

VODAFONE



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

21st September 2016

Newsletter #140

By David Kemeys

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



CRIKEY DID the Vodafone Warriors get hammered at the weekend. The constant theme was that we need a player clearout.

That is hardly groundbreaking stuff, but what was, was that players were named.

Hugh McGahan singled out Manu Vatuvei and Ben Matulino, arguing both had failed to live up their status as two of our highest paid players.

The former Kiwi captain said Warriors coach Stephen Kearney could make a mark by showing the pair the door, and proving to the others that poor performances won't be tolerated.

"Irrespective of his standing, Manu Vatuvei has got to go," McGahan told Tony Veitch. "And again, irrespective of his standing, Ben Matulino has got to go. They have underperformed. If you're going to make an impact I'd say that's probably the two players that you would look at."

Bold stuff, and fair play to the man, he told it like he saw it.

Kearney, on the other hand, clearly doesn't see it the same way, since he named both in the Kiwis train-on squad, and while he acknowledged they had struggled this year, he backed himself to get the best out of them.

In fact he went further, he said it was his job.

"That's my responsibility as the coach, to get the individuals in a position so they can go out and play their best. That's not an issue for me."

That is actually sensible stuff from our new boss. He is hardly likely to come out swinging, and alienate himself from his players.

Sacking players is easy from the sideline, and a lot harder in real life, when there are little things like contracts involved.

Veitch had a go in the Herald too, writing that everyone knows there are senior players on big money who must go, though he didn't name names, which is hardly surprising when he'll be calling them in a day or two to ask them to be on his radio show.

But the theme was echoed by his colleague Paul Lewis, although I just about lost the will to live before I got to the point, which was that "the big unanswered question" was if any of the playing roster would go.

"The consistent lament is the Warriors have the talent. After five years of no finals football, you have to query that."

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But would he be brave enough to name players? Yes he would, singling out Ryan Hoffman's captaincy, Manu, and Jacob Lilyman, before saying only Bodene Thompson, Issac Luke and Simon Mannering were up to it in the forwards.

Where the hell are we expected to get an entire forward pack less Simon, Issac, and Bodene, and an entire backline before next year?

Manly booted out 17 players at the end of the season but if it didn't work for them at Brookvale, can't see it working at Mt Smart.

In fairness to Lewis, he did pen this gem: "Three coaches in five years (four if you count caretaker coach Tony Iro) is testimony to the fact that if you keep changing the driver but the car still doesn't go fast enough, chances are something's wrong with the car."

Meanwhile, the – according to Lewis, suspect Hoffman – had this to say about Kearney: "He's not frightened to make some tough calls with some players that aren't fitting in, and you've seen that with the Kiwis. If you're a Warriors player you definitely head into preseason getting ready to work."

Any the wiser? No, me neither.

Henry Nails It

When Sir Graham Henry says something, I am inclined to believe it because last time I looked I had not coached an All Blacks team to World Cup glory.

The man knows what he is talking about, and he is talking about us.

The Warriors, he says, lack belief, which frankly, probably won't come as much of a surprise to anyone, let alone incoming coach Stephen Kearney.

Now part of the advisory board appointed to help the new coach, Henry, who of course spent a good chunk of the year trying to help outgoing head coach Andrew McFadden, says never mind making the eight, this has to be about creating an environment that strives for greatness.

"The expectation must be that this side can do the business, can win the NRL - you don't hear that a lot. Maybe that's a weakness," Henry told Newstalk ZB. "There needs to be a higher expectation."

Amen to that.

Henry wants a culture at Mt Smart driven by more than results, saying his All Blacks primary motivation was always self-improvement.

"Players are hung-up about winning and losing and when the pressure gets on they don't play as well as they should. Everybody is hard-wired to win, the All Blacks are hard-wired to win. But they're galvanised by team and self-improvement, so they're always striving for that when they're on the field."

Bennett Backs Kearney

Now if I reckon Sir Graham Henry knows what he is talking about, I am hardly likely to think less of the greatest coach, in my opinion, in league history, Wayne Bennett.

And he reckons believes Stephen Kearney can be the man we need.

He must know surely, since Kearney is his right-hand man at the Broncos.

Bennett says Kearney is a coach "on top of his game" and will know how to sort out our issues.

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"I'm pleased for Steve - it's a club I'm sure is close to his heart. He's been a wonderful Kiwi player and a great coach for them, so it's obviously something that's got a lot of appeal to him, to go back home and have the opportunity to coach there in his own right."

Plenty has been said about Kearney's Parramatta tenure in the 2012 season when he got just 10 wins in 42 games, but Bennett is not concerned, saying he wanted him for Brisbane because he knows the things you've got to do every day.

"They've got themselves a really good coach and I hope he does well."

Maybe more surprising is the ringing endorsement of a man who was part of Kearney's Eels side,

Tim Mannah, another who believes Kearney can deliver.

"I think he will excel with the Warriors," Mannah said. "I have seen him grow a lot over the last few years. What he has done with the Kiwis is pretty special, and working under Wayne Bennett he will have learnt a lot of things."

More importantly Mannah said it was turmoil at the Eels that ruined Kearney, and not that he was not ready for it. "If it was another time it might have been a different story, I don't think he was rushed into it, I think he was ready and I think he is ready now."

And So Does Mel

Kangaroos coach Mal Meninga is also in on it, saying Kearney is the man to help us realise our potential.

Meninga says Kearney is the perfect fit.

"It's a pretty natural selection, it's the best choice. From a cultural point of view, Stephen is the best fit, having so much familiarity with the players from rep footy, but also being a Kiwi. Hopefully they can become competitive and a team that can always get in the top eight."

And Then There Were Four

It's been 22 years since Canberra were within one win of the big dance, but that is where they are after ending Penrith's hopes 22-12 at GIO Stadium, booking a date with the Storm in Melbourne on Saturday - when their season will finally end.

Months ago I told you the Cowboys were going to go back to back, and despite all the talk being about Melbourne, I still believe they will.

Johnathan Thurston got North Queensland home against Brisbane 26-20, locking it up at 20-20 with seconds left in regular time, then producing the wonder-ball to set up Michael Morgan's 85th-minute try.

Thurston is, and I say this in the nicest possible way, a freak. And in his team is Jason Taumalolo, who is in breath-taking form, pretty good for a guy who was chucking eggs earlier in the week.

Watson Rips In

Laughed until I stopped when Warriors owner Eric Watson rubbished rugby as not "real sport" at the weekend, saying the National Rugby League was more exciting. Talk about how to win friends and influence people.

Before the rugby heads start crying, sports writer Chris Rattue, who is no league lover, said pretty much the same thing.

Now I do not mind a bit of rugby, but I do struggle with the stop start nature of it, and get bored because predicting a winner is not that hard.

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And that is exactly what Watson was on about “There’s no predictability in the NRL, you think about what’s happening in finals football, we haven’t got any idea who’s going to win. When the All Blacks play we pretty much know what’s going to happen. Real sport is where it’s close and hard and we don’t know what the outcome is going to be.”

Hohaia Takes On Coaching Role

The Huntly Hurricane Lance Hohaia is back with ball in hand, signing up to help coach the Grand Valley State men’s rugby team.

The club’s head coach is a bloke named John Mullett, and he is pretty pleased with himself for coaxing Lance out of retirement.

“I think he’ll have a huge impact as a coach and change a lot of what we do.”

Grand Valley is in West Michigan, and is the home town of his wife Marisa, who was studying in New Zealand when Lance was with the Warriors.

They moved together to England when Lance signed for St Helens, and Lance retired last year due to concussion issues.

“I knew Grand Rapids was a nice place to raise a family,” Lance said. “The winters are a little brutal now and then, but I don’t mind the cold.”

Lance is doing real estate work, but there won’t be much surprise he found his way back into sport.

“Obviously playing rugby, being brought up on rugby, you live and breathe it in our nation, so I feel like I have a lot to give,” he said.

“Lance is used to playing a more advanced version of what we play, so he is helping us take our game to the next level,” team captain Cameron Maher said.

And it is no flash in the pan for Lance, who hopes to be around for a number of years. “The coach wants to slowly step away so if there is an opportunity to be here full time, I would love it.”

Watch the entire Sir Peter Leitch Roast on YouTube. [Click here!](#)

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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)

Kidwell's Long Journey

David Kidwell is announced as head coach of the New Zealand Kiwis Rugby League team. Friday 16 September 2016. Photo www.photosport.nz

IT IS a sign of the times that David Kidwell's journey from junior player in Christchurch to Kiwis coach has been vastly more involved than those of his three Canterbury predecessors, Jim Amos, Lory Blanchard and Frank Endacott, who all made the transition without leaving their home town. Kidwell brings with him the experience of having played in three countries and serving his coaching apprenticeship in Australia.

Kidwell is a product of Canterbury's most successful club, Hornby. He was chosen for the 1992 Schoolboy Kiwis and the 1995 Junior Kiwis, a season when he played for Canterbury Cardinals in the Lion Red Cup. By the time he was included in the 1996 Junior Kiwis he was at Sydney club Canterbury-Bankstown, the first stop on a roller-coaster career which happily had many more highs than lows. He made his mark as both a blockbusting centre and an uncompromising backrow forward.

There was a shock Test appearance when plucked out of reserve grade; varying playing periods with six Australian clubs across three states; one of the biggest hits of all time to befuddle Willie Mason, who had disrespected the Kiwis' haka; a prominent role in the overthrow of a Kiwis coach; and New Zealand's memorable victories at the 2005 Tri-Nations and the 2008 World Cup. He played in 25 Tests and more than 200 NRL first grade games.

The Kidwell file includes the following:

1997 and 1998: played for the short-lived Adelaide Rams franchise created by Super League.

1999: Transferred to Parramatta and made his Test debut off the bench on his 22nd birthday against Australia at Sydney. He held his position for the inaugural Tri-Nations tournament.

2000: Called out of Parramatta's reserve team for the injury-hit Anzac Test Kiwis. Later he represented New Zealand Maori at the 2000 World Cup when overlooked by the Kiwis.

2001: Spent an unsettled 32-match season with Warrington in the British Super League.

2002: Rescued by the Sydney Roosters and switched to the forwards. Did not play in the grand final win over the Warriors but awarded a winner's ring for his contribution over 19 games.

2003-2006: Outstanding member of the formidable Melbourne Storm team in more than 100 appearances, playing in the 2006 grand final loss to Brisbane Broncos.

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2004: Recalled to the Kiwis for the Anzac Test on his 27th birthday as a replacement for the suspended Ruben Wiki. He received the Kiwis players' award in his first Test as a forward.

2004-2006: Regular member of the Kiwis pack over three Tri-Nations tournaments, including the 2005 triumph when Australia was beaten 24-0 in the final at Leeds.

2006: The only NRL first grader to play in the mid-season Test against Great Britain at St Helens. Kidwell demonstrated his devotion to the jersey when he travelled alone to England after Melbourne released him on condition he first played for the Storm before racing to the airport.

2006: Named NZRL Player of the Year, an award shared with fullback Brent Webb.

2007: Signed by a rejuvenated South Sydney as co-captain, only to trip over his daughter and miss most of the season. Returned to play for the All Golds in a special centenary match but was unavailable for the Kiwis tour of Britain because of a family illness. With captain Roy Asotasi, he lobbied for a coaching change, leading to Stephen Kearney being appointed.

2008: Restored to the Kiwis squad for the World Cup tournament, playing his last Test off the bench against Great Britain at Newcastle. He later retired after 209 NRL games.

2009-2010: Coached the South Sydney under-20s. In his second season they won the minor premiership but lost the grand final to the Warriors.

2010-2011: Coached the Junior Kiwis to win two of their three matches against the Junior Kangaroos.

2011-2013: Assistant coach to Craig Bellamy at the Melbourne Storm, including 2012 grand final victory over the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs.

2014-2016: Assistant coach to Mick Potter and then Jason Taylor at Wests Tigers.

2014-2016: Assistant Kiwis coach to Stephen Kearney, starting with victory in the 2014 Four Nations and including three consecutive defeats of Australia.

2016: Succeeded Kearney as Kiwis head coach when Kearney appointed head coach of the New Zealand Warriors. Kidwell's contract extends through to the 2017 World Cup in New Zealand and Australia.

WELLINGTON

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Griffiths Went Out a Hero

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)



IF IT is every top footballer's ambition to leave the international scene a hero, then tough West Coast wing and centre Reese Griffiths (Kiwi number 372) certainly achieved that. Griffiths, who gave one of the most courageous performances in Kiwis history at Carlaw Park in 1962, died in Greymouth last Friday, aged 78.

West Coasters never doubted that Griffiths – a nephew of 1930 Kiwi Norm Griffiths -- would make it to the highest level. A Schoolboy Kiwi in 1952, he was already rocketing towards higher honours when making his senior club debut for Runanga at 16. He was first chosen for the Kiwis as an 18-year-old on the 1956 tour of Australia, serving his apprenticeship as an understudy to legends Tom Hadfield, Tommy Baxter and Cyril Eastlake.

At 19 Griffiths made his Test debut on the wing in a famous 29-21 victory over Great Britain at Sydney during the 1957 World Cup, playing outside Runanga club-mate Geordie Menzies and alongside Auckland greats Hadfield, George Turner and Bill Sorensen. Griffiths toured Australia again in 1959 and 1963, went to the 1960 World Cup in Britain and featured in home series against the British in 1958 and 1962 and France in 1960.

But it is for the last of his 11 Test appearances that he should be most remembered. Recalled to the Kiwis after missing the 1961 tour to Britain and France, Griffiths slogged his way through the Carlaw Park mud with blood streaming down his face from a serious head cut as the Kiwis scored a record 19-0 victory over Great Britain.

There were no replacements, no blood bins, no concussion tests and no stitches inserted mid-match in those days. When the St John Ambulance attendant could not stem the blood flow, the Runanga coal miner shrugged his shoulders and went back to work marking giant British centre Neil Fox. When Griffiths and the Kiwis were done the British had been beaten 19-0, a record New Zealand winning margin and the first time in 46 Tests dating back 55 years that either side had been held scoreless.

Griffiths had multiple stitches inserted near his left eye after the match and was ruled out of the second Test a week later. When he returned to Australia for his third tour with the 1963 Kiwis he was, at 25, a veteran among a comparatively new crop of outside backs such as Brian Reidy, Ken McCracken, Neville Denton, Roger Bailey and fellow Coaster Graham Kennedy.

After the tour Griffiths went home to help Runanga win the West Coast championship and the Thacker Shield as the top South Island club. That Runanga side included seven players chosen for the Kiwis, Spencer Dunn, Reg Hart, Arnold Green, Reese Griffiths, Geordie Menzies, Gary Smith and Bruce Mann (who unfortunately missed the 1965 tour to Britain and France through injury), plus coach Norm Griffiths.

Reese Griffiths also quietly retired from representative and international football in 1963. His job was done. This week the old blokes at the Runanga Working Men's Club will once again recall those great days, and particularly the contributions made by Griffiths and Menzies, who also sadly passed away earlier this year.



Test Match

By Barry Ross



NEWLY APPOINTED Kiwi coach, David Kidwell, would be a happy man watching the Melbourne Storm over the past month or so. The Melbourne forwards in particular, have been very impressive and key members of this powerful pack will also be vital members of the New Zealand team who take on Australia in just over three weeks. The two teams will clash at Perth on Saturday 15 October and Kidwell will be keen to begin his Head Coaching career with a victory. There are several players still involved in the remaining NRL matches who are pushing for Kiwi selection, but Storm men, Jesse Bromwich (17 Tests), Kevin Proctor (11 Tests) and Tohu Harris (10 Tests) are probably on the top of the list. All three are in top form and Storm coach, Craig Bellamy, will be hoping they continue their domination in Saturday night's Preliminary Final against the Raiders in Melbourne. Kidwell will be a keen spectator and he too will be hoping the trio do well and avoid injury.

In Friday night's Preliminary Final between the Sharks and the Cowboys, Kidwell will be focussed on the play of North Queensland's backrower, Jason Taumalolo. The Kiwi coach won't be the only one studying the 23 year old wrecking ball. He was devastating in last week's win over the Broncos and if he does as much damage this week, the Sharks will have major problems. The game's best player, Johnathan Thurston was also brilliant in the Broncos win and in that form, the Cowboys are entitled to be favourites to reach their second successive Grand Final. But on saying that, don't write the Sharks off. They showed plenty of heart and determination to defeat Canberra in Canberra on 10 September and with Paul Gallen back in the side, they will not give an inch. They too have some in-form players such as prop Matt Prior, hooker Michael Ennis, centre Jack Bird, and goal kicking five eighth, James Maloney. I bet the Roosters are regretting letting 30 year old Maloney go this season after his first class and consistent year with the Sharks.

The Roosters may have finished their commitments for this year, but Jared Waerea-Hargreaves is still working hard on the training paddock. I was pleased to hear the 27 year old, 17 Test veteran, saying he is hopeful that Kidwell would remember his name for future Test selection. Still only 39, Kidwell has good insight into the modern game. It also helps that he has worked as an assistant to Bellamy at the Storm, while this year he was working with Jason Taylor at the Wests Tigers.

Last Sunday the popular Mick Cronin, collected his fourth south Coast Premiership in the past six seasons. Now 63, "the Crow" played 33 Tests for Australia and is second on the Australian all-time Test point scoring list with 309, behind Jonathan Thurston's 332. Cronin has coached the Gerringong club for the past six seasons or so and they have won the Group 7, South Coast first grade Premiership in 2010, 2013, 2015 and now 2016. With son's Patrick at five eighth and Peter in the centres, Cronin coaches the Gerringong Lions without any pay, while his players all play for nothing. Many of Gerringong's opposing teams include paid players. Gerringong is about 130 kilometres south of Sydney on the coastline. In Sunday's Grand Final, which was played in bleak, wet and slippery conditions, they defeated the Warilla Gorillas by 10-0.

I was saddened to hear that Ron Massey passed away on Monday 19 September, aged 86. A very popular and influential person in Australian Rugby League, Ron had been involved with the game for 75 years or more. He grew up in the Illawarra area, south of Sydney and soon after he moved to Sydney in the 1950s, he formed a firm and lasting friendship with Australian Team of the Century coach, Jack Gibson. The duo worked together at several Sydney NRL clubs, winning Premierships with the Roosters in 1974 and 1975, as well as with Parramatta in 1981, 1982 and 1983. Ron also served on the NRL judiciary panel and was Cronulla secretary in the early 1990s for a couple of years. The NSWRL recognised his contribution to the game in 2013 by naming their second tier competition, the Ron Massey Cup.

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stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz

The First Extra Time Was A Success - And a Player Drop-Off Could Be Even Better

By John Deaker



GOLDEN POINT extra time on Friday night between North Queensland and Brisbane was a resounding success. With the match tied up after 80 minutes, the new rule for the 2016 finals series kicked in and it ultimately achieved what it set out to do: Extra time didn't turn into a 'Drop-kick-a-thon' and players looked for tries as their preferred way to break the deadlock.

Ironically, North Queensland's try came in the 87th minute when all the commentators (particularly Greg Alexander) were all in agreement that with time running out on the clock a drop-kick had become the best option for North Queensland. Jonathon Thurston then made the commentators (and most of us at home) look silly by successfully setting up the match-winning try.

One example isn't enough to say that the new system is definitely much better than the Golden Point rule that previously applied, but the NRL would have been thrilled with how the match played out.

As we look long-term, I'd be a fan of a system like Touch has where you drop a player off from your team every minute or two. This would almost ALWAYS guarantee a try in extra time and prevent there ever being a need for the golden point period because with teams tired and down to nine or ten men tries would naturally present themselves. This could also provide a great battle between coaches as they tried to decide who were tactically the best players for them to drop off.

What we do know for sure is the system served rugby league successfully on Friday night and the only down side was that one team had to lose , because the way they played Brisbane and North Queensland both deserved to be involved somewhere in the semi-finals this weekend.

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KIWIS



Kidwell Promoted to Kiwis Head Coach

By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



AFTER THREE years as assistant coach, David Kidwell has been appointed to guide the NZ Kiwis into next year's Rugby League World Cup as head coach.

Kidwell (Kiwi #679) will fill the role on a full-time basis, replacing predecessor Stephen Kearney, who was named Vodafone Warriors head coach.

His first assignment will be next month's test against Australia in Perth and the Four Nations tournament in England.

"I feel humbled and privileged to be named head coach of the Kiwis," says Kidwell, who played 24 tests for his country from 1999-2008, including the victorious 2008 World Cup triumph.

"As assistant, I've watched Stephen building a strong culture within the programme and I want to make sure that is upheld and becomes even stronger. That's the message I'll be giving to our senior players.

Kidwell's appointment to the top job was a logical step, given his apprenticeship under Kearney and his experience as an NRL assistant coach, most recently at Wests Tigers. He also coached the NZ Junior Kiwis in 2011-12.

"David has been part of a succession plan for when the head coach role became vacant," says NZRL chief executive Alex Hayton. "He has contributed to the development of the Kiwis team culture, brings continuity and certainty to the playing group over the next 14 months, leading into the Rugby League World Cup."

One of Kidwell's first priorities over the next few days will be to recruit a coaching staff that continues the line of succession.

David Kidwell Careers Stats:

Born April 23, 1977 in Christchurch

Second row/centre

- 209 NRL games (1997-2009) for Adelaide Rams, Parramatta Eels, Sydney Roosters, Melbourne Storm & South Sydney Rabbitohs
- 32 games (2001-02) for Warrington Wolves
- 24 tests (1999-2008) for NZ Kiwis
- Three games (2000) for NZ Maori
- Coached Rabbitohs U20s to 2010 Toyota Cup final, lost to Warriors
- Premier assistant coach at Melbourne Storm & Wests Tigers
- Junior Kiwis coach 2011-12
- NZ Kiwis assistant coach 2014-16

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James Fisher-Harris

Disappointing End to NRL Season

By Ben Francis



ICAN PROMISE you one thing, James Fisher-Harris will be a star of New Zealand rugby league.

The 20 year old was a surprise call up in the Panthers first game of the season against the Raiders, and has not looked back since.

After the game, Fisher-Harris said he didn't think he would make his NRL debut this year, but since then so much has changed. Fisher-Harris has gone on to be one of the first names on the team sheet every week for Panthers and barely put a foot wrong.

He played in 23 of the Panthers 26 games, averaging 71 running metres, 24 tackles in 50 minutes per game. The Northland product also played 80 minutes seven times and ran over 100 metres seven times also.

But despite all that hard work, it will be three minutes of hell which could haunt Fisher-Harris for a while.

The Panthers were trailing 18-0, before two quick tries had them trailing by a converted try with 14 minutes remaining. The Panthers had all the momentum before a high tackle gave the Raiders good field position, shortly after Fisher-Harris was penalised for another high shot and the Raiders kicked for goal to put the game beyond reach.

The Green Machine went on to win the game 22-12.

It was a disappointing end to a brilliant season, but Fisher-Harris is hoping to go from Junior Kiwi to Kiwis first choice in the space of 12 months. He also confirmed he had been in contact with former Kiwis coach Stephen Kearney before Kearney signed with the New Zealand Warriors last Tuesday.

"The Kiwis is the pinnacle for me. It's the ultimate goal so I'm hoping to make it," Fisher-Harris told NRL.com.

"(Kearney) told me I was going well with my transition from the under-20s to the NRL and said to keep up the good work and stuff like that.

Even though Kearney is no longer the coach of the Kiwis, he will probably make suggestions on who to select, and this would be a good chance to select one of our most promising stars working under a hard enforcer like Kidwell was.

I believe he will be in the 2017 Rugby League World Cup squad, (if he stays healthy of course) but I think the possibility of seeing him in the Kiwis jersey sooner rather than later is very likely.



Phil Gould
@Gus10Gould

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Terrific .. exceeded but that didn't surprise

Ben Francis @Ben_Francis136

@Gus10Gould Hey Gus, What did you think of James Fisher-Harris in his first year playing 1st grade? Did he live up to expectations?

RETWEET 1

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1:06 AM - 19 Sep 2016

I asked Gus Gould on Twitter on his thoughts of JFH and his first season.

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Vodafone Warriors Awards



Eric Watson presents Simon Mannering with the ball from his 250th NRL game. Simon was awarded the Clubman and Player of the year.



Graeme Lee and Sir Peter Leitch with Sir Peter Leitch Member of the Year Emma Harper.



Owner and Chairman Eric Watson made a riveting speech.



Player of the year Simon Mannering with CEO Jim Doyle and Owner and Chairman Eric Watson.



SKYCITY Legacy Award is presented to Allen McLaughlin.



Brent Carter from TNT presents the TNT NYC Rookie of the Year to Chanel Harris-Tavita.



The crowd on the night.



Vodafone ISP Team Man of the Year is presented to James Bell.



Vodafone People's Choice Award is presented to Shaun Johnson.



Stan Walker performing.



Eric Watson with Club Person of the Year Susan Turner. A very worthy recipient.



Stacey Jones Lounge members at the awards night.

CANTERBURY HAVE won the Ramesh Patel Shield to take honours as the country's best performing region this year.

The Ramesh Patel Shield recognises the top region over Hockey New Zealand's three annual high performance tournaments – Under 21s, Under 18s and the Ford National Hockey League.

It came down to the wire with the Canterbury Cats defeating North Harbour 3-2 in the Ford NHL women's final to secure the K Cup as well as the Ramesh Patel Shield.

Canterbury finished on top of the standings with 110 points, beating out Midlands (also on 110 points) by just one tie-breaking outright win.

View results: [Click here](#)



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Reader Mail

THE VODAFONE Warriors League in Libraries 2001-20015 box set is an amazing array of short stories, which have been created by Kiwi children and beautifully illustrated.

This box set should be in every primary school in New Zealand, each and every story makes reading fun. I was introduced to the box set by Sir Peter at his Celebrity Roast, in fact, he flung them at me saying that I needed to read something worthwhile. This is such a great product that my partner Somboon and I, are going to take some box sets to several orphanages in Thailand that we sponsor, so they can not only learn English but read some great stories. And yes Sir Peter in case you're wondering - I have read every book in the box set.



David Hartnell MNZM Hollywood Gossip Column.

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NRL Telstra Premiership and Holden Cup Week 3 Finals Series Match Officials

NRL Match Officials

GAME: SHARKS V COWBOYS		DATE: 23/9/16	
VENUE: ALLIANZ STADIUM		NRL KICK OFF: 7.55PM	
REFEREE:	Ben Cummins	REVIEW OFFICIALS:	Luke Patten, Ashley Klein
ASSIST REFEREE:	Gerard Sutton	SENIOR RO:	Bernard Sutton
TOUCH JUDGES:	Brett Suttor		
	Chris Butler		Andrew Dunemann
STANDBY REFEREE:	Grant Atkins	JERSEY COLOUR:	Red
GAME: STORM V RAIDERS		DATE: 24/7/16	
VENUE: AAMI PARK		NRL KICK OFF: 7.40PM	
REFEREE:	Matt Cecchin	REVIEW OFFICIALS:	Ben Galea, Ashley Klein
ASSIST REFEREE:	Alan Shortall	SENIOR RO:	Bernard Sutton
TOUCH JUDGES:	Michael Wise, Jeff Younis		
STANDBY REFEREE:	Jared Maxwell	JERSEY COLOUR:	Red

Holden Cup Match Officials

GAME: PANTHERS V COWBOYS		DATE: 23/9/16	
VENUE: ALLIANZ STADIUM		NYC KICK OFF: 2.55PM	
REFEREE:	Ziggy Przeklasa-Adamski	REVIEW OFFICIAL:	Ben Galea
ASSIST REFEREE:	Drew Oultram	SENIOR RO:	Ashley Klein
TOUCH JUDGES:	Dave Ryan		
	Josh McGowan		
STANDBY TJ:	Adam Cassidy	JERSEY COLOUR:	Red
GAME: DRAGONS V ROOSTERS		DATE: 23/9/16	
VENUE: ALLIANZ STADIUM		NYC KICK OFF: 5.15PM	
REFEREE:	Phil Henderson	REVIEW OFFICIAL:	Jason Robinson
ASSIST REFEREE:	Kasey Badger	SENIOR RO:	Luke Patten
TOUCH JUDGES:	Rohan Best		
	Todd Smith		
STANDBY TJ:	Adam Cassidy	JERSEY COLOUR:	Lime

Big thank you to Novotel Lakeside hotel in Queenstown this LOVELY platter was in our room on arrival felt pretty special!



Dave the owner of the Lone Star in Queenstown with Sir Graham Henry, who was speaking at the Lion Nathan Conference

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