

VODAFONE



# Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

14<sup>th</sup> September 2016

# Newsletter #139



## The Great Charity Roast



The Roaster team Phil Gifford, Leighton Smith, Sir Graham Henry, Murray Deaker, Miles Davis, David Hartnell and Sir John Kirwan with Sir Peter.



Phil Gifford our outstanding MC on the night.



Kerryn Winn aka Elvis entertains the guests.

# The Great Charity Roast



Joe Jakicevich, Catherine and Allan Scott, Bridget Jakicevich (Joe's wife).



Chubbs Ropiha, Warren Spain, Sonny Hopkins, Horse Bourneville and Security Seals Ltd sponsor Glen Moore.



David Hartnell had plenty to say about the Butcher.



Enjoying the night.



Kerryn Winn was fantastic.



Lindsay, Rowana and Lance.



Mark von Dadelszen, President of the Prostate Cancer Foundation.



Masterchef winner Brett McGregor and his wife Tracy.



Mrs Linda Stopforth, David Hartnell MNZM and Somboon Khansuk.



Peter Rakich and his wife Michelle. Peter is the big boss of the BLK NZ, the Kiwis apparel sponsor.



Table settings thanks to Pacific Linen, Centrepiece and Benefitz.



# The Great Charity Roast



Phil Gifford, Murray and Sharon Deaker and the Butch.



Raewyn, Mervina, Lynn and Cathy.



Roaster Miles Davis in action.



Sam and Miles enjoying the night.



Sam the weather man and his lovely partner Sarah Bowman.



Simon Powell from Westpac Bank, Butch and Sue Foley.



Simon Power, Westpac's General Manager, Consumer Banking and Wealth.



Sir Graham Henry and Murray Deaker.



Sir Graham Henry, Murray Deaker and Leighton Smith.



Sir John Kirwan and the MC for the night Phil Gifford.



Warren, Margret and Bob.



# Pete Gets a Roasting

By David Kemeys

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



**A**NYONE WHO set foot in the lounge will know it is Pete who is normally firing the barbs, but the tables were turned last week at the Great Charity Roast in support of the Prostate Cancer Foundation and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter, all superbly MCed by Phil Gifford.

The great and the good – and quite a number of Mad Butcher Club members, including those rowdy Pommy Bastards – were at SkyCity to hear it.

To use one of Pete’s favourite phrases, to be fair, gossip writer David Hartnell who stole the show, opening proceedings with a torrent of offensive jokes about Pete’s background, before handing over to air radio personality, though I use the term loosely, Miles Davis.

The motor-mouth launched into more stories of Peter’s less than stellar academic career, dubious parentage and general mean-spiritedness, before another radio voice, Leighton Smith took over, confirming the first piece of advice he ever received from the Butch was “Go back to Australia, you wanker”. His memory must have been playing tricks on him because I’m fairly confident the first two words of advice weren’t actually “go back”.

Sir John Kirwan, or the Junior Knight, as he is always referred to, was hugely funny, laying the blame for his much talked about problems with anxiety and depression firmly at Peter’s door, after years of abuse about being a rugby poofster who was a disgrace to his family – not least in the middle of Queen St.

Kirwan’s father Pat and Peter were good friends, and John’s background as his father’s apprentice in their Onehunga store, means the Kirwan-Leitch relationship goes back further than many people realise.

But JK still hammered the Butch for “ruining most butchers in Auckland”, a barb which Peter responded to in his traditional way, advising the former Warrior and All Black to get over it, though with a few expletives inserted to reinforce his point.

Rugby World Cup winning coach Sir Graham Henry has, as most of us know, become kayaking buddies with Peter, something he claims actually means he acts as a tutor and mentor to the man who spent half his life in education.

Henry was quick to dispel the myth, saying at least half the time they were out, was actually spent on Blackpool beach trying to manhandle Pete into his kayak, and the other half was constantly interrupted by Pete making and taking calls on his cellphone.

Retired broadcaster and acknowledged league hater Murray Deaker translated Peter-speak, noting “to be fair” meant exactly the opposite, and disagreeing with the sausage king meant you were certain to be tagged as having “your head up your arse”, and really pissing him off could only mean the said head was “so far up, you fart when you smile”.

He told a story about fronting at Mt Smart for a kicking duel, only to need Peter to get him off the park because he had pulled a muscle, which Peter achieved by having the crowd boo him repeatedly, pulling out a referee’s whistle, and sending him off.

Roasting is a piss-take on “toasting”, where instead of nice things being said, anything – however offensive – goes.

The only problem is that the roastee gets the last word – just like Peter always does – and he repaid the general unkindness in spades with several cutting barbs of his own – the best of which was that he had been handling the famously gay Hartnell’s meat for 30 years.

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Despite all the fun it was evident that the roasters, held their mate in high regard.

There can't be too many blokes who could get the Prime Minister to put himself up for auction, or get away with telling the event's principal sponsors Westpac that they were a bunch of scoundrels and it was unacceptable he'd never got so much as a "cup of tea" out of them.

Then again, there can't be too many blokes who would line up to be insulted by a panel of skilled speakers, all in the name of charity, either.

### **Kearney Now Coach**

So Kiwi coach Stephen Kearney is our new head coach, signed on a three-year deal.

Andrew McFadden stays on as an assistant, with Vodafone Warriors legend Stacey Jones, with another international coach set to be signed.

Predictably the Radio Sport lines ran hot with venom, with the usual array of tirades alleging Kearney is not up to it, or that he is able to walk on water.

Let's give the poor bugger a chance.

The Broncos are still in the finals but when it is all over the 44-year-old Kearney will trade Queensland for Penrose.

The real casualties of the review are current assistant coaches Andrew Webster and Justin Morgan, the defensive mastermind, and that will probably come as little surprise to anyone.

"We're delighted we've been able to bring Stephen back to Mt Smart," boss Jim Doyle said. "He was outstanding during his playing career before moving into coaching, and he has taken the Kiwis to a new level."

Kearney has worked with Craig Bellamy at the Storm and Wayne Bennett at the Broncos, so something must have rubbed off surely.

He says he is looking forward to returning to Auckland. "While I've got a job to do here I'm really excited about coming on board at the Vodafone Warriors. The club means a lot to me from my time there as a player and this a great opportunity to take the football department in a new direction."

All of which leaves me wondering how McFadden is going to cope. It is a tough ask to go from being

the man in charge to the underling, and that is not a great spot to be put in.

But nothing in his demeanour, the way he has handled himself through tough times, gives reason for concern. McFadden can and will contribute.

Jones is beyond criticism isn't he? He is a club legend and he has done well with his InTrust Premiership side.

You can not question his commitment or his loyalty, and on top of that, he is a bloody good bloke too.

We also apparently get a football advisory board to oversee the club's football operations. Rugby World Cup-winning All Black coach Sir Graham Henry, experienced NFL coach Eric Mangini, club great Awen Guttenbeil and director Owen Eastwood, Doyle, and board member Les Archer make up that board.

This one has the capacity to go wrong really fast. If things do not travel the way you want on field, the temptation for a board like this is to try and drive selection, and it all becomes a too many cooks in the kitchen scenario very fast.

But on the other hand, that is a mass of sporting experience, some lively minds, and a board that has the capacity to provide good insight, direction and support.

Which way it goes, we'll have to wait and see.

Club owner Eric Watson said he and Doyle had been discussing a football advisory board for some time. "We were well aware our board has been made up of directors who all bring strong commercial expertise to the table. But we have been lacking sporting knowledge, so we have moved to improve that."



*More on the on next page..*

## Week One – And Then There Were Six

Poor David Skipwith at the Herald doesn't know it, but he's our designated yardstick for the finals because I thought it might be fun to see how accurate his predictions were. Going into the finals he saw it this way:

**Broncos by 12 over the Titans**, because no one expected the Titans to get as far as they did, and Brisbane would have the goods on them, especially at Suncorp, and on the back of five-straight wins.

Result: Broncos win 44-28, we'll give you that one David.

**Raiders by 10**, the one-time 15 in a row Cronulla, having lost four of their last five consigned to another fruitless season by a Canberra side growing in confidence and looking for their 11th-straight win.

Result: Sharks win 16-14, so one and one my friend.

**Storm by six**, the minor premiers tipped to be too good for the reigning Premiers because they have already downed Thurston's Cowboys twice this year. The Cowboys, meanwhile, have a bit of egg on their face.

Result: Storm win 16-10, right on the nail David.

**Panthers by six**, because the Bulldogs are struggling for cohesion. Penrith has the momentum and a better, and more varied attack. Dogs without a few players too, while the Penrith line-up is settled.

Result: Panthers win 28-12, most saw the result, maybe not the margin.

The man's a genius. Three results, only one trip, the Raiders letting our man down, going down to the Sharks, a result not many picked, to be fair. Good effort from the Herald's man.

### Define Passion

If I hear one person tell me how passionate they are about the Warriors, and that's why they get so upset when we lose, I'll bloody-well scream.

Packing a hissy-fit when things don't go our way, is not the same as being passionate.

Don't get me wrong, the boys are our team, and I will always support a fans' right to be a bit grumpy. It's not like that's not something I'm not guilty of myself.

But to me, passion is more about standing up again when we get knocked down, continuing to believe,

shrugging off the setbacks, and sticking behind the team you supposedly love.

If that makes me naïve, so be it.

I was, as I admitted last week, not that upset about our weak showing against the Eels, having had little expectation of anything else.

But I'm already suffering withdrawal symptoms, having watched the first week of the finals, and I'm looking forward to next year.

Do I hope it will be better, of course. If it isn't will I be pissed off, of course. If we play poorly will I will be among the critics, of course.

But equally, will I be there on game day one, of course. Will I be there on game day two, of course, and will I be there on the last game of our season, whenever it comes, of course.

I hope when that day comes, I won't be not expecting much again, but I'll be there regardless.

### Score One For McFadden

Andrew McFadden haters might want to skip this bit.

I listened with interest to the under-fire coach speaking on Radio Sport last week as I drove home from work, and I was really impressed by what he had to say, and more importantly, how he said it, and handled himself, given he would have to live in a parallel universe not to have let all the criticism get to him.

He admitted his time in charge had been tough, and the old "steep learning curve" cliché came out. But he was honest, direct, never ducked for cover on a question, and showed great composure.

He did not try to sugar-coat things either.

Jobs were under the microscope, something he called "not nice", and admitted to being as disappointed as us fans, that he had to take responsibility for our poor finish, and in particular, that our final month was just not acceptable.

The review is still going on, though there is talk of it being finished this week, and McFadden also made it clear he wanted to stay on, particularly with the support of the team. "I feel like I have grown as a coach and I am getting better, but obviously the results aren't showing at the moment.

*Continued on next page...*

It hardly matters what I think certainly, but I admire his courage in going on air when it would have been easier to be unavailable, his honesty, and the way he fronted to the tough questions.

### **Konrad Fails To Fire...**

For a guy who was supposed to be impossible to handle, Konrad Hurrell showed a lot of class last week.

The discarded Warrior and now Titan was asked all about the club that off-loaded him, the journalist expecting him to fire-up and have a gloat. He did nothing of the sort.

“To be honest, I feel for the boys and the club.”

But it is not just that comment. Konrad admitted he was, at first, determined to prove Andrew McFadden wrong, but soon realised that mindset was not going to help him.

“So I stuck to footy and just wanted to play for the Titans. They gave me the opportunity, so I just wanted to be happy at the club and help out the boys. When I’m happy, that’s when I start playing better.”

### **First Kiwis Squad Dominated By Warriors**

Eleven Warriors were named in the first 23-man Kiwis wider-squad for the test against Australia and the Four Nations.

The first group named always comes from clubs that did not make the playoffs, so there are some obvious names missing.

David Fusitu’a, Solomone Kata, Sam Lisone, Bodene Thompson, Shaun Johnson, Simon Mannering, Issac Luke, Manu Vatuvei, Thomas Leuluai, Ben Matulino and Tui Lolohea are all named.

The squad will be added to as teams drop out, and the size of the squad can fluctuate, depending on injuries. A final travelling squad of 24 is scheduled to be named in the week after the NRL Grand Final on October 2.

Others named so far are Lewis Brown, Marty Tau-pau and Addin Fonua-Blake from Manly, Shaun Kenny-Dowall, Sam Moea, Isaac Liu and Jared Waerea-Hargreaves from the Roosters, Tim Simona and Elijah Taylor from the Tigers, Dragon Jason Nightingale and Manu Ma’u and Brad Takairangi from the Eels.

### **We Will Miss Leuluai**

Most of those I have spoken to are sad to see Thomas Leuluai headed back to England.

I confess I wondered why bringing back a bloke who had not set the NRL on fire in his first stint with us, was considered the way forward. But today I’d line-up with those who say Tommy was among our best.

Nothing better typifies his attitude than the shot of him throwing strapping to the ground in disgust after the Eels game, so I thought it was worth revisiting what he had to say.

It’s not like he has not been through a poor end to the season before, but this year was worse, he said, because the Warriors blew it themselves.

“We’ve come a long way and we’re better than that. We didn’t play to our potential. The other years we weren’t good enough. This year we were, but we blew it.”

That is a very honest assessment, and exactly what you would expect of a good, honest professional.

Best of luck in Wigan, and I’m confident I say that for all the fans.

### **Dumb Ideas Boys**

You have to choose to be offended, but what would have possessed Parramatta Eels Brad Takarangi and Manu Ma’u to dress up in orange prison-style jumpsuits? Pretty stupid from Ma’u, who served three-years for a gang-related stabbing. And they wonder why people thought it was inappropriate.

And then there was North Queensland Cowboy Jason Taumalolo in the donger for egging cars. Really?

He got charged with wilful damage. Hardly the worst offence of the year, but still pretty sad.

### **Nines Dates Set**

It’s another Waitangi weekend date for league fans after February 4-5 was confirmed for the Downer NRL Auckland Nines.

Maybe we will go one better than 2016, when we lost in the final to the Eels – who were later, cheating bastards that they are – stripped of the title.

More than 80,000 fans are expected over the two days.

## Bennett Takes A Stand

Broncos coach and league genius Wayne Bennett does not beat around the bush, and he came out swinging during the week about match-fixing.

Plenty over in Oz are banging on about no evidence, where's the proof etc, but Bennett said he had bugger-all doubt fixing was a problem, for a very good reason.

And he laid the blame squarely with gambling, and especially the different possibilities open to punters. That, he said, meant "lone wolf" players could manipulate small things their coach or even teammates would never realise.

"That's your challenge as a coach and as a club. You can have maybe one or two lone wolves in your joint that just do things. You don't really notice but because of the multiples that they can bet on, then that gives them that opportunity."

Bennett did go on to say match-fixing was another matter. "I can't imagine one of my players throwing a game or wanting to be involved in that. It's not part of our culture or psyche at this club."

## Manly Clears Out

Did you see Manly's clear-out? Seventeen players, and that's on top of Luke Burgess and Feleti Mateo, who were released in July. Both went to Salford, but Mateo has already been let go for family reasons.

Jamie Lyon and Tim Moltzen are giving it up, Siosaia Vave goes to the Eels, and Fabian Goodall to rugby, but Josh Starling, Liam Knight, Nathan Green, Blake Leary, Isaac John, Jayden Hodges, Rhys Armstrong, Halaufa Lavaka, Tony Satini, Dylan Kelly, Hugh Pratt, Nicho Hynes and Darcy Cox all got the Don't Come Monday.

Coach Trent Barrett has blamed injuries for the failures this year and is already crowing about how they will make the eight next year. "Hopefully the injury gods smile on us."

That might be tougher than he thinks, with Brett Stewart and Steve Matai both dealing with serious injuries, and Dylan Walker, Daly Cherry-Evans and Tom and Jake Trbojevic all set for off-season surgeries.

## What A Joke

Players, coaches, fans and administrators finally agree on something. The decision not to ban Canberra's Jack Wighton for a shoulder charge was a farce.

Johnathan Thurston, Michael Ennis (pretty rich coming from the man I consider to be the niggliest player in the entire league), Laurie Daley and Phil Gould all slammed the decision.

Thurston said the water was now so muddy he had no idea what a shoulder charge was.

Daley said confidence in the judiciary had evaporated, and Gould said the episode had embarrassed league.

No one bothered to ask Charlie Gubb what he thought, but I talked to his Dad last week and it is fair to say he was not impressed, although he may have used language that was a little more direct than that!

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To vote and donate \$3 to Prostate Cancer Foundation

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To vote and donate \$3 to Prostate Cancer Foundation

Carrier fees apply. Your contribution of \$3 will go to Prostate Cancer Foundation New Zealand. Donations made direct to our Ambassadors' Every Day Hero pages will also count towards finding our winner.

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# Mannering Wins Double At Vodafone Warriors Awards

By Richard Becht - Vodafone Warriors Media Manager



**T**IRELESS BACK rower Simon Mannering has been named the Vodafone NRL Player of the Year a record fifth time in his 12-season career at the Vodafone Warriors' 22nd annual awards dinner in Auckland tonight.

The 30-year-old is the only player in the club's history to win the premier award more than twice, Steve Price earning the accolade in 2006 and 2007 and Ben Matulino honoured in 2012 and 2015.

The other finalists tonight were halfback Shaun Johnson, departing standoff Thomas Leuluai and second rower Bodene Thompson.

Mannering was first singled out early in his career in 2008 before earning the supreme acknowledgement again in 2011, 2013 and 2014 while he was a leading contender every other season as well, such is his consistency.

On a big night personally he was also named the winner of the Canterbury of New Zealand Clubman of the Year Award in recognition of his all-round contribution to the club, not just on the field but off it in the community and in the way he represents the club's values.

On the field the relentless Mannering played in 22 of the 24 games, finishing with five tries to lift his career tally to 58, fourth on the club's all-time list. He averaged 77 minutes on the field making an average 11.2 runs, 89.95 metres and 47.36 tackles a game. It's the second straight season he has topped 1000 tackles.

The award topped a campaign in which Mannering became only the second player after the great Stacey Jones to play 250 NRL games for the club. He finished the year on 258 matches and needs just four more games next season to move beyond Jones' record of 261.

While Mannering collected two of the main NRL awards, the Vodafone NRL Rookie of the Year was between Nathaniel Roache (Vodafone Warrior #207) and Jazz Tevaga (Vodafone Warrior #209), the only two players who qualified in terms of games played this year. They both made 11 appearances each with Roache – 19 at the time of his debut in round one – getting the nod.

Johnson, the only player to appear in all 24 games, was again voted the winner of the Vodafone People's Choice Award after a season in which he scored 10 tries and 125 points in all to lift his career total to 667, only eight short of beating another Jones record (674).

The finalists for the Vodafone ISP Player of the Year were Ata Hingano, Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad and John Palavi. First-year Vodafone Warrior Nicoll-Klokstad was the winner after a season in which he was the only player to appear in each of the side's 24 games. Used at fullback, on the wing, in the centres and also standoff initially he was the team's top try-scorer with 11.

The Vodafone ISP Team Man of the Year went to James Bell.

Three people were acknowledged for their contributions off the field.

Susan Turner, who has worked for the club since 1995, won the newly-introduced Club Person of the Year award while Emma Harper was named the Sir Peter Leitch Member of the Year.

RadioSport commentator Allen McLaughlin was a popular recipient of the SKYCITY Legacy Award. The 66-year-old 'voice of rugby league' called his last Vodafone Warriors game at Mount Smart Stadium on September 4 after covering all but one of the club's 254 games at the venue since 1995.

*Continued on next page...*

## VODAFONE WARRIORS AWARDS | 2016

Sir Peter Leitch Member of the Year - Emma Harper  
SKYCITY Legacy Award - Allen McLaughlin  
Vodafone People's Choice Award - Shaun Johnson  
TNT NYC Rookie of the Year - Chanel Harris-Tavita  
Vodafone ISP Team Man of the Year - James Bell  
Vodafone NRL Rookie of the Year - Nathaniel Roache  
Club Person of the Year - Susan Turner  
Canterbury of NZ Club Person of the Year - Simon Mannering  
Vodafone NYC Player of the Year - Chris Sio  
Vodafone ISP Player of the Year - Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad  
Vodafone NRL Player of the Year - Simon Mannering



### VODAFONE WARRIORS PLAYER OF THE YEAR | 1995-2016

1995 Tea Ropati	2006 Steve Price
1996 Stephen Kearney	2007 Steve Price
1997 Stacey Jones	2008 Simon Mannering
1998 Joe Vagana	2009 Micheal Luck
1999 Jason Death	2010 Manu Vatuvei
2000 Robert Mears	2011 Simon Mannering
2001 Jerry Seuseu	2012 Ben Matulino
2002 Ali Lauitiiti	2013 Simon Mannering
2003 Francis Meli	2014 Simon Mannering
2004 Wairangi Koopu	2015 Ben Matulino
2005 Ruben Wiki	2016 Simon Mannering

### VODAFONE WARRIORS | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Departing players** | Henare Wells, Shaun Lane (#211), Jeff Robson (#205), Raymond Faitala-Mariner (#200), Jonathan Wright (#198), John Palavi (#188), Ben Henry (#173), Konrad Hurrell (#172), Sione Lousi (#159), Thomas Leuluai (#105), Ali Lauitiiti (#55).

**NRL debuts** | Nathaniel Roache (#207), Jazz Tevaga (#209), Toafofoa Sipley (#212), Bunty Afoa (#213), Ata Hingano (#214).

**Vodafone Warriors debuts** | Roger Tuivasa-Sheck (#203), Blake Ayshford (#204), Jeff Robson (#205), Issac Luke (#206), Nathaniel Roache (#207), James Gavet (#208), Jazz Tevaga (#209), Ligi Sao (#210), Shaun Lane (#211), Toafofoa Sipley (#212), Bunty Afoa (#213), Ata Hingano (#214).

#### Achievements:

150 NRL tries | Manu Vatuvei.  
600 NRL points | Shaun Johnson.  
250 NRL games (all for Vodafone Warriors) | Simon Mannering.  
200 NRL games | Issac Luke.  
150 NRL games for Vodafone Warriors | Jacob Lillyman.  
50 NRL games | Sione Lousi.

# Vodafone Warriors Awards Night



Simon Mannering and partner Anna.



Simon Mannering with CEO Jim Doyle and Owner and Chairman Eric Watson.



Vodafone Warriors player of the year Simon Mannering with the Mad Butcher.



Trevor, Lorna, Peter, Janice, Lorraine and Dave from Christchurch and Bruce at the awards night.



The awesome venue for the awards last night. Shed 10 on Queens Wharf.



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# Milestones

By Barry Ross



**N**OW THAT the regular season has finished, I would like to reflect upon some pleasing milestones that were reached during 2016. The Warriors passed their 2,000 Premiership try mark since joining the Big League back in 1995. They now have 2,003 tries and 248 wins in their 22 seasons. This is an average of 118 tries and close to 15 wins each season. Manu Vatuvei now has 152 tries from his 225 first grade games and this puts him at equal 10th with Harold Horder on the all-time try scoring list. Now 30 years of age, Manu is a crowd favourite on both sides of the Tasman and probably still has many four pointers to come. Captain Simon Mannering has now played 258 top grade games and as he just turned 30 last week, could finish with more than 300 matches on his CV when he decides to call time on his brilliant career. He now has 58 tries which is an excellent effort from a man deep in the engine room.

Issac Luke marched past the 200 first grade game mark and he finished the year with 208 matches and 482 points to his credit.

Shaun Johnson moved from fourth to second on the all-time Warriors point scoring list. He now has 667 points, from 55 tries, 220 goals and seven field goals, which puts him just seven points behind the leading point scorer, Stacey Jones, who has scored 674 points from 77 tries, 176 goals and 14 field goals. Shaun has played 125 first grade games and with at least five seasons of top grade football left in him, he should finish well over the 1,000 point mark in his more than 200 games. Shaun turns 26 this Friday, so happy birthday to one of the world's best players.

Still on the Warriors, Solomone Kata's effort in collecting 15 tries from his 21 games this year was brilliant. Still only 21, he will be even better next year and opposing centres will not be looking forward to his powerful runs and rugged defence.

Cameron Smith continues to play outstanding football and his skills will play a major role in the Storm's play-off campaign. He now has 1,975 points and could crack the 2,000 mark before the end of this season. He is 33 and has played 332 games. He will move into fifth place on the all-time first grade game list this Saturdaynight at Melbourne against the Cowboys. Only Darren Lockyer (355 games), Terry Lamb (350), Steve Menzies (349) and Brad Fittler (336) sit in front of him. He is also fifth on the

all time point scoring list, behind Hazem El Masri (2,418), Andrew Johns (2,176), Jason Taylor (2,107) and Daryl Halligan (2,034). He is one of just three players to have landed more than 900 goals. He now has kicked 906 goals and only Jason Taylor (942) and Andrew Johns (917) have kicked more. Another list he sits near the top on, is Most First Grade Points for One Club. El Mazri scored all of his 2,418 for the Bulldogs, while Johns' points were scored for the Knights. Smith is third on this list. Probably Darren Lockyer's 355 games for the Broncos keeps Smith in second place for the Most Games with One Club, while he holds several Storm club records.

Together the Morris brothers achieved something they will cherish for the rest of their lives. They both now have more than 100 first grade tries. Brett has crossed for 131 tries in his 195 top grade games, while Josh has 105 from his 218 matches.

It was pleasing to see the reception Robbie Farah received at Leichhardt Oval on Sunday. The drama at the Wests Tigers is old news now but I believe he would have been asset to the team if he had been used against the Raiders on Sunday. Coach Jason Taylor was never going to consider it but while Farah's presence may not have resulted in a win, his experience would have been useful to the younger players in the pressure cooker atmosphere of such an important game. Now 31, Farah has collected 61 tries in his 247 first grade games. Invercargill's Dene Halatau was also farewelled after a stellar 249 first grade game career with the Bulldogs followed by the Tigers. He is 32, has played 15 Tests for New Zealand and could be on the Tigers coaching staff in 2017.

Another top ranked man who called it quits this year was Manly's Jamie Lyon. Eight Tests for Australia, 10 Origin matches for NSW, plus 294 first grade games and 1,554 first grade points says it all about the 33 year old Manly skipper.

To finish, I would like to compare some of the Warriors 2016 statistics to the opposition teams. In tries scored they finished eighth (90), while in metres gained they were 12th (35,952), in tackles made they were 14th (7,437) and on the error count they were equal sixth (227). On the missed tackles list they were 13th with 617, which is good. I haven't analysed these stats but they are worth studying.

# Do We Need a Second NRL Team?

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)



**O**NE OF the reasons I have never advocated a second professional rugby league franchise being set up in New Zealand was concern it would dilute the available talent and therefore lessen the chances of the Warriors – or the second team for that matter – ever achieving the improbable by beating fifteen or more Australian clubs for what they regard as their own precious NRL premiership.

But I must admit to a change of feelings after what occurred at Mt Smart this year, though I still have serious reservations that anywhere other than Auckland – be it Wellington or Christchurch – has the structure, depth, money and facilities to support a franchise. It's just that I have come to the belief a second team would not so much harm the Warriors as greatly benefit their prospects of breaking through for a maiden title.

It is alarming to learn of the impact another disappointing season has had on leading Warriors players. Manu Vatuvei revealed his children had come home from school crying because of the verbal barbs suffered after another loss by their father's footy team. Just as worrying was Shaun Johnson's admission that after making an error his first thoughts were of what his critics would say on social media.

Sure, they are richly paid to do a job most able bodied young men in this country would relish. But it seems the pressure imposed upon them increases with each failure to make the play-offs, let alone seriously challenge for glory on grand final day. The latest investigation is under way to discover why a squad blending international veterans alongside highly athletic youngsters does not even qualify for the top eight.

The Warriors would not publicly oppose a second New Zealand franchise but privately they would be seething at the prospect. No established organisation dependent on sponsorship and playing talent wants to share its territory. Remember the Brisbane Broncos and the South Queensland Crushers, and the Newcastle Knights and the Hunter Mariners, during the Super League War? And they were in separate competitions.

But an emergence of the Wellington Orcas or the Canterbury Bulls in an expanded NRL draw would relieve much of that pressure which is allegedly reducing the Warriors to also-rans. For a start, the second team would inevitably struggle as it established itself in the toughest sporting contest in this part of the world. The Warriors, for some time at least, would still be the spearhead of a two-pronged New Zealand NRL assault.

The Broncos reigned supreme, not only in Brisbane but in Queensland, for a long time after the North Queensland Cowboys and Gold Coast Titans were admitted to the competition. It is now history that the Cowboys beat the Broncos in the 2015 grand final and finished ahead of them in the 2016 minor premiership. Now the Titans, based much closer to Brisbane, are also snapping at the heels of the Broncos.

What the Broncos really would not want is a second team in Brisbane, one which would reduce those average home crowds of more than 30,000. But logic suggests the capital of Queensland, such a dominant rugby league state, should host a match every weekend. The Warriors will never face the possibility of a rival club in Auckland. They will never have to geographically share the immense south Auckland junior nursery.

Ironically, Australian clubs have forced the Warriors to gauge NRL popularity outside of Auckland by scheduling "home" games in this country. Playing on New Zealand soil should benefit the Warriors more than their opponents but, despite having overwhelming crowd support, their record is woeful. It's as if they are unconsciously reluctant to send the fans home happy and increase the desire for clubs to evolve in other cities.

There would be obvious benefits nationally. More of our better youngsters would not need to cross the Tasman in search of fame and fortune. The district league which has an NRL team would experience a great influx of juniors who would see a home pathway to the top. And New Zealand would have an attractive NRL local derby, akin to Auckland v The Rest, a format which was used in past Kiwis trials.

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While my views might have changed, I still cannot see the NRL looking east when or if it next expands the competition. A second Brisbane team and one from Western Australia have the inside running over the NSW Central Coast and central Queensland, with New Zealand only an afterthought. Christchurch has been mentioned as a possible base for a second-tier NSW Cup team.

**Footnote:** I have read many opinions of who might succeed Thomas Leuluai in the Warriors number six jersey. What about Fa'amanu Brown, the Hornby lad who was outstanding for the Cronulla Sharks in 2014 before missing 2015 through injury? Brown, 21, deputised for James Maloney in first grade during the Origin series but has otherwise been biding his time in the NSW Cup with Newtown. Maybe he will come back to haunt the Warriors as captain of a Canterbury Bulls NRL franchise in 2023!

## Perth - And the Indomitables

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)



**KIWIS COACH** Stephen Kearney has been releasing his progressive train-on squad on a weekly basis as clubs are eliminated from the NRL play-offs. Defending the Four Nations trophy against Australia, England and Scotland in Britain is the eventual target for Kearney's men, but first there is the October 15 Test match against the Kangaroos at Perth, which will become a new international venue.

The Kiwis will do well to emulate the success of another international team which passed through Perth 70 years ago. Although the 1946 England team (as it was officially known despite there being 11 Welshmen among the 27 players) did not actually play in Perth, it was a vital stopping off point for one of the most remarkable sporting ventures of all time.

The Second World War had ended less than 12 months earlier but influential people in both Australia and Britain were keen for the tour to go ahead as a means of lifting public morale. But there was an obvious lack of transport in an era before international air travel and when no commercial liners were available. Berths were belatedly found on the aircraft carrier HMS Indomitable, sailing from Plymouth.

It did not take long for the players, who were made honorary petty officers, to adopt the name of the naval vessel as a symbol of their determination to not only reach Australia and New Zealand but to re-establish British superiority in the 13-a-side game. For the remainder of their lives they were known as the Indomitables. It was a title they lived up to, particularly against the Australians.

During the voyage the players volunteered to stoke the massive ship's boilers as a means of maintaining fitness, and there were training sessions on the flight deck to keep in trim. Interestingly, among the other guests were a bevy of war brides, British lasses who had met Australian servicemen during the six long years of war and were travelling to a new life Down Under.

Rugby league did not then exist in Western Australia, and the British were to continue on and eventually disembark at Sydney. But a five-week voyage via the Suez Canal, with stops in Gibraltar, Malta, Port Said (Egypt), Aden and Colombo, ended at Fremantle, the port of Perth. From there the Indomitable was diverted to Singapore to pick up freed prisoners of war from the notorious Changi Prison.

The team was to travel to Sydney on another aircraft carrier, HMS Victorious, but it had been damaged in a tropical storm. After staying in a military camp and playing an exhibition game, there was no alternative than to cross the continent on an overcrowded slow train. The trip took five days, was immensely hot and players drew lots to decide who were lucky enough to sleep in the wire-netted luggage racks above their mates in the hard-backed upright seats!

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Once again, rudimentary training was carried out alongside the railway lines whenever the train stopped for water and restocking of provisions. For two months Australian Rugby League officials kept their fingers crossed their invitees would actually arrive in Sydney so they could finalise the itinerary with the team managers.

Despite the rigours of their journey, the 1946 Indomitables became the first – and still the only -- British team to be unbeaten in a three-Test series in Australia. They drew the first Test 8-8 at the Sydney Cricket Ground in front of 64,527 fans and went on to win the second 14-5 at Brisbane and the third 20-7 in Sydney. They also won 14 of their other 17 matches while riding the rails from Townsville to Canberra.

Another sea trip brought them across the Tasman for seven more matches. They lost the only Test 13-8 at Carlaw Park when Kiwis prop Brian Graham crashed over for the winning try. Their only other defeat was by 17-8 to West Coast at Greymouth, the most decisive loss of the entire Australasian tour. The Indomitables then faced a more relaxing but still very long voyage home.

For decades they were fated as one of the most famous of all British teams, having given rugby league the jump on other sports as the world recovered from war. In 2009 their families held a reunion in Huddersfield, attended by the last two survivors, Wigan hooker Joe Egan and Barrow centre Bryn Knowelden. Egan outlived his old mate, dying in 2012 at the age of 93. The last of the Indomitables lived up to that proud name until his final breath.

Footnote: The Cowboys must be content that accused egg-thrower Jason Taumalolo was given October 11 as his court date. While it is a comfortable nine days after the grand final, it is also four days before the Kiwis-Kangaroos Test at far-off Perth. Last year Taumalolo was outstanding in his club's grand final triumph before withdrawing "injured" from the Kiwis' Test series in Britain.

## International Eligibility Rules Set for Shake Up

By Ben Francis



**R**UGBY LEAGUE players will have to wait five years to represent their adopted country after the Rugby League International Federation changed the eligibility rules.

The RLIF board extended the qualification period from three years during meeting to discuss the two finalists to host the 2021 Rugby League World Cup.

The eligibility rule has been under scrutiny since New Zealand born Rangi Chase switched his allegiance to England in 2011 which saw the five-eight go on to represent England at the 2013 Rugby League World Cup.

Federation officials say they have now extended the qualification period to five years while ensuring players from developing nations retain dual eligibility. The new eligibility rules will take effect on October 1st, four weeks before the start of the 2016 Four Nations which is being hosted by England.

The new rules will mean that Auckland born winger Denny Solomona who has been in England since 2014 will have to wait an extra two year before he can

represent England.

This will be a massive blow for England, as Solomona is the leading try scorer in the Super League this season running in 32 tries for the Castleford Tigers.

The 22year old can represent second tier nation Samoa, if he is overlooked by the Kiwis.

RLIF chairman Nigel Wood said: "Following the presentation of an initial review by the RLIF chief executive officer and secretary, we have consulted extensively with our members and made these changes not only in time for the 2017 World Cup but also for the international matches leading into our flagship event,"

"This provides maximum preparation time for nations, their players and coaches, and enhances the quality and competitiveness of our global events"

This years Four Nations will be represented by England, defending champions New Zealand, Australia and newcomers Scotland.

The Tournament kicks off when Australia faces Scotland on Friday October 28 (Local Time) in Hull.





By John Deaker



## 10 Reasons to Love Stephen Kearney's Appointment

*Stephen Kearney at the Rugby League World Cup 2017 draw announcement.  
Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)*

- 1) Kearney has Mana ( presence, charisma, and commands respect ) & is a Kiwi. He therefore provides a strong point-of-difference from recent Australian coaches who failed to make the top 8 with the team when at the helm.
- 2) Kearney can bring great external analysis. ALL organizations can do with this at times. They get too set in their ways and don't realize how flawed some of their processes are. Kearney will be in a great position to evaluate the Warriors on and off the field and will have the power to make changes where it's appropriate.
- 3) Kearney rates the Warriors' roster. It's clear from the 11 Warriors he picked last week in an extended Kiwis squad that he won't use the roster as an excuse to fail.
- 4) Kearney's existing relationship with Kieran Foran. This could help this key signing for the club come to fruition and also make it a very successful one for the club.
- 5) Kearney has strong contacts that could help the Warriors' roster in the future. This includes the retention of players as well as the signing of fresh players to the club.
- 6) Kearney's done a good apprenticeship before coming to Mount Smart Stadium. Not only will he have learnt plenty from coaching under Craig Bellamy and Wayne Bennett he'll also have learnt plenty from his failure at Parramatta. He could look to Ricky Stuart for inspiration; Stuart was another man to fail dismally at Parramatta but then he returned to a club he had played for ( Canberra )and has made a big impact as their coach.
- 7) Kearney's not afraid to drop star players. He's proven that recently with dropping Issac Luke from the Kiwis and players like Luke will know that if they don't produce what's expected of them then they'll find themselves on the bench or in reserve grade.
- 8) Defence is one of Kearney's specialties. Sorting out the Warriors' defence is one of the greatest challenges in rugby league.
- 9) He brings very little baggage to the Warriors role and won't be afraid to make tough calls.
- 10) He played for the Kiwis and the New Zealand Warriors. That doesn't mean much on its own but when combined with the other assets he brings to the table it's another reason that will help Kearney to build a strong rapport with the Warriors' players that could make his signing a success.

# Kearney Steps Down as Kiwis Coach

By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



**N**EW ZEALAND Rugby League is delighted for Stephen Kearney, with his appointment as new Vodafone Warriors head coach.

"Stephen has always been open about wanting another NRL head coach position and securing his old club means a lot to him," says NZRL chief executive Alex Hayton. "We wish Stephen every success with the Warriors.

"Stephen wants to concentrate on his new full-time responsibilities and feels he cannot commit 100% to the Kiwis at this time, ending his eight-year reign as national team coach.

"He leaves a legacy that will be hard to match, both as one of our greatest players and coaches..

"In his first year, he lead the Kiwis to a World Cup victory in 2008, which helped reinvigorate the game in New Zealand. He has worked tirelessly in building a strong team performance culture.

"Winning the 2014 Four Nations was part of dream run, with success at the 2015 Anzac Test, New Zealand's first mid-year win since 1998, the first time they had beaten Australia in three straight games since 1953 and, subsequently, for the first time ever the world number one ranking.

"Although he is leaving us, we're excited that he is actually moving closer to home and will continue to play a leading hand in developing NZ rugby league talent."

NZRL is in discussion with several candidates to quickly to fill the Kiwis vacancy, with the team scheduled to face Australia on October 15 in Perth, before defending their Four Nations title in England.

## Stephen Kearney Kiwis Coaching Record

- 42 tests for 23 wins and one draw
- Most wins of any Kiwis coach
- Most wins by Kiwi coach against Australia - 5
- Kiwis achieved world No.1 ranking for first time
- Rugby League World Cup winner 2008
- Rugby League World Cup runner-up 2013
- Four Nations tournament winners 2010 & 2014
- Awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit 2009

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# Rays Still Rule in National Final Rematch

By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



**L**ATE TRIES to George Edwards and Semisi Tyrell gave Counties Manukau Stingrays an encouraging start to their NZRL National Premiership title defence.

In a rematch of last year's finalists, the reigning champions found themselves under pressure from Canterbury Bulls and ahead by only two points with 10 minutes remaining, before drawing away for a 36-22 victory.

The contest was probably a far better spectacle than their previous meeting last October, when the South Aucklanders comfortably prevailed 41-10. This time, they built an early 12-0 lead, but allowed the South Islanders back into contention through the middle stages of the game.

Tries to Erwin Sauni and Tevin Arona, both converted by Toi Sepuloni, saw the scores tied 12-12 at half-time, and Matt Sauni put the Bulls ahead 16-12 soon after the restart.

Counties responded with the next two tries, but when hooker Corey Lawrie scored in the corner and Arona converted from the sideline, Canterbury were only 24-22 adrift.

Edwards clinched the result for the Stingrays, when he leapt high above the defence and juggled a crosskick, regathering and falling across the line for his touchdown.

Earlier, Akarana Falcons showed they would be a force in the premiership, overrunning Wellington Orcas 60-26 in their season-opener.

Orcas half Anthony Utanga provided the individual highlight for the visitors, bringing up his second try of the match with an intercept on his own goal-line and 100m dash to the far end of the field.

Eight of Akarana's 11 tries were converted by teenage half Zae Wallace, who added a chip-and-chase try on half-time for a personal haul of 20 points.

Meanwhile, Waikato are early front-runners in the NZRL National Championship, with an emphatic 62-4 result over Taranaki Sharks in Huntly.

Wing Teina Ngahiwi recorded a try-scoring double, while fullback Aaron Jolley scored a try and converted nine of 11 for 22 points.

Southland emerged ahead in the South Island derby, defeating Canterbury Development 26-16, despite a hat-trick of tries to Canterbury win Tauvale Tauvale.

## New Zealand Universities and Tertiary Students Rugby League Capping Ceremony

**T**HE NEW Zealand Universities and Tertiary Students Rugby League broke new ground late last week by holding two capping ceremonies in Auckland for former representative players.

The NZUTSRL Chairman, Dr Barry Hughes, said the idea behind the ceremonies went to his long serving Secretary and Honorary NZRL Historian, Carey Clements.

"For more than a year, Carey undertook research in his own time in trying to trace down every team list of players that represented the New Zealand Universities, New Zealand Students and the NZUTSRL, since the council was officially formed in Wellington in August, 1968," Dr Hughes said.

*Continued on next page...*

The caps which come with a tassel in the same way a graduating mortar board caps have, each has a unique number, with the first one going to whoever represented NZU first in surname alphabetical order in 1968.

Dr Hughes noted that the numbered caps will only be awarded to those that took the field in official 13-a-side fixtures, meaning those that were selected in either paper or tournament sides will miss out along with those that played in the national 7's tournaments in the late 1970's.

"We however will still award them caps, but it means they will have the years down instead on the back of the cap in which they played," he noted.

Off the field staff such as coaches and managers will be eligible as well, but again will only have their titles written down on the back along with whatever years they were involved.

The capping ceremonies saw a total of 25 receive caps including brothers Peter, John, Tea and Iva Ropati along with Emil, Greg and Richard Va'afusuaga, who all played in the 1980's.

NZRL President Howie Tamati also received a playing cap as the successful New Zealand captain that won the inaugural Student Rugby League Cup 30 years ago along with his fellow ex Kiwi and World Cup coach, Trevor Patrick, who was awarded cap number ten, having made his NZU debut in its first official year of 1968.

Dr Hughes personally thought the cap idea was great, especially as it proved to be a hit with a lot of the older players

"It meant we created an environment that allowed them to catch up with each other for the first time in many years and relive their playing days and recall forgotten events, such as Howie (Tamati) coaching New Zealand Universities, after finishing as the Kiwi coach in 1993," Dr Hughes said.

Before the first capping ceremony was held at the Otahuhu Rugby League Club, Carey Clements visited four players who were unable to be available at either ceremony before presenting them with their caps.

One of the players included the 1984 prop Carrick Courtney, who at the time, of being presented his cap, was recovering from surgery, inside an Auckland Hospital ward.

"It was a great cheer up present," Clements said, "and luckily for him both his wife and his son were present to witness at first hand, part of a ceremony that he had not encountered since graduating decades beforehand."

Among the guests that attended the Saturday night dinner and capping ceremony, were former NZUTS-RL President and NZRL President Gerald Ryan along with his playing team mates from the original 1957 Auckland University side.

"Sadly the NZUTSRL Patron and founding father of University Rugby League in New Zealand Bob Dragicevich died exactly a week beforehand," Clements said, "so to me I could not help but notice the irony where he had led the way in one era and now we are starting a whole new one which I am sure he would have approved of".



# 2016 NZRL Premiership Rugby League Competition



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