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Sharks 2016 NRL Champions



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz



By Barry Ross



Grand Final

*Cronulla Sharks team celebrations as Paul Gallen lifts the Proven-Summons Trophy.
Photo www.photosport.nz*

THE NRL are to be congratulated for a highly successful Grand Final day. Everything about the event was positive- the game was dramatic and exciting, the atmosphere was electric, the entertainment first class and the weather superb. Living in the Cronulla area, I am biased towards the Sharks but except for Storm fans, I joined most of the Rugby League community in wanting the Sharks to break their 50 year drought and win their first Premiership. They experienced many tense moments before they did this and the celebrations within “ the Shire “ will go on for many weeks. The entire Sharks 17 man squad rose to the occasion. While Luke Lewis took out the Clive Churchill Medal as the game’s best player, several of his team-mates were not far behind him. Andrew Fifita posted incredible statistics. The big prop ran for 189 metres in his 23 hit-ups, made 12 tackle busts, one linebreak and 30 tackles in 61 blockbusting minutes, and for good measure, powered over for the Premiership winning try with 11 minutes to play. Five eighth James Maloney also worked hard and although his numbers were not great, halfback Chad Townsend had an influential game. The Storm players concentrated on Townsend, sending their big men racing at him on the edge of the rucks while he also copped some big hits, one especially brutal from Rugby Union bound winger, Marika Koroibete, after just six minutes. The Sharks half made 23 tackles. Matt Prior continued his strong end of season form. The Sharks called upon their blond headed prop to make the hard yards up the middle and he certainly responded with 164 metres from his 16 hit-ups, plus he made 27 tackles in his 54 minutes on the field. Captain Paul Gallen, in his 279th first grade NRL match, all for the Sharks, finished with 26 tackles, plus 148 metres from his 19 hit-ups, in his 58 minutes.

In the Melbourne side, captain Cameron Smith made an incredible 72 tackles. While this stat proves his value to the Storm, it was his after match speech that showed what a class act the Australian captain is. While he was obviously distraught after the defeat, he said all the right things, showing poise and integrity at a very emotional time for him.

The weekend was memorable for the two Douglas brothers, Luke aged 30 and Kane, 27. Luke (263 NRL games with the Sharks and then the Titans), was one of the retiring players who were honoured at Grand Final day, while Kane was a Wallaby lock at Pretoria in their 18-10 loss to South Africa. Warriors evergreen, Ali Lauitiiti, now 37, was another of the 26 retiring players, who the NRL paid tribute to at the big day. Ali played 115 top grade games for the Warriors from 1998 to 2004, as well as 19 Tests for New Zealand.

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The two early games on Grand Final day also provided the fans with plenty of drama and excitement. In the under 20s, the young Roosters surprised everyone with their 30-28 victory over minor premiers, Penrith. They went into halftime trailing the Panthers 28-6, but crossed for four unanswered tries in the second half. The match winning four pointer came seven minutes from the end, when Johnny Tuivasa-Sheck, 20, younger brother of Roger, raced over down the left sideline. The Roosters finished fifth on the table and the week before the Grand Final came from 14-0 down in the preliminary final to beat St. George 26-20. One of their many stars was 19 year old captain and lock, Nat Butcher, who won the Jack Gibson Medal as Man of the Match. Before the Grand Final, Butcher had run for the most metres in the 2016 under 20 competition, with 4,306 from 423 runs, while he also finished second on the tackle count ladder with 995, from his 23 games. Another Roosters player to shine was 18 year old, Vic Radley, who was moved from second row to hooker, following a late shoulder problem for Grant Garvey. In the Interstate Intrust Super Challenge Interstate match, the Illawarra Cutters, from Wollongong, thrashed Queensland's Burleigh Bears by 54 to 12. While the scoreline was lopsided, there was plenty to like about the Cutters polished display. Twenty one year old half-back, Drew Hutchison called the shots and collected the Man of the Match Award. Hutchison, who has played three first grade games, is expected to become St. George/Illawarra's permanent NRL half in 2017. This was the first time a NSW team has won this Challenge game, since its inception in 2014. Born in Innisfail, North Queensland, 26 year old Cutters five eighth, Shaun Nona, landed all of his nine shots at goal for 18 points.

A half an hour or so before kick-off of the first grade clash, Keith Urban, Jessica Mauboy, 57 year old Bon Jovi guitarist, Richie Sambora and his girlfriend Orianthi entertained the crowd. While some of the music media criticised Sambora and Orianthi, saying they were well past their best, they were full of praise for Urban and Mauboy. Personally I couldn't see any problem with any of the pre-game show and like the majority of the 83,625 crowd, I bopped along with the music, especially the Bon Jovi hit, Livin' on a Prayer. It was a perfect lead-in to what was to come.

The day before, the Western Bulldogs set the scene for the Sharks, with their first Aussie Rules Premiership in 62 years following their 89-67 victory over the Sydney Swans, before a crowd of 99,981 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The Swans were the minor premiers, as were the two losers in Sydney, the Storm and the under 20 Panthers. I watched Melbourne's big day on TV and I thought the Sydney Grand Final event was much better. Sting was the Melbourne Entertainment main man, but his "Message in a Bottle," did not come close to "Livin' on a Prayer."

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Links between Cronulla, Vodafone Warriors and New Zealand

By Richard Becht



A STRONG NEW Zealand and Vodafone Warriors flavour runs through not only Cronulla's inaugural premiership-winning side but also right through the club's history starting with Dane and Kurt Sorensen.

Of the 17 players involved in last night's pulsating 14-12 win over Melbourne – the Sharks' first title win in their 50th season – seven boasted links with New Zealand, the Kiwis or the Vodafone Warriors.

Halves James Maloney and Chad Townsend developed into established NRL players during their stints at Mount Smart Stadium.

Maloney had seen next to no first-grade time when he joined the Vodafone Warriors in 2010 before going on to make 75 appearances before returning to Sydney to link up with the Roosters for the 2013 season. The Vodafone Warriors made a big offer to retain him but Maloney turned it down, making it clear he and his wife Jess wanted to return to Australia to be close to their families.

Townsend had been given just 19 first-grade games over three seasons by the Sharks when he joined the Vodafone Warriors but immediately became a first-choice player making 41 appearances in 2014 and 2015. The club had an option to retain him in 2016 but Townsend asked for a release so he and his partner Marissa Sorensen – granddaughter of the late 1953-1960 Kiwi Bill Sorensen – could return to Sydney to be near Marissa's terminally-ill mother.

The other players with links to both clubs in the final were wing Sosaia Feki and interchange forward Jayson Bukuya. Feki clocked up more than 40 NYC appearances for the Vodafone Junior Warriors in 2010 and 2011 before signing with the Sharks in 2012; he made his NRL debut in 2013. Bukuya joined the Vodafone Warriors from Cronulla in 2014, featuring in 18 NRL games before returning to the Sharks for the 2015 campaign.

The other New Zealand links in the Sharks' squad last night were wing Valentine Holmes, Gerard Beale and Sam Tagataese.

Holmes, of Cook Islands-Maori descent, has opted to make himself eligible for Australia although he qualifies for the Kiwis through his New Zealand-born father.

Kiwi international Beale, also of Maori extraction, was born in Australia but has New Zealand heritage through his parents while Tagataese was born and raised in Lower Hutt. Like Vodafone Warriors prop Ben Matulino he's a St Bernard's College product; he played First XV rugby union before embarking on a rugby league career which included stints with Melbourne and Gold Coast before he joined Cronulla in 2011.

Four other New Zealand-born players have played for the Sharks this year in halfback Fa'amanu Brown, hooker Matt McIlwrick and forwards Joseph Paulo and Jesse Sene-Lefao

While there was cause for special New Zealand interest in Cronulla's performance last night, the trailblazers linking New Zealand with the Sharks were unquestionably the outstanding Sorensen brothers Dane and Kurt.

Dane caused a stir when he signed for the Sharks for the 1977 season at a time when players were bound by international transfer fees and routinely blocked from representing the Kiwis if they chose to play overseas. However, he had negotiated a clause in his contract allowing him to play for New Zealand if selected, which he did that season and through until his last Test in 1985. He finished his career with a then club record 217 first-grade appearances for the Sharks.

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Younger brother Kurt wanted to join Dane at the Sharks but had to buck the system to do so. To avoid a transfer fee being paid he sat out the entire 1978 season in Sydney before being able to sign for Cronulla in 1979. An absolute weapon who struck fear into opponents, Kurt was unable to play for the Kiwis again until 1983 when the way was cleared for all players – regardless of where they played – to represent their country. He went on to play 124 times for the Sharks and then carved out a long and illustrious career with Widnes in England before finishing up with more than 400 top-level games.

The Sorensens' former Mount Wellington team-mate Mick Rasmussen joined them at the Sharks in the late 1970s, making one first-grade appearance.

Thereafter so many players of New Zealand extraction have gone on to play for Cronulla at some stage of their careers while a number have also travelled across the Tasman to represent the Vodafone Warriors (Blake Ayshford, Jeff Robson and Jonathan Wright were all with the club this season).

The Sorensens apart, Beale has been a Kiwi since 2011 while Feki was in New Zealand's 2014 Four Nations squad but didn't play a Test.

Other ex-Kiwis on Cronulla's books have been Tawera Nikau, Richie Barnett, Nigel Vagana, Andrew Lomu, Luke Covell, Bryson Goodwin and Sam Moa while another notable signing at the time was ex-Bay of Plenty and Southland rugby union fullback Eion Crossan, who spent the 1994-1995 seasons with the Sharks.

Players who have appeared for both Cronulla and the Vodafone Warriors have been Maloney, Townsend, Bukuya, Feki, Ayshford, Robson, Wright, Dane Nielsen, Brett Seymour, Misi Taulapapa, Vince Mellars, Henry Perenara, Tevita Latu and Richard Villasanti. Bryan Laumatia and Toshio Laiseni were on the Vodafone Warriors' books before having brief first-grade careers at Cronulla.

Foundation Auckland Warriors coach John Monie played three seasons with Cronulla from 1968-1970.

Other players with New Zealand connections who have appeared for the Sharks include Fraser Anderson, Jeremy Smith, Tinirau Arona, Bronx Goodwin, Matthew Wright, Jack Afamasaga, Karl Filiga, Tupou Sopoaga, Taulima Tautai, James Stosic, Hutch Maiava, Karl Lovell, Leo Tanoi, Terence Seuseu, Phillip Leuluai and Jason Williams (the front rower, not the ex-Kiwi winger).

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Talking to Kenny Bromwich

By Laurie Reid

KENNY, IT was an incredibly close match but you've come out on the wrong side of the scoreboard. How are your emotions right now?

I'm shattered, absolutely shattered. It was such a tough game, physical and fast. They came out hard but we were able to hold them off for most of the first half. In the second half we were better and got in front but it took something special from the Sharks to bring it back and they ended up getting it.

Were you surprised by their intensity at the start?

No, not at all. I knew it was going to be like that, that they were going to throw everything at us. That's what happens in big games.

What ultimately was the difference tonight?

They dominated possession and territory, especially in the first half which was always going to make it hard. And we missed a couple of opportunities but that's the way it goes.

As always with the Storm, you never gave up. What were you thinking in the last minute, when you were hot on attack?

I thought we were on, I thought it might have been one of those special moments that you have seen before in grand finals. But it wasn't meant to be. When the final whistle went it felt like everything inside of me just dropped, it was heart breaking.

What did you think of your performance?

I thought I went okay. I got a head knock early but was feeling fine. I had a few carries and did my job on defence. I tried to get involved and give my all.

Yes, tell us about that head clash with Wade Graham – it looked nasty...

He got me a beauty. I was trying to get to either side of him but I ended up using a bit too much footwork and copped one to the head. That's alright, that's what happens. It hurt at the time but I felt okay after it.

Putting aside the result, which must be devastating, it must have been a special week?

It's been an unreal experience. When I get over the result I will look back and see how special it was, running out with my big bro and the rest of the team.

What was that like, preparing to play a grand final with your brother?

We were preparing as normal, nothing too different. We both already knew how special it was, but it would have been more special to get that win. It's gone now, we have to see how we go next time

How many of the Bromwich clan were at ANZ Stadium?

I think between Jesse and I we had 12 tickets for immediate family. There were 25 or 30 other family and friends that came over. I had quite a few mates from New Zealand make the trip and come over to support me. I was very thankful to them.

This has been a breakout season for you, one of only four Storm players to feature in every game. You must be satisfied?

It's been a pretty good season. I've been a little bit more consistent in terms of my performances and my worst has been not too far from my best. Now I need to move forward from this season, look at what I can improve on.



Kenny Bromwich is a New Zealand born player currently playing for the Melbourne Storm

Talking to Sosaia Feki

By Laurie Reid

SOSAIA FEKI moved to Australia as a 20-year-old, after starring for the Junior Warriors in the 2010 and 2011 Grand Finals. He signed on for a bottom tier contract at the Sharks – around \$48,000 per annum – and endured a tough start in the Sutherland Shire but is now a NRL champion.

How does it feel to win a grand final?

It's the best feeling. It's a dream just to play in one and then to win it..that's amazing. It was a really tough game. We did our best and [on the night] that was enough. But I thought I was dreaming when we won..I was in shock to be honest.

Cronulla's start to the match was incredible – high intensity and brutal. Where did that come from?

I'm not too sure where that came from to be honest. We have been training like that for the last two weeks and then we went out there and shocked the Storm. They couldn't really handle us at the start. But they are a strong team. We knew they weren't going to go away and they came back well in the second half but thankfully we came out on top.

What does it mean to you to win a NRL title, to have that premiership ring on your finger?

It's very special. It's been a long journey for me. I won back to back [Under-20s] competitions at the Warriors then went through some ups and downs. I came here and then there was the ASADA scandal so to see us get to the top, I'm overwhelmed.

How hard was it to leave the field early in the second half?

Obviously I didn't want to but I knew the knee wasn't right. They slammed my knee into the ground (a tip tackle by Will Chambers) and I heard something click so it wasn't good.

What was going through your mind in the last minute, when the Storm threw everything at you, launching wave after wave of attack?

I was sitting on the side line thinking this can't happen, 'make that tackle'. Even when it was full time they were still passing the ball around - that was pretty scary - but as soon as the hooter went and they made that final tackle it was unreal. Everybody just jumped up and started celebrating.

Did you have some family support in the stands?

My brother and sister were there, and my best friend. My Mum wanted to come but she was too sick to fly. She is getting better, back at home and walking so she is getting stronger. But the trip would have been too much. [However] I called her from the dressing room and it was a proud moment to talk to her.

You've been at Cronulla since 2012. How comfortable are you there now?

I feel like I have found myself here at this club. I've been trying to work on myself and improve my game and I couldn't ask for better blokes to play alongside and to learn off.

When you look back now, how do you reflect on your departure from the Warriors?

Things happen for a reason..that's footy. Clubs have to make decisions and at the time it is hard but you have to move on. Obviously things didn't work out at the Warriors but it's working out now. I'd love to stay at the Sharks, it's a great club.

Why has this season gone so well for you personally?

I've been working really hard on changing my mental approach and it has paid off. It's been about building confidence; when I made a mistake I used to get quite down on myself but the boys here always say "don't leave divots". That is what I have been following; don't leave divots, try to move on as fast as I can. I've been working on that all year.



Sosaia Feki is a New Zealand born player currently playing for the Sharks

Five Reasons to Love the NRL Grand Final

By Laurie Reid

1 FAIRYTALES DO COME TRUE

It doesn't always happen, but when the 'Cinderella' story comes off there are memories created for the ages. Think of Canberra's first premiership in extra time in 1989, Penrith breaking their drought in 1991, the Knights achieving a miracle six years later and the West Tigers spectacular win in 2005. Cronulla's victory on Sunday – ending 50 years of heartache and disappointment – can now be added to that list.

2 QUALITY AND DRAMA

Over the last few years the NRL decider has served up some incredible matches. The 2010 grand final between the Dragons and Roosters was a bit dour, but since then there have been some beauties. There was the six try thriller between the Warriors and Sea Eagles, and the emotional victory for the Rabbitohs over the Bulldogs in 2014 was a gripping encounter. The Roosters and Sea Eagles produced a brilliant match in 2013 and the last two editions of the 'big dance' have been epic matches. We shouldn't take it for granted, because finals in other sports can often be fizzers.

3 OVER THE TOP COVERAGE

Whatever you might think of Channel Nine's coverage, they certainly put on an extravaganza on grand final day. Every year there is a new feature, innovation or camera angle, plus an ever-increasing team of ex-players turned commentators (with varying degrees of competence). The only let down was Richie Sambora's performance of 'Wanted Dead or Alive' and 'Living on a Prayer', who showed why he was lead guitarist (and not lead singer) in his Bon Jovi days.

4 NEW ZEALAND INVOLVEMENT

Over the last decade we have become accustomed to seeing plenty of Kiwis on grand final day and Sunday night was no different. There were seven New Zealanders on the field and all played their part. Jesse Bromwich led the Storm pack and scored a vital try, while Tohu Harris, Kevin Proctor and Kenny Bromwich all contributed for the Melbourne side. Sosaia Feki, Sam Tagataese and Gerard Beale turned out for the Sharks, with Feki the most impressive of the Sharks trio.

5 A TIME FOR HEROES

The grand final is a time for heroes to be made and it continued last Sunday. Andrew Fifita's try will forever belong in Cronulla folklore and Michael Ennis got to bow out a winner, in the same way that the likes of Royce Simmons (1991), Mal Meninga (1994) and Anthony Minichiello (2013) got to finish their careers.

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SO NOW there is the Vodafone Warriors, and the Gold Coast Titans. You can't argue against it, we are one of only two clubs to have never won the premiership, as the media has been so swift to point out.

But that is a stupid argument.

The Titans have only been around five minutes – well, since 2007, and us, sure, since 1995.

Do not get me wrong, I don't want to have to wait 50 years, like Sharks fans, but the fact we have not won it is just a curiosity.

You would be just as correct if you said our years of failure still mean our losing streak is better than Parramatta's. The Eels have not won the title since 1986.

The club many Kiwis have a soft spot for, perhaps because it has long had a Kiwi contingent, the Canberra Raiders, have not had to get the Brasso out since 1994.

So in my view it actually means Fanny Adams.

That said, how good would it be to be able to celebrate like that army of Cronulla fans that crammed the park on Grand Final night?

There was a Melbourne enclave, but they were hugely outnumbered and you had to look hard to find them.

It was a final no one wanted, Sharks and Storm supporters apart, but fair play, Paul Gallen's Sharks ended that 50 year hoodoo.

My wife was cockahoop, stating emphatically she wanted Cronulla home, for the simple reason "Melbourne always bloody win".

As I said last week, I didn't care. Drug cheats or salary cap cheats, all the same to me.

But when that whistle blew I found myself in the Storm camp, and every time that shit Ennis was anywhere near the play the ball, the desire to see the purple come over the top grew that little bit more.

I am also on record as being a big detractor of Andrew Fifita, who I consider to epitomise everything poor about our game, so it was a very bitter moment when he got the winning try.

Does anyone else feel, quite irrational as it is, like they are the kind of Jonah of supporters? My list does not make for pretty reading. Newcastle United football in England – relegated; the Warriors – uh, huh; the Blues – last of the NZ sides; Bay of Plenty – rubbish; and so on.

I kind of have the complete opposite to the Midas touch.

But with another season now as far off as it is possible to be, the Midas touch is what new coach Stephen Kearney is going to have to have to turn us around.

Okay we were minor premiers in 2002, and have lost two finals.

It is time to turn things around – the last chance saloon really.

Even owner Eric Watson has complained that if things don't change perhaps it is time for him to get out.

Really, the only lesson that can be taken out of the Sharks' win is that every dog has its day, even if it is only one day in 50 years, and there is no reason we should not have ours.

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But, insert your favourite cliché - the harder you work, the luckier you get, and we will not end years of misery without committing to being different.

The coach is already different, the set-up and support mechanisms are different but the players, largely, are not.

So the same guys have to commit to changing attitudes, to putting in a shift for the jersey, and most importantly, for the fans.

They are my team, and I will support them, but that doesn't mean I don't get as frustrated as the next long-suffering Mt Smart fan.

I'm sorry, selfish or not, I've waited long enough to feel as good as those Sharks fans.

Kidwell Names His Side

New Kiwis coach David Kidwell has not taken long to make his mark, dispensing with a few tried and trusted players, keeping Melbourne's Jesse Bromwich as captain, and naming five newcomers.

The five rookies for Australia next week and the Four Nations are Warriors David Fusitu'a and Solomone Kata, Raiders Joseph Tapine and Jordan Rapana, and Panther Te Maire Martin.

No place then for the most talked about Warrior, Manu Vatuvei, while Ben Matulino's omission was attracting lots of talk too, though why, given he is actually among the injured, escapes me..

Simon Mannering makes it, but it will come as no surprise the man who elected to hand the Warriors reins over, was not recalled as skipper, with Bromwich again in the role.

"Jesse did a great job leading the team in Simon's absence and, at this stage of his career, Simon is just as happy not having the weight of captaincy on him," said Kidwell.

The selections have been made, we are told, with an eye on developing players.

"We've tried to achieve a balance between players who are proven at test level and those who are the future. Injuries play an unfortunate part in our game and some of these newcomers will get an immediate opportunity to show they're ready."

Unavailable through injury were Roger Tuivasa-Shock, Peta Hiku, Dean Whare, Kieran Foran, Matulino, Alex Glenn and Kodi Nikorima.

Fifita Not Wanted

Grand final hero Andrew Fifita – the biggest boofhead in the game – has been overlooked by Australia because of his off-field issues. The Cronulla prop was left out over writing a message of support for convicted killer Kieran Loveridge.

Facing domestic violence charges, Eel Semi Radradra, has also been overlooked, the NRL's chief executive Todd Greenberg saying his presence might be a distraction.

Paul Gallen and Corey Parker have been overlooked, coach Mal Meninga looking to the future, naming seven rookies.

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Clubs Eye Matulino?

Interesting story from Michael Burgess in the Herald, and let's face it, he doesn't get much wrong, that "at least four" Sydney clubs would take Ben Matulino if we let him go.

Burgess doesn't name any of the sides, and although Ben had a less than impressive season for us, I doubt he is in the exit lounge.

Incoming coach Stephen Kearney will be hoping he gets the mobile, aggressive, ball-playing prop we are used to, and not the player we all saw this year.

It's a bit like Blackjack – sit, or twist, but in my humble opinion, it will be sit. One poor year does not make you a poor player, just one a bit lacking in form.

Someone who agrees with me, is Happy Frank Endacott. "He could be as good as any prop or second-rower in the world, but something hasn't been right this year."

One thing I would do for sure – which is probably why I'm not an NRL coach – is give the fella a few Big Ben pies. We hear so much about players at the club being overweight, but Ben needs to get back to being Big Ben, and a little more weight would be a good start.

Bennett Gets Sidekick

England has announced Paul Anderson will be an assistant coach to Wayne Bennett, Denis Betts and Paul Wellens, in preparing for the Four Nations and 2017 World Cup.

Anderson will work alongside England manager Jamie Peacock and coaching staff in planning all training sessions, recovery and competition for players.

Anderson was coach at the Huddersfield Giants for four years from 2012-16, leading his team to League Leaders' Shield success in his first full season in charge, and the play-offs in 2014 and 2015.

The 2016 Four Nations features England, Australia, New Zealand and Scotland and starts on October 28, with Australia v Scotland from Hull, and England v New Zealand in Huddersfield the next day.

On November 5 it's England v Scotland, then New Zealand v Australia, from Coventry.

November 11 sees New Zealand v Scotland in Work-

ington, and two days later the final game of pool play is England v Australia in London.

The final is at Anfield, the home of Liverpool Football Club, on November 20.

League Goes Reggae

The rugby Reggae Boys, Jamaica, will make their first official tour to the UK to play Ireland on October 16 and Wales five days later.

Czech Mate

Three unconverted tries gave the Czech Republic a narrow 12-6 win over Norway.

Serbia Target World Cup

Serbia rugby league has stepped up its preparations for the World Cup qualifiers, with a 64-4 win in Valencia against Spain.

Wales Go Live

Wales' first 2017 World Cup European Pool A qualifying match against Serbia on October 15 is to be shown live on TV in Wales. It is the first time the Welsh language broadcaster has shown live league since 2008.

Ireland Select 40

Included in Mark Aston's initial 40-man World Cup qualifier squad are no fewer than 10 Super League players, including a trio who have helped lift the League Leaders' Shield with Warrington, brothers George and Toby King, and Joe Philbin.





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 Take Centre Stage

Four Nations Trophy - Photo www.photosport.nz

NOW THAT the NRL Grand Final is out of the way, international rugby league is about to take centre stage with the Kiwis playing the Kangaroos in a stand-alone Test match at Perth on October 15 as a prelude to New Zealand's defence of the Four Nations title in Britain. These quadrangular tournaments, and the Tri-Nations contests which preceded them, rank second only to the four-yearly World Cup in importance.

There have been eight previous tournaments. Australia has won five. New Zealand won the Tri-Nations in 2005 and the 2010 and 2014 Four Nations. England (or Great Britain) has competed in all eight without doing better than losing three finals, all to Australia. France, Papua New Guinea, Wales and Samoa each qualified once without managing to beat any of the big three. Scotland makes its debut this time.

Here is a brief summary of those eight tournaments:

1999: The Frank Endacott-coached Kiwis were desperately unlucky not to win the inaugural Tri-Nations. They beat the Kangaroos 24-22 and Great Britain 26-4, only to be pipped 22-20 by Australia in the final at Ericsson Stadium. The Kiwis had the ball over the try-line on fulltime without being able to force it. Worse, because of that try-line action the referee missed an off-the-ball foul in back play. An easy penalty goal would have given the Kiwis a draw and the title on countback. Centre Nigel Vagana scored four tries over the three games.

2004: After drawing 16-16 with Australia at North Harbour, the Kiwis disappointed when they travelled on to England. They were well beaten 32-12 by the Kangaroos in London and dropped both games against Great Britain, 22-12 at Huddersfield and 26-24 at Hull. The Kangaroos thrashed the Lions in the final.

2005: Last year proud team manager Peter Leitch organised a 10-year reunion for his champion Tri-Nations Kiwis. Coached by Brian McClennan and captained by Ruben Wiki, they beat Australia 38-28 in Sydney (the first time since 1959) and lost 28-26 in the return match in Auckland. They then beat Great Britain 42-26 in London, only to lose that return game 38-12 at Huddersfield. But the final was all one-way traffic as the Kiwis recorded a remarkable 24-0 victory in Wiki's 50th Test match. Stacey Jones circled the world by returning to Auckland for the birth of his son and then flying back for the final at Leeds.

2006: McClennan and Wiki were denied a double when Darren Lockyer scored the winning (16-12) try in the seventh minute of Golden Point time. It was a tremendously gutsy display from a Kiwis side which progressively lost three backs to almost clear the interchange bench. New Zealand had earlier suffered narrow losses to the Kangaroos at Sydney and Melbourne before beating Great Britain 18-14 at Christchurch and 34-4 at Wellington. The Kiwis needed to win that last match by at least 14 points to reach the final after being penalised over the Nathan Fien "Grannygate" saga. Nigel Vagana extended his Test try-scoring record to 19.

Continued on next page..

Continued from previous page..

2009: The Kiwis travelled to England as reigning World Cup champions and hopes remained high when they drew with Australia 20-20 in London and thumped France 62-12 (Luke Goodwin 22 points, Sam Perrett three tries) in Toulouse. But they still needed to beat the locals, now playing under the England banner, to reach the final. But it was the Lions who roared, 20-12, at fulltime in Huddersfield. There was no roaring after Australia won the final.

2010: Some Benji Marshall magic produced a last-gasp try for Nathan Fien, who qualified on residential grounds, to clinch a 16-12 Kiwis triumph over the Roos in the Brisbane final. The Kiwis started with a 24-10 defeat of England at Wellington and both Sam Perrett and Junior Sa'u scored three tries in a 76-12 battering of Papua New Guinea at Rotorua. More than 44,000 fans watched Australia beat New Zealand 34-20 and England beat PNG 36-10 in a double-header at Eden Park. Simon Mannering showed his versatility at centre in the final while captain Marshall inspired the surge which led to two tries in the last nine minutes.

2011: With 14 players not available, the Kiwis were on the back foot from the start, losing 26-12 to Australia at Wellington. They then flew north to beat Wales 36-0 in a double-header at Wembley but lost 28-6 to England at Hull. The Kangaroos were untroubled to dispose of England in the final at Leeds.

2014: Stephen Kearney coached and Simon Mannering captained New Zealand to its first unbeaten tournament, out-classing Australia 30-12 at Brisbane before repulsing formidable challenges from Samoa (14-12 at new Test venue Whangarei) and England (16-14 in Dunedin's first Test since 1928). This time the Kiwis defended desperately late in the final before completing their third consecutive win over the Kangaroos (22-18) at Wellington. It was Mannering's 40th Test. Manu Vatuvei took his New Zealand Test try-scoring total to a record 20, while fellow wing Jason Nightingale scored at least once in every game.

2016 Four Nations draw (with local dates and times):

Friday, October 28 (8pm): Australia v Scotland at Hull
Saturday, October 29 (2.30pm): England v New Zealand at Huddersfield
Saturday, November 5 (5.30pm): England v Scotland at Coventry
Saturday, November 5 (8pm): New Zealand v Australia at Coventry
Friday, November 11 (8pm): New Zealand v Scotland at Workington
Sunday, November 13 (2pm): England v Australia at Olympic Park, London
Sunday, November 20 (2.30pm): Final at Anfield, Liverpool.



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- MC plugs throughout the night

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One main sponsor - to be negotiated.

Co-sponsor - \$6500.00 inclusive of GST each. Payable within 7 days.

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All our wonderful boxers need a sponsor! These guys and gals are putting a huge amount of time and effort into training with Jamie from A-Town Boxing and will be getting lots of coverage on the night.

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- Branding in association with your boxer on all printed materials on the night
- MC plugs on the night in association with your boxer - before, during and after the fight
- Five general admission tickets to the stands

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On the night we will be running auctions, a silent auction and raffles. It would be very appreciated if you have vouchers, goods or services you would be able to kindly donate towards this. Several larger items will be auctioned off by the MC during the evening and there will be plugs as this is happening. Smaller items will go to the silent auction for the raffle.

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What will you get for your sponsorship?

- Includes a gold ringside table for ten people - all-inclusive food and drinks for the evening
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 - Social media promotion
 - MC plugs throughout the night

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A Hull of a Feeling

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)



MOST PLAYERS who lose a Grand Final, no matter at what level, are convinced there is no worse feeling in rugby league. But after watching the scenes at Hull Kingston Rovers' home ground last weekend there is obviously one result which is even more painful to a losing team – that is being relegated from a high-profile professional competition to the virtual obscurity of second-tier football.

The proud Hull KR Robins will drop from Super League to the Championship next season, a far cry from when they were flying high in the 1980s when their line-up included outstanding Kiwis Mark Broadhurst, Gordon Smith and Gary Prohm. To make it worse, fierce rivals, Hull FC, have the coveted Challenge Cup in their trophy cabinet and are probably still celebrating on their side of town.

Hull KR loss happened in the most excruciating fashion against relegation rival Salford in what is termed the Million Pound Game, a reference to the difference in central funding between the two competitions. With just two minutes left, Hull KR led 18-10 and was attacking the Salford try-line. Salford had also lost leading try-scorer Junior Sau through injury. The Robins couldn't lose, could they?

But a poor kick gave Salford the chance to mount an 80m attack which culminated in an unconverted try in the left corner. At 18-14, and with 53sec remaining, Hull KR still only needed to defend one set. Salford then made another break on the left before quickly relaying the ball across field for a try in the right corner. Again, fullback Gareth O'Brien missed the conversion and the match went into Golden Point sudden-death.

Salford received the kick-off and battled its way just into Hull KR territory. What happened next caught the television commentators and the nervous Hull KR fans completely by surprise. Instead of kicking for position, O'Brien let loose with a field goal from near halfway. The world effectively stood still for both clubs as the ball sailed unerringly towards and then between the goal posts to clinch a 19-18 victory.

Emotions overflowed on and off the field. The Salford players were ecstatic; their Hull KR rivals slumped to the ground in despair. Many Hull KR fans in the grandstand were inconsolable; any tears shed by those wearing Salford's colours were purely of joy. There were incredible scenes in the Hull KR dressing room with not only the players but also their wives and children weeping without shame.

Hull KR club directors face the tough decision of whether to keep the playing staff fulltime or to cut wages and inevitably lose their better players from a squad which includes Australians Terry Campese, Dane Tilse and Maurice Blair. Former England captain Jamie Peacock, who was in charge of the Robins' football operations in a non-playing capacity, made a comeback at 38 in a vain bid to prop up the forward pack.

Former Kangaroos coach Tim Sheens was literally caught in the middle. He joined Salford as an adviser this season but was to have taken over the head coaching reins at Hull KR in 2017. To avoid a conflict of interests, Sheens withdrew from any involvement in the Million Pound Game. Now he also has to clarify his own future.

Hull KR's place in the 12-team Super League will be taken by Leigh Centurions, who had already earned promotion by winning six of their seven matches in the round-robin qualifying competition. Meanwhile, Warrington and Wigan clash in the Super League Grand Final at Old Trafford on Sunday morning (NZ time). In last weekend's semi-finals Warrington beat St Helens and Wigan beat Hull FC.

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NZ's Cricket Series Shows Us Why the NRL must Keep Using Video Replays in 2017

By John Deaker



WITH ANOTHER NRL season completed many aspects of the game will get reviewed. One area that people are constantly debating is the extent that technology should continue to be used within the sport. Hopefully those reviewing this important issue look wider than just rugby league ; the Black Caps' current test series against India would be a good place to start.

India continues to not allow the DRS (Decision Review System) to be used for matches in India – in contrast to its use for matches played in all other countries. What India's tests against the Black Caps the last few weeks have clearly shown is what a ridiculous look it is for the sport to have technology available but then elect not to use it.

There are obvious down-sides to using third umpires and Video referees (such as time 'wasted' waiting for decisions) when there is no guarantee the decision will be correct. However, time and time again in the Black Caps v India series we've seen the wrong decision given by the umpires , and they're often decisions that could easily have been quickly corrected if players' referrals to the third umpire were allowed. The issue reached an almost farcical level at times when the Indians (who tend to get the rub of the green from most decisions in their home conditions) expressed huge frustration to the on-field umpires following some decisions.

What rugby league fans witnessed this season was that the use of the Bunker for the first time didn't result in a huge improvement in the quality of decisions that video referees made. However, it did show that the NRL is willing to invest money in improving the way they use technology and that attitude should be applauded.

To go the other way and not use technology at all in the NRL (like many people want to happen) would be a massive backward step for the game. The bunker wasn't a slam-dunk success but it wasn't a worse system and it was a good attempt at creating a better system. Let's hope the NRL can make the odd positive tweak to the bunker for 2017, but for the sake of rugby league officials, players and the fans there must be no consideration to them getting rid of it.

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Me and my tokos Glen Fisiiahi, Albert Vete and Konrad Hurrell.



Me and the legend Eric Murray.



Paul Henry and his daughter Bella. Unfortunately she didn't win but put up a great fight!.



The main man international boxing commentator Colonel Bob Sheridan. He called the Joesph Parker fight.



The team heading to watch the fight.



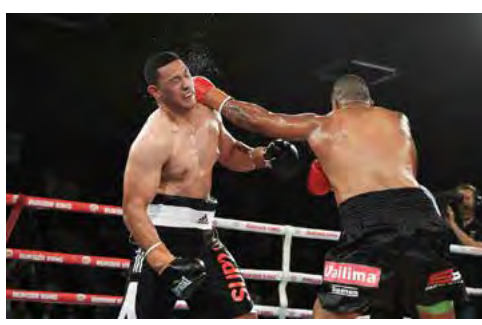
With Breakfast co-host Brodie Kane.



Bowyn Morgan, in black and gold v Gunnar Jackson. Bowyn won this fight.

Brown Buttabeau v Clarence Tillman. Brown Buttabeau took out this fight.

John Parker, black and yellow trunks v Ratu Dawai. John Parker won his debut fight.



Naz Khanjani, blue headgear v Bella Henry. Naz took out this fight.

New Zealand's Junior Fa v Samoa's Alapati A'Asa (red gloves).

Poland's Izu Ugonoh, in red v France's Gregory Tony. Poland's Izu Ugonoh won this fight.

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz

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Bromwich to Lead Kiwis Four Nations

By Te Arahī Maipi - Kiwis Media Manager

FIVE ROOKIES have been named in the NZ Kiwis squad to take on Australia in Perth next week and the subsequent Four Nations tournament.

In his first selection as Kiwis head coach, David Kidwell has named NZ Warriors backs David Fusitu'a and Solomone Kata, promising five-eighth Te Maire Martin, Canberra second row Joseph Tapine and inform Raiders team-mate Jordan Rapana.

If selected to play on tour, one of them has the opportunity to become Kiwi #800.

"All of these players have shown exciting form during the NRL season and have certainly earned their selection on merit," says Kidwell.

"But we're always looking one step ahead, whether that's to next year's World Cup or beyond, and we also think all these players can play a big part in keeping the Kiwis on top for many years to come.

"In picking this team, we've tried to achieve a balance between players who are proven at test level and those that are the future of the Kiwis programme. Injuries play an unfortunate part in our game and some of these newcomers will get an immediate opportunity to show they're ready for the next level."

Kiwis regulars unavailable for the up-coming campaign include Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Peta Hiku, Dean Whare, Kieran Foran, Ben Matulino, Alex Glenn and Kodi Nikorima.

Kidwell has also opted to retain Melbourne Storm prop Jesse Bromwich (Kiwi #775) as his captain, continuing the role he filled against Australia at Newcastle in May. Long-serving skipper Simon Mannering (Kiwi #731) is also in the group.

"Jesse did a great job leading the team earlier this year in Simon's absence and, at this stage of his career, I think Simon is just as happy not having the weight of captaincy on him," says Kidwell.

"But, ultimately, they will both be part of a strong leadership group that set a strong culture for this team."

The Kiwis squad will assemble in Perth over next weekend for the test against Australia on October 15.

They open their Four Nations account against hosts England on Sunday, October 30(NZ time) at Huddersfield, followed by Australia (November 6) and Scotland (November 12).

Name	Club	Kiwi No.	Name	Club	Kiwi No.
Gerard Beale	Sharks	767	Issac Luke	NZ Warriors	749
Adam Blair	Brisbane Broncos	732	Simon Mannering	NZ Warriors	731
Jesse Bromwich	Melbourne Storm	775	Te Maire Martin	Penrith Panthers	-
Lewis Brown	Sea Eagles	762	Manu Ma'u	Parramatta Eels	795
Greg Eastwood	Bulldogs	737	Jason Nightingale	Dragons	747
David Fusitu'a	NZ Warriors	-	Kevin Proctor	Melbourne Storm	771
Tohu Harris	Melbourne Storm	778	Jordan Rapana	Canberra Raiders	-
Shaun Johnson	NZ Warriors	774	Joseph Tapine	Canberra Raiders	-
Jordan Kahu	Brisbane Broncos	790	Jason Taumalolo	Cowboys	786
Solomone Kata	NZ Warriors	-	Martin Taupau	Sea Eagles	785
Shaun Kenny-Dowall	Sydney Roosters	746	Jared Waerea-Hargreaves	Sydney Roosters	755
Thomas Leuluai	NZ Warriors	704	Dallin Watene-Zelezniak	Penrith Panthers	794

2016 Kangaroos Four Nation Squad

THE AUSTRALIAN Rugby League Commission has today selected the following players to represent the Australian Kangaroos in the 2016 Four Nations tournament.

The 24-man squad to play in the Four Nations in the UK against England, New Zealand and Scotland contains seven potential Kangaroos debutants – Shannon Boyd, Jake Friend, Tyson Frizell, Valentine Holmes, James Maloney, Matt Moylan and Justin O’Neill.

The squad for the October 15 Test match against New Zealand at Perth’s nib Stadium will come from the 24 players named today, and will be confirmed early next week.

“This is a new era for the Kangaroos and the squad which has been selected for the Four Nations tournament reflects that,” Kangaroos Coach Mal Meninga said.

“This squad has been selected for the present, but with an eye to the future.

“It is extremely heartening to see the players buy in and the quality of the players available highlights that.

“We have very experienced Test players as well as

some outstanding young players who have big futures in the green and gold.”

NRL CEO Todd Greenberg said the selectors had been informed that both Semi Radradra and Andrew Fifita were not eligible for selection for the tournament.

“In Semi’s case, while he has pleaded not guilty, he has charges to answer at the end of the tournament,” Mr Greenberg said.

“We don’t want either him or the team to be distracted by this matter and have decided he will not be eligible for selection on this occasion.

“In Andrew’s case, selection for the Australian team requires standards on and off the field and as he is currently under investigation by the Integrity Unit, we believe he still has some way to go to meet those off field standards.”

The Australian Four Nations squad will depart for Perth this Sunday (October 9), farewelled at a special Kangaroos reunion at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The Kangaroos will come together this Thursday for a media opportunity. Details of the media opportunity will be released on Wednesday.

The 2016 Kangaroos squad is:

Player	NRL Club	Player	NRL Club	Player	NRL Club
Cameron Smith ©	Melbourne Storm	Valentine Holmes	Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks	Matt Scott	North Queensland Cowboys
Darius Boyd	Brisbane Broncos	Greg Inglis	South Sydney Rabbitohs	Sam Thaiday	Brisbane Broncos
Shannon Boyd	Canberra Raiders	David Klemmer	Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs	Johnathan Thurston	North Queensland Cowboys
Boyd Cordner	Sydney Roosters	James Maloney	Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks	Aaron Woods	Wests Tigers
Cooper Cronk	Melbourne Storm	Josh Mansour	Penrith Panthers		
Josh Dugan	St George Illawarra Dragons	Trent Merrin	Penrith Panthers		
Blake Ferguson	Sydney Roosters	Michael Morgan	North Queensland Cowboys		
Jake Friend	Sydney Roosters	Matt Moylan	Penrith Panthers		
Tyson Frizell	St George Illawarra Dragons	Justin O’Neill	North Queensland Cowboys		
Matt Gillett	Brisbane Broncos	Josh Papalii	Canberra Raiders		





*By Grant Chapman
NZRL
Communications
Manager*

Falcons Fly High for Premiership Crown



FOR THE second time this season, Akarana Falcons have unleashed a dominant second-half performance to stun rivals Counties Manukau, taking out the 2016 NZRL National Premiership final 32-12 at Mt Smart Stadium.

Counties were ahead only 8-6 after a closely contested opening stanza, but lost their grip on the title, when they conceded the next 16 points after the restart.

Winger Polima Siaki was on the end of a break from captain Dylan Moses, accepting the final pass from Taylor Daniels to cross in the corner and snatch the lead.

Moments later, Daniel Palavi was over by the posts, followed by Eddie Purcell, both touchdowns converted by diminutive Zae Wallace.

Now trailing 22-6, the Stingrays gave themselves a sniff of hope, with Gibson Popoalii grabbing his second try of the night.

But there was no way back for the South Aucklanders, with prop Siliga Kepaoa and winger Arden McCarthy running in two more tries to extend Akarana's winning margin.

The Falcons last won the title in 2013, but have not returned to the final since. They very nearly slipped out of this final, with a loss to Canterbury Bulls in Christchurch last week, but were not to be denied with the trophy within their grasp

"It's been a bit of a long season, but good to finish it with a win," said Moses, who moved from his regular position in the second row to stand-off for the occasion.

Palavi was named player of the day, and for coach Keith Hanley, it was his second national title in two days, having guided the Falcons 17s side home at the NZRL National Youth Tournament in Rotorua on Friday.

Meanwhile, Waikato have earned a spot in the 2017 premiership, overpowering Wellington Orcas 38-14 in their promotion/relegation play-off.

Ahead 16-10 at the break, fullback Aaron Jolley produced a stroke of brilliance to start the avalanche of points, chipping ahead, regathering on the full and slicing through the last line of defence.

Malcome Noda and Teina Ngahiwi followed soon after, and the Orcas had no answer.

Jolley and Ngahiwi both recorded a tryscoring double, while the former added five conversions for a personal haul of 18 points.



*By Grant Chapman
NZRL
Communications
Manager*

Ratu in Charge of Strong Residents Side

COUNTIES MANUKAU coach Rod Ratu will guide the NZ Residents side against NZ Maori Invitation later this month.

Ratu's appointment caps 12 months in which he has achieved success at all levels of domestic rugby league.

In 2015, he steered the NZ Secondary Schools Selection to victory over NSW Combined High Schools and then the Stingrays to the NZRL National Premiership title over Canterbury Bulls.

Ratu also had the reins of the NZ 18s last year, and in 2016, he lead the Southern Cross Campus to the NZRL National Secondary Schools crown and then returned Counties to the premiership final, ultimately bowing to Akarana Falcons.

"It's definitely a step up," admits Ratu. "Looking at the list of players available, there's a lot of experience there, but it will be a challenging campaign in terms of getting them to play to their potential.

"This is an important programme for grassroots footy and providing a pathway for senior players. It's an opportunity for them to prove they're ready to go on to bigger and better things."

The 18-man NZ Residents squad is:

Uila Aiolupo (Counties Manukau Stingrays), Tevin Arona (Canterbury Bulls), Chris Bamford (Canterbury Bulls), James Baxendale (Canterbury Bulls), Jethro Friend (Counties Manukau Stingrays), Roman Hifo (Counties Manukau Stingrays), Tevita Latu (Akarana Falcons), Paulos Latu (Counties Manukau Stingrays), Phil Nati (Canterbury Bulls), Alan Niulevu (Counties Manukau Stingrays), Siua Otunuku (Akarana Falcons), Daniel Palavi (Akarana Falcons), Eddie Purcell (Akarana Falcons), Nick Read (Waikato), Tevita Satae (Akarana Falcons), Nathan Saumalu (Canterbury Bulls), Matthew Sauni (Canterbury Bulls), Raymond Talimalie (Counties Manukau Stingrays)

NZ Residents will face NZ Maori Invitation at Huntly's Davies Park on Saturday, October 15.

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



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Kiwis Association Reunion



Venue: Commerce Club, Remuera

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*Enter the raffle on the day
and be into win this piece of
Kiwis artwork.*

ONLY FOR ASSOCIATION MEMBERS



By Grant Chapman
NZRL
Communications
Manager

Stingrays Youth have a Reason to Celebrate



*Counties Manukau celebrate their NZRL National Youth 15s title
(Gerhard Egger)*

COUNTIES MANUKAU Stingrays have finally turned the rotten luck of recent years to their favour, toppling rivals Akarana Falcons 18-16 to capture the 15s title at the NZRL National Youth Tournament in Rotorua.

Since the age-group competition reverted to a week-long affair in 2014, the South Aucklanders have been on the wrong end of some heart-breaking outcomes in both 15s and 17s grades, as the Falcons have reigned supreme.

But coach Mike Cudd's boys have enjoyed some payback in an encounter that swayed one way and then the other.

Locked up 12-12 at half-time, the Falcons took a 16-12 lead soon after the restart, with a try to Totive Junior Tuileisu, and the game seemed to be slipping away from the Stingrays, who had now conceded 16 unanswered points.

But they weren't done, with Fotu grabbing his second try down the home stretch and Te Napi Waipouri converting. Akarana were hot on attack when the final siren sounded, but were not able to steal victory back.

"This means a heap to us," insisted Cudd. "The boys have put in a lot of hard work to get here, there were some tough teams through the build-up and we knew the Falcons don't get beaten very often."

The Falcons were more successful in the 17s final, where they overwhelmed the plucky South Island Scorpions 44-6.

Midway through the opening half, the scores was 6-6, after Carlos Henry had put the Aucklanders ahead and Jordan Leigh responded in kind for the southerners.

But the Scorpions had played their hearts out the previous day to oust Counties Manukau in the semi-finals and seemed to run out of inspiration, as Akarana began to impose themselves.

South Island dug deep over the final 40 minutes, but had nothing left in the tank. Akarana ran in eight tries, six of them converted by Regan McClennan.

"We're full of respect for the quality game that South Island gave us," said Falcons coach Keith Hanley. "They put in a great effort to be where they are today and deserve our full admiration."

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FEATURES

- Retiring veteran hooker **Michael Ennis** has finished his career with a premiership and is in awe of the fearlessness of the young players in his team – especially **Valentine Holmes** and **Jack Bird**. “They’ve made my final two years so much fun,” Ennis says. “They’ve taken me back to playing as a kid. They play with no fear of failure, they just play like they’re in the backyard and they feel like they can dominate, no matter who they play.”

- Fans may be slightly worried about what happens when the ‘Big 3’ retire – but especially after this finals campaign, **Cameron Smith**, **Cooper Cronk** and **Billy Slater** couldn’t be more confident in how the club will continue to grow. “I think our leaders below Cameron and the senior playing group did a tremendous job. They’re the reason we got to grand final day. I’m talking about **Dale Finucane**, **Jordan McLean**, **Kevin Proctor** and **Tohu Harris**. If they continue on that trajectory anything is possible for this club,” Cronk says.

- Also, Sharks CEO **Lyle Gorman** says the club wants to create a dynasty; **Billy Slater** is raring to go for 2017 but will have to wait for medical clearance on his troublesome shoulder and **Matt Scott** says despite suggestions his career is running on borrowed time, he is fit and rating to go for Australia.

PLUS... The Analyst runs the **grand final numbers that mattered**.



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