah) in a career which has covered ten seasons at the Tigers and four with the Bulldogs.

At 33 years of age, it is no little distinction to go out while wearing the hooker’s jersey ahead of the current NSW State of Origin representative. Halatau perfectly conforms to Taylor’s game plan by providing quick and accurate dummy half service to emerging young halves Luke Brooks and Mitchell Moses, whose development the coach believes was being blunted by Farah’s more domineering play-making methods.

The Halatau family moved from Invercargill to Sydney when Dene was aged four, not that he ever had any doubts about his heritage. “Playing for the Kiwis was amazing,” he said of his 15 Tests between 2004 and 2009. “I’ve got an Aussie accent and been here most of my life but New Zealand is still a big part of me – it’s where my parents grew up.” He recalled the emotion felt when Wests Tigers flew his parents to Britain for his Kiwis debut.

Halatau started at hooker in 11 of his Tests and came off the interchange in his other four. He missed the 2005 Tri-Nations victory because of off-season surgery and played only a minor role in the 2008 World Cup triumph. At 178cm and 92kg, Halatau actually came into first grade as a centre or second-rower and was undaunted at conceding size to most of his rivals. Tigerish defence and enthusiastic support play compensated for that.

When Wests Tigers played the Warriors three times in Christchurch local fans not only had the chance to watch Benji Marshall weave his magic but to also appreciate the development of New Zealand-born youngsters Halatau and Bronson Harrison. I can recall justifying long interviews with them to a doubting sports editor, saying “they will both be Kiwis”, but with fingers firmly crossed behind my back. They didn’t let me down.

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The undoubted highlights of Halatau's NRL career were the 2005 play-offs culminating with the 30-16 grand final victory over the Cowboys. Marshall, Farah and a few higher profile players tend to be most remembered but Halatau filled a significant role. He was promoted from the bench to loose forward for the finals and named Man of the Match after scoring two tries in the 20-12 preliminary final win over the Dragons.

Bulldogs officials also publicly praised Halatau's contribution to the game, on and off the field, on learning of his retirement. Injuries restricted him to 69 games for the Bulldogs but they appreciated his versatility. In 2012 a knee injury suffered in round 19 kept him out of first grade for the remainder of the season. But he was still made 18th man for the grand final and was just a warm-up mishap away from making a dramatic appearance.

In 2014 he realised another ambition by returning to the Tigers on a two-year deal, which was later extended to include 2016. Halatau was happily back where he played his junior football and attended Westfields Sports High School. In the last two years Halatau has captained the Tigers when Farah and Aaron Woods were away on State of Origin duty, is currently vice captain, and has been to the forefront of the club's community programme.

Dene Halatau, by his own admission, might not go down in history as a world beater but he will be remembered as one of the Wests Tigers' most versatile and consistent players during contrasting times of triumph and turmoil. Few teams find success without men of his calibre and they are even more valuable in a crisis. The Kiwis also had cause to be grateful that, despite his accent, he never forgot where he and his parents came from.

## The Political Games

By John Coffey QSM

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



**F**ORTY YEARS ago I spent America's Independence Day sitting around a camp fire in the Black Hills of North Dakota talking to one of the most courageous men I have ever met. He was a white South African journalist who had earned notoriety in his homeland for criticising the racial Apartheid policies of his government. And he was telling me that our government was making a grave error by allowing the 1976 All Blacks to tour South Africa.

We were part of a 70-strong group of international journalists invited to celebrate America's bicentenary, the 200th anniversary of its breakaway from British rule. Our hosts provided us with about 25 units, each comprising a new Chrysler Cordoba car and silver Airstream trailer. There were guides in front to lead us and mechanics behind to repair us if necessary. In about 30 days this fine convoy drove 6000km from Washington DC to Seattle.

About the same time that we were pulling out of our Bull Run staging point near the United States capital, athletes from around the world were assembling in Montreal, Canada, for the 1976 Olympic Games. Some stayed only briefly. When the IOC refused to ban New Zealand for consorting with disgraced South Africa most of the other African nations pulled out. The Games, especially the track and field events, were much the poorer without them.

Two years earlier, in 1974, I had looked on in amazement at one of the truly great individual sporting achievements of all time. Filbert Bayi, a little man from Tanzania, cleared out from the field to effortlessly win the Commonwealth Games 1500 metres gold medal. Without any hint of a pace maker, he just as effortlessly shattered the world record. New Zealander John Walker led the hopeless pursuit and comfortably claimed the silver medal.

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Any chance of Bayi and Walker – or any other African and white competitors – meeting up again in Montreal was ruined by politics. Later, the 1980 Games in Moscow were devalued when most of the western world, including New Zealand, boycotted them. In retaliation, the Russians and their allies boycotted the 1984 Games in Los Angeles. Some sports were affected more than others, but the so-called spirit of the Olympics was dead and buried.

I always felt the west should have sent their yachtsmen in 1980 because the sailing was held off Tallinn, Estonia, which was fiercely opposed to its Russian rulers. I visited the site of that regatta in 2013. The yacht club is still there. But the church the Russians were required to build for visitors (behind a high fence to keep the locals out) was demolished as soon as they had gone home. The Estonians still passionately dislike their former oppressors.

After the 1980 boycott the New Zealand government poured money into promoting the multi-sport, multi-venue 1981 New Zealand Summer Games, which also incorporated the Pan Pacific Games track and field meeting. I was owed five months leave from The Press and took the job as Games Information Officer. Backed by the grateful Americans, there were world-class competitors in every sport but it was a poor substitute for the real thing.

Now IOC officials have permitted politics to interfere with the Games which open in Rio this weekend by allowing Russia, whose government has for years sponsored an illegal drugs programme, to take part. Individual sports organisations have at least banned some Russians, including previously proven drugs cheats. But even that is hypocrisy, considering that previous convictions of United States and Jamaican sprinters have been ignored.

We have also had inter-media politics within this country, with news organisations NZME and Fairfax pulling their reporting teams out of Rio because of alleged restrictions put on them by rights-holder Sky. It almost seems that NZME and Fairfax have already merged, such was their orchestrated withdrawals. Obviously, the newspaper print sections of their empires now count for little, if anything. Video and the internet rule.

Back to 1976: that east-west transcontinental jaunt was an amazing experience. There were speedway writers from Venezuela who delighted in racing to the next stopover; two French lasses who twice ran out of petrol because they mistook the temperature gauge for the fuel gauge; and even two guys from Wairarapa who repeatedly muttered “we’ve got nothing like this in Masterton” whenever they were shown another wonder of the American world.

And what happened to my South African colleague who warned me about our governments’ policies around that camp fire in the Black Hills? He and his family bravely returned to South Africa where he continued to fight for justice. Some years later he smuggled his wife and children out of the country and then escaped himself. Our politicians learned nothing and condemned us to the horror and division of the 1981 Springboks tour. Roll on Rio.



Just thought I  
would remind you  
of the final score  
on Saturday Night  
- Sir Peter Leitch





**D**ESPITE THE weather, Mt. Smart was the place to be last Saturday. Great Entertainment and two excellent and well deserved results. At the beginning of the season if anyone had said that the Warriors would play five Golden Point games, there would have been plenty of doubt. But such matches reveal a lot about a team's character and that was very evident on Saturday. They wouldn't give up and obtained the desired result, which puts them back in the top eight, if only by a slender margin.

It is interesting to analyse the Warriors complete Golden Point match statistics. The Penrith game was their 14th such match, since this method was introduced for the 2003 season. They have now won five of these games, lost six and drawn three. Stacey Jones won two with dropped goals, while the other victories came from tries by Bodene Thompson, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck and now Shaun Johnson. The first win, which was just the third Golden Point game, came at Allianz Stadium in Sydney on 29 June 2003, when the Warriors beat South Sydney 31-30. The second was at Mt. Smart on 19 April 2009 when they beat the Roosters 17-16 and the third at Parramatta last year, on 16 May 2015, when they defeated the Eels 17-13. This season they beat the Roosters 32-28 at Gosford on 3 April and then came Saturday's victory over Penrith. Three of the wins have been away, while two came at Mt. Smart.

The Cronulla Sharks have played the most Golden Point games with 18 now for nine wins, two draws and seven losses. Then comes the Wests Tigers with 16 games, followed by Souths and Penrith with 15 and then the Warriors, Brisbane and the Cowboys who have each played 14 such matches. The Sharks also have the most Golden Point wins with nine, while Manly, seven, have played the least games.

Conditions were far from favourable last Saturday and the match statistics showed just what a titanic struggle it was in the forwards. The Warriors' forwards made a total of 282 tackles while their backs totalled 54. Each of the five outside backs ran for more than 100 metres, with Tuimoala Lolohea topping the list with 170 metres. The most amazing match stat was the five line drop outs by Penrith compared to none of these from the Warriors. Shaun Johnson's superb kicking game was responsible for the Panthers' problems in this department. Shaun now leads the NRL forced line drop out list with 21 and this is a tremendous weapon to have in the team's arsenal.

The Sydney papers have commented on it, as have many of the radio boys, but when is a penalty not a penalty? The League has to act on this lack of consistency in the Golden Point period. Several Panthers were offside as they raced up to Shaun Johnson before he skipped around them and over for the match winning try. Towards the end of the first half of extra time, Issac Luke was engulfed by defenders only 10 metres or so out from the Penrith tryline on the last tackle. A couple of these were well offside.

Not a round of football goes by without some problems coming out of the Bunker. Referees boss Tony Archer is deservedly being criticised for his constant defending of their decisions. Not only was a Bronco forward denied a fair try against the Roosters on Thursday night, but there were several other questionable decisions and non-decisions during the past weekend. In the 72nd minute of the Cowboys-Storm clash at Townsville on Saturday night, Cowboy winger, Javid Bowen appeared to lose possession at the play-the-ball. But a replay clearly showed it had been sneakily kicked, not once but twice, by Storm marker, Cheyse Blair. Fox commentator Braith Anasta said, "that has to be a penalty to the Cowboys."

However the referees put a scrum down for the lost possession and the Bunker did not communicate to let the referees know what really happened. Why didn't they communicate the facts to the referees, as they had done in other games during the past weekend and as they have done all season.

Players and fans just want consistency but they are not getting this from the Bunker.

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The Holden Cup side showed plenty of grit, determination and heart to hold out Penrith for their 30-28 win. The Panthers are runaway leaders in this competition and Saturday's loss was only their second this year. Congratulations to 19 year old fullback, Kane Telea for reaching the 100 point mark this season. His try against the Panthers, his ninth in 2016, took him to 102 points for the year in his 19 matches. Winger, Lewis Soosemea, who turned 18 four weeks ago, has the most tries for the team with 10 in his 17 games. Juniur Pauga, aged 20, has now run for 2,685 metres in his 19 games, scored six tries and made 230 tackles. Chris Sio, 18 and Sheldon Pitama, 20, are the top tacklers. Chris has made 651 tackles in his 20 matches and Sheldon, 20, is not far behind with 649 in his 19 games. The young Warriors have a big job in front of them to finish in the top eight teams but on Saturday's form, they can do it.

What a great game to finish the round. The Titans stopped the Sharks winning run at 15. Great effort by the Gold Coast forwards. Greg Bird was terrific. But both teams had players offside in the Golden Point period, when field goal attempts were in play. Yet again, no action taken by the referees.

## Warriors Win Epic Grand Final By Ben Francis



**T**HE TAKAHIWAI Warriors are the 2016 Scott Electrical Premiership champions after beating the Otangarei Knights 18-16 in an epic final showdown.

This was the Warriors first title since 2008.

The Warriors opened the scoring through Joel Freeman.

But the Knights hit right back as Doug Makiri crashed his way over the line.

Later on in the half, Knights player Verne Wilson dotted down to give Otangarei its first lead of the final.

Following the try, Otangarei slotted a penalty goal which gave the Knights a 12-6 lead.

Just before the break, Warriors half Kyle Hool scored, however the try went unconverted.

The Knights led 12-10 at the break.

With just over 20 minutes remaining, Knights winger Shaquille Ormsby was sent to the sin bin.

Down a man, the Knights defended bravely but Hool crossed again to give the minor premiers the lead once again.

In the final 10 minutes, a superb try from Knights player Pedro Blake, followed up with the conversion tied things up.

It looked like for the second straight year the grand final was going to extra time. Last year, the Warriors went down to the Hikurangi Stags 20-16 after playing double extra time. The Warriors certainly didn't want a repeat of last year.

However, Takahiwai was awarded a penalty close to the tryline and opted for the two with 38 seconds remaining. Utility Nic Poutama stepped up and converted the penalty goal as the siren sounded..

The Warriors stole victory at the death to finish off a thrilling season at Toll Stadium.

Warriors player Nic Schuster won man of the match.

In the under 18s final, Marist Brothers beat the Moerewa Tigers 30-22 to claim the Sam McKendry cup.





# High-Tackle Holloway... I'll give ya the tip mate!

## *The Mad Butchers Weekly NRL Tipping Comp.*

By John Holloway

### NRL Round 22

		Sue Phelan	Joe Vagana	John Coffey	Fast Eddie	Monty Betham	Bill Hayward	High-Tackle Holloway
		<i>Maloney's Barber Shop - The best haircut in town.</i>	<i>League Legend and Machine Lease King.</i>	<i>Newsletter Columnist and Veteran Leagueie</i>	<i>Devonport Dutchman - Takin it easy...</i>	<i>The Warrior Boxer - StepsForLife</i>	<i>Link Business - Buying or Selling a Business</i>	<i>Richmond Bulldog - Old School Richmond Leagueie</i>
Date/ Venue	Game							
04/08 - WIN	Dragons v Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos
05/08 - Pirtek	Eels v Sea Eagles	Sea Eagles	Eels	Sea Eagles	Eels	Sea Eagles	Sea Eagles	Sea Eagles
06/08 - Hunter	Knights v Bulldogs	Bulldogs	Bulldogs	Bulldogs	Bulldogs	Bulldogs	Bulldogs	Bulldogs
06/08 - Sth Cross	Sharks v Raiders	Sharks	Sharks	Sharks	Sharks	Sharks	Sharks	Sharks
06/08 - AAMI	Storm v Rabbitohs	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm	Storm
07/08 - CBus	Titans v Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors	Warriors
07/08 - Leichardt	Tigers v Cowboys	Tigers	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys
08/09 - Pepper	Panthers v Roosters	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers	Panthers

#### How they're traveling....

Picks last week	6/8	6/8	5/8	4/8	6/8	6/8	7/8
Total picks	92/154	91/154	104/154	94/154	100/154	106/154	110/154

**M**Y TEAM of the round would be the never say die Titans as what they lack in brilliance they make up for in balls! They didn't totally derail the Sharks but they certainly brought the train to a halt hanging in for the 18 apiece draw. Only the second tie in 150 plus matches this season. Linchpin for the journeyman looking gold coasters is tyro half Taylor, who debuted very early on as a skinny looking kid replacing injured boom prospect Elgey but has seemingly matured overnight to a seasoned and sturdy looking playmaker. Douglas, McQueen, James, Taia and the tough and combative Greg Hollywood Bird are a pack that's hard to tame. The back division not scary looking but ex Warrior Hurrell is showing form and Hoffman, Don and McDonald just give their all. They certainly stood up to the big name Shire crew at every point. They will be a high hurdle for our boys who travel to CBus super stadium this week. The Roosters continue to improve as I predicted and they bucked the Broncos 32/16, more sleep loss for brooding Bennett. The Bulldogs got home but only just with the Dragons staying in the dogfight at 13/10. The Tigers were favoured and proved too strong for a bottom feeding Eels outfit 23/8. Taylors Westies lose injured young-gun Brooks for a few weeks which is not a help to high flying halves partner Moses. The Storm swept the Cowboys away 16/8 but even without JT the far north crew were not disgraced. A possible final preview this if the Sharks lose their bite. Also impressive and I guess not out of Big Dance calculations Rickys rampant Raiders stewed the Rabbits by 50 big ones, a smashing for under threat coach McGuire and his bunnyboys. The big name Inglis should be back on deck this week but I can't see him making a great diff to a listless Souths. The Manly boys continue to dream Top 8 but I think a bridge too far still they got another 2 points nipping the cellar dweller Knights 36/16. Right to the main event the mighty Vodafone Warriors and the Panthers. More heart-stopping dramas for Sir Butcher, Coach Cappy and every one of us Faithful fans.

*Continued on next page...*

*Continued from previous page...*

Don't believe the NZ TAB the Panthers started favourite for this and on recent form and personnel rightly so but thankfully our brave boys rose to the occasion to take the honours, but only after another titanic golden point struggle. Blind as a bat (or worse) ref Atkins ignored blatant multiple offside/unsquared play by Mer-rin/Latu/Moylan on Isaac luke in front of the posts in the 83rd minute and further offside action in a latu tackle that robbed the home team of an earlier and easier result. Both of these indisgressions later admitted and conceded publicly by Refs Boss Archers match report. Bottom line we stuck to task and yet another mix of Magic Johnson magic got us home. Yaaahooo! The wet, dark jostling in the crowds after-match walk back to the car can be a drudge but this one was an upbeat journey of jovial jokes and banter.

Tipping Talk..ggrrrr those bloody Titans robbed old High-Tackle of the full house bonus...had to settle for a 7, bugger. On the upside I stole another point in the lead. Super Sue, Big Joe, Monty-Rio and wily Bill Hayward all banked 6s to stay handy. JC one back on a 5 and fast Eddie handicapped by making his tips a few weeks ahead while being overseas slipped on a 4. Tough luck for the Dutchie.... Mind you holidaying in London, Amsterdam, The Italian Amalfi coast and then South Africa he is probably not really too concerned.

## Round 21 Photos By Ra Pomare



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*By John Deaker*

## The NRL's Golden Point Tiebreaker Isn't The Best System – But It's Not The Worst Either!

*Shaun Johnson scores the golden point winning try for the Warriors during the NRL match Warriors v Panthers. Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)*

**W**ITH THE Warriors finally winning a match in golden point extra time at the weekend it provides an opportunity to debate the merits of the existing tiebreaker system in the NRL without the Warriors' losses in extra time influencing my opinion too much.

Regardless of people's stance on the current system it's hard to deny that it more-often-than-not produces a thrilling finish. Unfortunately, solely that fact doesn't necessarily make this a fair system or even the best one we could possibly use.

People's opinions tend to differ markedly on this topic ; they're often heavily influenced by whether they like the concept of using ANY system to find a winner or whether they'd actually prefer the draw to stand as the full-time result. Personally, I'm a fan of there being a winner in all sports and compared to a sport like football ( where they use the penalty shootouts in tournaments ) the golden point is great because even though the drop-kicks are often executed by one or two men in each team the WHOLE TEAM are responsible for working towards some good field position to dictate their teams destiny.

The biggest down-side of golden point extra time has become the inconsistency of the refereeing and even with two referees it hasn't improved. Rather than scrap golden point though I'd love them to simply change to a better system. The model from touch rugby of a drop-off system ( where each team loses a player every two minutes once they go into extra time ) could work really well in rugby league. Sports like football should also look closely at the drop-off system. Penalties put too much emphasis on just one or two players and luck becomes too much of a factor.

We've seen in the Auckland Nines how much more space a reduction of players creates on the field for try-scoring opportunities. By making teams score a try to win the match it would ensure at least half of the team ended up deciding what happened in the match; you could be much more confident that the team who eventually won deserved their victory than you can be with the status quo.

The NRL decided a few months ago that they'd change the golden point system this year for the whole of the finals series. Ten minutes of 'normal' extra time will initially be played if the scores are tied up after 80 minutes and if there's still a deadlock after 90 minutes they'll revert back to golden point. It was just last year that North Queensland won the grand final against Brisbane with a drop-kick from Jonathon Thurston in extra time.





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\*Colmar Brunton Feb 2016

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# Promising Coasters in Camp With Warriors

**T**HREE OF West Coast rugby league's promising players George Watson, Brad Campbell, Cameron Graham and West Coast rugby league development officer Paddy Byrne head to Auckland on Sunday to get some tips from the Warriors.

Byrne said the three boys will spend three days in Auckland training, which will include gym work, on-field skills, and training with the Warriors 20's squad.

*(L-R) George Watson, Brad Campbell, Cameron Graham and Paddy Byrne.*



## Edwards Promoted to NZRL Board By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



**A**N EFFORT to bring New Zealand Rugby League governance closer to “the game” has seen Cantabrian Reon Edwards elevated to the position of deputy chairman.

Incumbent Garry Fissenden was re-elected chairman of the NZRL board last week, a role he inherited mid-term from predecessor Scott Carter in 2014.

Fissenden has been a director since 2009, after a playing career with Te Atatu Roosters and a business career as a qualified accountant that sees him serving as chief executive of The Skills Organisation.

Edwards has just begun his second year on the NZRL board, voted in by the NZRL zones, after three years as Canterbury Rugby League chairman and six on the Southern Zone board.

“Two years ago, we promised to move our board closer to the grassroots of the game and I think Reon’s appointment as deputy chair shows we’re committed to that goal,” says Fissenden.



*NZRL chairman Garry Fissenden (left) & deputy Reon Edwards (right)*

---

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# NZRL National Premiership Games Live on SKY

By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



**SKY WILL** televise all NZRL National Premiership games live over September/October. The new district-based competition will kick off on September 11, with a power-packed doubleheader at Auckland's Mt Smart Stadium.

In the confirmed premiership schedule, Akarana Falcons take on Wellington Orcas in the early game, with champions Counties Manukau facing Canterbury Bulls in a rematch of last year's finalists.

The revamped national competition will see these traditional powerhouses contest the top grade, with Auckland represented by its two NZRL zones, while winners from four qualifying pools will compete for the second-tier NZRL National Championship.

Championship winners will play the fourth-placed premiership side for promotion next season.

Full draws for the 2016 NZRL premiership and championship are:

## NZRL Premiership

Date	Fixture	Venue	Time
Sunday, September 11	Akarana Falcons v Wellington Orcas	Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland	2pm
Sunday, September 11	Counties Manukau Stingrays v Canterbury Bulls	Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland	4pm
Friday, September 16	Akarana Falcons v Counties Manukau Stingrays,	Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland	7.30pm
Sunday, September 18	Canterbury Bulls v Wellington Orcas	AMI Stadium, Christchurch	4pm
Sunday, September 25	Wellington Orcas v Counties Manukau Stingrays	Porirua Park, Wellington	2pm
Sunday, September 25	Canterbury Bulls v Akarana Falcons	AMI Stadium, Christchurch	4pm
Saturday, October 1	Grand Final (First v Second)	Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland	8pm
Saturday, October 1	Promotion/Relegation (Fourth v Championship winners)	Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland	6pm

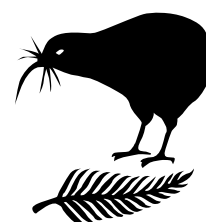
## NZRL CHAMPIONSHIP

Date - Fixture

Saturday, September 10 - Northern v Central  
 Saturday, September 10 - Southern v Development  
 Saturday, September 17 - Central v Southern  
 Saturday, September 17 - Northern v Development  
 Saturday, September 24 - Development v Central  
 Saturday, September 24 - Development v Central



*Counties Manukau Stingrays celebrate their 2015 NZRL National Premiership victory (Photosport)*



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# Women in League

## By Niki Schuck - Director New Zealand Vodafone Warriors

**I**T'S PRIVILEGE to be involved in an organisation that not only takes time to acknowledge the role women have within the New Zealand Vodafone Warriors and in rugby league across the country but who actually celebrates that involvement.

From enthusiastic mums, wives and partners on the side line every weekend, to coaches, players, administrators, board members and Vodafone Warriors fans; women are critical to league's success. To have a round at NRL level, which recognises that contribution, is very special.

On Saturday night the Vodafone Warriors corporate box was awash with pink and smelt much like a beauty salon as 36 women were hosted in style as part of the Women in League round. However, come 5pm until that moment when Shaun crossed the line, in our fourth Golden Point round, the women were focused on nothing else but cheering on the Vodafone Warriors. It's fair to say I have never heard the corporate box so loud in support of our team - it was just fantastic to see and hear. Each of the women knew and understood that behind the 13 players on the field at any one time, there are a massive number of people, many of them women, who are involved or connected in some way. So while the team wins, actually all of us who are involved at any level of rugby league also win because we all consider them 'our' team.

The New Zealand Herald produced this video to profile some of the women involved at the New Zealand Vodafone Warriors. Please take some time to watch it, if you haven't already. [Click here.](#)

On the 16th August I will attend the NRL Women in League celebration dinner in Sydney. I am honoured to represent the New Zealand Vodafone Warriors and rest assured I will fly the flag very proudly.



Claire Paine and Paula Ye-Tobias



Danielle Lendich, Dianne Lendich  
and Cilla Carter



Lisa Grant and Amanda Robinson



Samantha Dalwood and  
Sian Strachan



Sara Stickler-Smith and Kristen  
Wilson



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

# An Update from the Vodafone Warriors Membership Team

**I**T'S BEEN a big month for the membership team here at the Vodafone Warriors and this weekend is no exception.

On the back of our last-gasp win over the Penrith Panthers in golden point last week, we now board a plane for the Gold Coast to take on the impressive Titans.

There's no doubt it will be another challenging contest. But, like last week, our finals fate rests solely in our own hands.

As is always the case with any away game in Queensland, we are expecting a huge turnout of fans and members in the house and in full voice to cheer the boys on. Seats have been filling up fast for our supporters' bay with fans from all over Aussie and New Zealand making the journey to the GC. We've said it before but it's worth repeating – we have the best fans in the NRL!

We are also putting on a function after the game for Vodafone Warriors fans and are expecting a full house there too.

By Tuesday last week we were having to stop taking orders as we'd reach our max capacity. As they say, it's always best to get in quick to avoid disappointment.

Without wanting to rub salt in the wounds for those who wanted to attend but were a little late with their ticket orders, we have a great day planned.

Our club emcee Gordy Gibbons will be running proceedings along with our 19th man and No 1 fan, Sir Peter Leitch.

We are expecting a couple of club legends to also join us in the peerless Kevin Campion and cult hero Mark Tookey.

The boys will also be in attendance and signing autographs. So here's hoping we do the business on the field and have every reason to celebrate afterwards.

In other membership news, we've been inundated with applications for our memberships coordinator role.

While we could never really replace Shontayne Hape – who left us last week – we are confident we'll get the right person to help in the memberships team.

As you can see, there's a lot going on.

But first and most importantly, let's get the win on Sunday.

Catch you all soon and go the mighty Vodafone Warriors.

---

**W**E SEND our deepest sympathies to former Kiwi Riki (Ricky) Cowan, his family and close friends at this time.

Bronwyn, Riki's wife of 29 years, was farewelled last week after losing her battle with cancer.

Riki's back in New Zealand now after living in the Cook Islands for some time, where he was heavily involved in the local rugby league scene including coaching the Cook Islands residents side.

Back in the 1980s he was with the Mount Albert, played six tests for the Kiwis and also toured the United Kingdom with the New Zealand Maori team.



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# Reader Mail

Hi Sir Peter,

**J**UST WANT to say a huge thank you to you and your team for my warriors Heritage jersey which I have won in your fabulous newsletter cannot wait to see it and ill be sure to send in a photo showing how proud I am to be a warriors supporter !!!!!.

Keep up the good work mate J

Regards,

Adrian Curtis

Good afternoon Sir Peter

**E**VERYONE AT work nearly got whip lash they spun their heads so fast when I squealed and yahooped with excitement. Thank you so much for the opportunity to enter and be one of the lucky winners for the Simon Mannering signed Warriors shirt. The grin on my face is – well as they say – priceless

Go the Mighty Warriors

Have wonderful rest of the week

Greatly appreciated, Kelli



**I**AN AND Marcia Carpenter leaving the Pub, in Port Headland in Western Australia, after this week's magic win. "How good was that! Check out the 30 degree mid-winter weather too!!"



**A**LL THE signed jerseys were posted out on Monday 13th to addresses around NZ plus 1 to France and 1 to Aus-sie. All winners will also receive some back copies of Big League Magazine as a bonus. - Sir Peter



**L**AST WEEK we published the photo on the left with the incorrect caption. We just wanted to make sure that Bill Whitehead was paying attention. Bill sent in the correct caption "Logan Edwards, Wayne Wallace and Mark Nixon".

We apologize for the mistake and thank Bill for sending in the correct caption.





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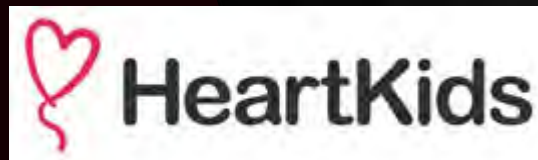
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## *With* Graham Lowe

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# Henry Announces Decision to Retire

*by Richard Becht*

**F**OLLOWING MAJOR knee surgery in three of the last four seasons, Vodafone Warriors back rower Ben Henry has today confirmed he will retire at the end of the 2016 NRL season.

The 24-year-old's fifth NRL campaign was ended by a patella injury to his left knee in the opening match of the season against Wests Tigers in March.

It followed ACL injuries to the same knee in 2013 and 2015, the injuries limiting Henry to just 52 appearances since his NRL debut against Manly at Eden Park in the first round of the 2012 season.

"It's been a tough call to make because my goals were always to be a professional rugby league player," he said after telling his team-mates about his decision today.

"It's a huge disappointment but after all the damage to my knee there really wasn't any option. While my heart was set on coming back yet again I've had to accept my body won't allow me to compete at the level I need to.

"While there have been setbacks I'm still so grateful for the opportunities rugby league has given me. To be able to play for the club in the NYC and the NRL as well as making my Test debut for my country has been a privilege.

"I've played alongside so many

great players and I'll always cherish those times. I want to thank all the team-mates and coaches I've had for being there to support me through the good and bad times.

"This isn't the way I planned it but now I have made this decision I'm ready for the next phase of life after football."

Ever since he was in the club's NYC squad from 2009-2011, Henry has prepared himself for a career outside football through ongoing study. He has completed certificates in electrical engineering, small business and computer servicing while he has also been heavily involved in the club's community, education and wellbeing areas including being an NRL education ambassador in 2013 and 2014 and a NRL State of Mind ambassador in 2015.

Coinciding with his decision to retire, Vodafone Warriors managing director Jim Doyle has announced Henry is in discussions for a role in the club's football department.

"It's a sad day for Ben and for all of us seeing his playing career ended so prematurely," he said.

"Above all Ben is an impressive person with so many qualities and we see him providing so much value to the Vodafone Warriors.

"He has always been extremely professional in all he does, in the

way he has prepared himself as a player and equally in the way he has prepared for his life without football.

"In addition to his rugby league career, he has been a champion of our education and wellbeing programme and he has taken on all the opportunities presented to him.

"The primary purpose of the role for Ben is to work with the players, the football department and our education and wellbeing team to promote and drive the success of the NRL team through constantly improving our standards."

After coming into the Vodafone Warriors development system, Henry made his NYC debut in 2009 and went on to make a club record 64 appearances in the grade. He captained the side in 2010 and 2011, missing the grand final win in 2010 but leading the side to its premiership victory the following year.

Mainly used as a back rower during his NRL career, he also played in the centres. He has finished his career with 17 tries plus three goals in his 52 games.

The Bay Roskill Vikings junior made his Test debut – his only international appearance – in the 2014 Anzac Test against Australia in Sydney.





# Rookies Added to Bench for Gold Coast Trip *by Richard Becht*

**A**N UNCHANGED starting line-up has been named for the Vodafone Warriors' 22nd-round NRL game against the Gold Coast Titans at CbusSuper Stadium in Robina on Sunday (2.00pm kick-off local time; 4.00pm NZT).

Tuimoala Lolohea is at fullback for the second week running with David Fusitu'a again in the centres.

The starting pack features prop Albert Vete and ex-Titans back rower Bodene Thompson, both late inclusions against Penrith last Saturday.

Vodafone Warriors head coach Andrew McFadden has selected a five-man bench notable for the return of 2016 rookies Nathaniel Roache and Bunty Afoa.

Roache (20) comes in for Jazz Tevaga, his last NRL outing being the 17th-round 27-18 win over the Titans at Mount Smart Stadium on July 2. He was superb for the NYC side against Penrith on Saturday with 10 runs, 156 metres, 41 tackles and no misses.

Afoa (19) is in line for his fourth NRL outing, coming back into the squad after he also turned out for the Vodafone Junior Warriors in their 30-28 win over competition leader Penrith last weekend.

The others on the interchange are props Ben Matulino and Sam Lisone plus centre Blake Ayshford.

## VODAFONE WARRIORS

- 1 Tuimoala Lolohea
- 2 Ken Maumalo
- 3 David Fusitu'a
- 4 Solomone Kata
- 5 Manu Vatuvei
- 6 Thomas Leuluai
- 7 Shaun Johnson
- 8 Jacob Lillyman
- 9 Issac Luke
- 10 Albert Vete
- 11 Bodene Thompson
- 12 Ryan Hoffman (c)
- 13 Simon Mannering

## Interchange

- 14 Nathaniel Roache
- 15 Sam Lisone
- 16 Ben Matulino
- 17 Bunty Afoa
- 18 Blake Ayshford

## VODAFONE WARRIORS

v

## GOLD COAST TITANS

Cbus Stadium, Robina

2pm, Sunday, August 7



# BIG LEAGUE

## THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S HUGE ROUND 22 ISSUE...

Jam-packed with FEATURES and NEWS, plus columnist **DANNY BUDERUS** and game analysis by **BEN IKIN**; plus NRL, HOLDEN CUP, NSW CUP, QLD CUP and RON MASSEY CUP team lists and a FULL NRL DRAW.

### FEATURES

- There has been plenty of drama at the Wests Tigers but one thing is for sure – **Mitchell Moses** has been maturing. His coach **Jason Taylor** explains: "Mitch just decided he wanted to make a few adjustments and that's what the best players do, realise there's more to it than just training and playing. They understand the way they carry themselves... has an impact."
- Jillaroos captain **Ruan Sims** is on a media tour for Women in League week, with the main message to show young girls they can aspire to any role in the game. She hopes to see a fully-functioning women's comp as Cronulla try to build a nines competition in the next few years.
- We delve into the Storm's leadership set-up with former Collingwood captain **Nick Maxwell** at the helm. Already this year they reversed their usual Origin slump and added **Blake Green** and **Jesse Brownich** to the senior leaders group, paving the way for the next wave of talent at the club.
- Also, **Ben Barba** credits the signing of **Michael Ennis** for the Sharks' stunning turnaround from two years ago; Titans great **Mat Rogers** calls **Greg Bird** the club's version of **Johnathan Thurston**; the Bulldogs resist switching **Will Hopoate** and **Brett Morris** despite a lack of spark in attack and rookie **James Fisher-Harris** talks about his exceptional debut year so far.

**PLUS...** The Analyst tries to figure out **who will make the top eight** and we look at the **Top 8 biggest female influencers in the game**.

**AND:** Little League, lower grade previews and a Jordan Rapana poster.



### THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

On sale at newsagents, supermarkets and at the ground from

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

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