

VODAFONE



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

12th September 2016

Newsletter #143

Go the Kiwis

By David Kemeys

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



NOW I have only been supporting the Kiwis all my life, so this ruling the world is a bit new to me, but David Kidwell has named his first side as head coach, and to be fair, as the Butch would say, it is not bloody bad.

Those sneaky pigging Aussies though have a way of making our lives miserable, so I will be tuned in at the weekend hoping we see one of those still rare victories we get, though I will not be broken-hearted if we don't win, just as long as we do at the Four Nations.

There will be debuts for our own Solomone Kata, and it is a thoroughly deserved call-up for one of our best this season.

The other debutante will be Raiders winger Jordan Rapana, and only an idiot, which I am reliably informed Kidwell is not, would have overlooked the best winger in the entire comp.

It is a bummer that the ever-reliable Simon Mannering is out with a knee injury, but our back row looks the goods, with Kevin Proctor, Tohu Harris and Jason Taumalolo all named, and those are three blokes I would not want running at me, let alone smashing me in the tackle.

I am delighted to see Jared Waerea-Hargreaves back, especially now he seems to have learned how to control his aggression, and with the skipper and Melbourne Storm front-rower Jesse Bromwich on the other side of the scrum, we will not lose anything there.

Issac Luke comes in as hooker, and if there is a better Kiwi hooker in the NRL I haven't noticed him, but there will still be a few nervous Nellies around, wondering if we will get the fearsome Issac or the one who struggled at the start of the year. My money is on the fearsome one, because he is a player who gives his all for the jersey.

Kidwell said Rapana picked himself after his superb season, in which he scored a new single-season club record at Canberra with 23 tries.

Kata swaps his Tongan jersey for the black and white, and that is fine by me, so I don't want to hear any bleating about international availability rules.

The forwards look a good crop but the backs maybe a little less so, and remember we lost 16-0 to the Kangaroos in the Anzac test this year.

We defended really well, but did not trouble the Aussie defence if we are honest with ourselves, and If Shaun Johnson is not the playmaker who is, but I am not sure Thomas Leuluai will send shivers up the spines of the Green and Gold.

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Shaun Kenny Dowell will partner Solomone Kata in the centres, Jason Nightingale takes the other wing slot, and Jordan Kahu gets the nod in the No 1 jersey.

Even the interchange looks impressive, with Mr Versatile Lewis Brown named, Martin Taupau, Manu Ma'u, Adam Blair, Joseph Tapine, and Gerard Beale rounding it out, though two will be omitted.

Saturday's test is the only chance for us to test out combinations before the Four Nations, but it would be a mistake to treat it as a warm-up. The Aussies will eat us if we do that. It has to be all out because it is a test against Australia, and those buggers are ruthless. Give them a sniff and they will put their boots on our throats, and you will still be hearing about it when you get to England for the Four Nations.

So test number one as the big cheese Mr Kidwell. No pressure then!

Luke Backs New Boss

Big wraps on NRL.com from Warriors hooker Issac Luke, who says Stephen Kearney can cure our defensive woes.

We were, let's face it, terrible defensively this season, in fact the third-worst in the comp, giving up 101 tries.

Luke reckons Kearney can work his magic at the club.

"He really helped the Storm with their defence, so if we can get anywhere near that, we'll shut down a lot of teams," Luke said.

Luke said Kearney's passion and diligence would get the best out of our roster.

"We have a lot of youngsters who have energy and ambition, and to be able to point them in the right places, it's going to be good," Luke said.

Roger For The 9S?

Fullback Roger Tuivasa-Sheck could make his comeback at the Downer Auckland Nines.

RTS suffered a season-ending knee injury after only seven NRL games but the 23-year-old says his recovery is going well. "I'm on track with my rehab, I'm back on the grass and so much happier now that I'm running a lot."

What Is A Club?

For those who don't know, I'm a big Newcastle United Football Club fan. We once had a manager, dead now, named Sir Bobby Robson. There is a statue of him outside the club.

He was something of a hero to the fans, largely because he seemed to understand more than most how much the club meant to the city of Newcastle, and its fans around the world.

I mention this because he was once asked what a club is, and this is what he replied:

"It's not the buildings or the directors or the people who are paid to represent it. It's not the television contracts, the get-out clauses, marketing departments or executive boxes. It's the noise, the passion, the feeling of belonging, the pride in your city. It's a small boy clambering up stadium steps for the first time, gripping his father's hand, gawping at that hallowed stretch of turf and, without being able to do a thing about it, falling in love."

Nice Isn't It?

Every time I get fed up with the Warriors, I remind myself of what Bobby had to say. Already longing for the next season to be here.

Three sign on the dotted line

You will have heard plenty about the Vodafone Warriors securing David Fusitu'a on a three-year contract extension, but less about two others.

Promising youngsters Isaiah Papalii and Junior Pauga have also signed new deals.

Fusitu'a, who is about to turn just 22, completed the most intensive season of his career, appearing in each of our last 18 matches, after starting the year with the Intrust Super Premiership side.

He finished the year with 11 tries – including four against Newcastle in June – to lift his career tally to 20 in 33 first-grade matches.

His outstanding form – averaging 136 metres with 14 line breaks – culminated in him being included as one of five newcomers in the Kiwi squad for this week's test against the Kangaroos in Perth and the Four Nations in England.

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Fusitu'a has been in our system for several years, coming into the NYC side as a 17-year-old in 2012 and going on to score 21 tries in 37 under-20 appearances across three seasons.

“David’s a special talent and he showed that consistency throughout the 2016 season,” recruitment and development manager Tony Iro said.

Papalii has signed for three years, and Pauga for two.

Papalii has fashioned an impressive record in both league and rugby, as well as being a powerlifting champion. He was one of a host of 17-year-olds who made their NYC debuts for us this year. Selected for the Junior Kiwis in May, he played 11 NYC matches in a year when he was unavailable for much of the season because of rugby commitments with the champion Mt Albert Grammar side. The school won the Auckland championship, and the New Zealand Secondary Schools title, Papalii being named Player of the Year.

Pauga, 20, scored eight tries in 23 appearances in his second and last NYC season. A standout with the ball, he topped 3300 metres – an average of 146 a game – including 11 line breaks and an exceptional 128 tackle breaks, by far the most of any player in the side. He also debuted for club’s Intrust Super Premiership side this year.

We Just Keep Growing In Europe

The Capitals of Rugby League 9s took place in Budapest at the weekend, with sides from England, the Netherlands, Sweden, Serbia, France, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Hungary represented. This all took place as Greece was hosting a big shindig to continue its development work by hosting a coach education course in Athens, and Ireland were playing Malta in a build-up to World Cup qualifiers, while Ukraine was playing the Czech Republic in the European Championship.

That’s a pretty decent spread across Europe isn’t it?

New Man Joins Europe’s Board

Former France captain Marc Palanques, the president of the French Rugby League Federation, has also joined the Rugby League European Federation board.

Serbs Get A Tiger

Serbia has a Tiger in its 22-man squad for the World Cup qualifiers against Wales. Wests Daniel Burke has been named in the squad.

Super League Grit For Spain

Spain has named a 22-man squad for its qualifiers against Russia and Ireland, with Hull FC youngster Joel Laynez included.

WELLINGTON

QUARTER FINAL
18 NOVEMBER

TICKETS ON SALE 27 OCTOBER 2016



2017 Downer NRL Auckland Nines Tickets Now on Sale



Shaun Johnson and Johnathan Thurston will be lining up alongside a host of NRL superstars at Eden Park over two action-packed days! The 2017 Auckland Nines is a sporting party you just can't miss.

Can the Warriors go one better than last season's run to the final or will Thurston lead his Cowboys team to their second Nines title?

Secure your tickets right now to make sure you are there to find out in person.

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- 48 Australian Internationals; 44 Kiwi players; 45 State of Origin stars; 68 Pacific Nations reps have played at the Nines so far
- 31 action packed games
- More speed! More tries! More fun!
- 9 players per team, 9 minute halves
- NZ \$2.6 million dollars+ in prize money
- 80,000+ fans expected over 2 days

EVENT DETAILS

- DATE: Sat 4 & Sun 5, February 2017
- VENUE: Eden Park, Auckland
- GA TICKETS: On-sale now at Ticketek
- CORPORATE HOSPITALITY PACKAGES: On-sale now - contact Donna Churton.
Phone: +64 309- 2400 or +64 27 545-5353

Email: donna@duco.co.nz

- INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PACKAGES: On-sale now from Sportsnet Holidays [click here](#)

[Click here to buy tickets](#)

Hard Acts to Follow

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)



DAVID KIDWELL is poised to become the fourth Cantabrian to coach a Kiwis Test team when they play the Kangaroos at Perth on Saturday night. Those who preceded him, Jim Amos (1952-54), Lory Blanchard (1966-67, 1969, 1970-72) and Frank Endacott (1994-2000), all guided New Zealand to significant achievements. Amos and Blanchard did so when in charge of amateur footballers battling against professional Australian and British opponents.

The current Kidwell coaching contract includes this Test match, the Four Nations against Australia, England and Scotland at various British venues from late this month, the last scheduled Anzac Test early next season, and the 2017 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. In rugby league terms, that is a packed international programme, highlighted by the Four Nations title defence and the World Cup.

Although he coached the Kiwis more than 60 years ago, Amos' deeds were recalled as recently as last year when Stephen Kearney (with Kidwell as his assistant) took the Kiwis to three consecutive victories over the Kangaroos. After the Kiwis' loss in the Anzac Test at Newcastle earlier this year, Amos' men continue to hold the record at four, achieved at Brisbane and Sydney in 1952 and Christchurch and Wellington in 1953.

Amos had succeeded celebrated Auckland coach Scotty McClymont in 1952 and inherited a team which had competed strongly but without winning a Test in Britain and France during the previous off-season. But that tour hardened them up and moulded them into a team with proven combinations. The humble Amos told his players they were more experienced at the international game than he was and he invited their input from the start.

It took Amos just one losing Test at Sydney to decide the Kangaroos could best be attacked via star fullback Clive Churchill. He noted Churchill had a "weaker side" when the ball was kicked towards him. So the Kiwis kicked to Amos' instructions and fleet-footed forwards Alister Atkinson and Frank Mulcare hared downfield to torment Churchill. The little Aussie panicked and the Kiwis won at Brisbane by the remarkable score of 49-25.

Back at the Sydney Cricket Ground four days later they maintained their ascendancy and clinched the series. When the Australians made a reciprocal tour the following season the tactics were repeated with similar success. The first two Tests were won at the Addington Show Grounds and Wellington Basin Reserve. Amos should have had a clean sweep, but the Kangaroos were let off the hook with two late tries in the third Test at Carlaw Park.

During Blanchard's era, the NZRL shared the coaching duties among its national selectors. Blanchard, Auckland's Des Barchard and Wellington's Maurie Church came and went in a bewildering rotation between 1966 and 1972. Fortunately, the steady hand of former Kiwis front-rower Blanchard was at the helm for the all-important year of 1971 when the Kiwis faced Australia at home and toured Britain and France.

Blanchard will always be remembered as the coach of the Grand Slam Kiwis. Australia was walloped 24-3 at Carlaw Park in a one-off Test before the Kiwis won two of the three Tests in Britain – the first New Zealand side to win a series on British soil since the original 1907-08 All Golds – and won two Tests and drew the other in France. He, too, came up with an inspired plan after the Kiwis struggled in their early tour games.

Blanchard switched John Whittaker, who had scored two tries on the right wing against Australia, to full-back so he could also accommodate powerful wings Mocky Brereton and Phillip Orchard. In company with captain and centre Roy Christian, dazzling 18-year-old Dennis Williams and workhorses Ken Stirling, Tony Krietich, Henry Tatana, Jim Fisher and John Greengrass they starred on arguably the greatest tour of all time.

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When Endacott took over the Kiwis in 1994 New Zealand was about to enter a professional era through the Auckland Warriors, where he was also on the coaching staff. "Happy Frank" was to enjoy three significant victories over the Australians and to almost totally dominate the British while winning 22 and drawing two of his 35 Test matches. There were also close calls for his highly competitive Kiwis in Tri-Nations and World Cup tournaments.

The Kiwis beat the Super League Australians in 1997 and backed up for a 1998 victory over a united Kangaroos team ranked among the most powerful of all time. That 22-16 victory at North Harbour was undoubtedly one of our finest, especially as it was achieved after losing prop John Lomax to injury in the second minute. A willing Ruben Wiki, then a centre, spent the last hour in the forwards and prop Terry Hermansson had the game of his life.

Endacott's men also beat Australia in the opening match of the 1999 Tri-Nations, only to lose the final in heart-breaking fashion. His 1995 Kiwis were also level with Australia after 80 minutes of a World Cup semi-final at Huddersfield before losing in extra time. Endacott was truly a Lions tamer. Great Britain was beaten in all three Tests of their 1996 tour and only just scrambled to a third-Test draw to avoid a similar result in England two years later.

So, no pressure David, only a little matter of red-and-black coaching pride to be preserved, and hopefully enhanced, over the next 15 months.

Footnote: The only other Cantabrian to coach New Zealand was Charles Pearce, who was a forward in the 1907-08 All Golds and a pioneering player again when rugby league started in Christchurch in 1912. Pearce coached the 1925 New Zealand team in Australia, when no Tests were played.

CHRISTCHURCH

NEW ZEALAND V SCOTLAND

4 NOVEMBER

QUARTER FINAL

18 NOVEMBER

TICKETS ON SALE 27 OCTOBER 2016

GET BEHIND THE
KIWIS





By Barry Ross



Andrew Fifita

*Andrew Fifita walks off after being sin binned. NSW v Queensland State of Origin.
13 July 2016. Photo: www.photosport.nz*

ANDREW FIFITA may have missed out on the Australian team but there is no doubt as to his value to the Sharks throughout the 2016 season. It's Rugby League history now that he scored the Grand Final winning try against the Storm, while his stats from this game were sensational. But his figures from the NRL statistics site for the whole season proves just how important he was during his 25 games in 2016. He made 4,263 metres from his 467 runs, which is an average of more than nine metres every time he took the ball up. As well as this, he made 747 tackles, which is close to 30 per game. He also made 70 offloads. His 1,384 minutes of game time during the year, showed that coach, Shane Flanagan, used him for around 70 percent of each 80 minutes. At the Cronulla Presentation night early last week, Fifita and his fellow forward, Matt Prior, tied as winners of the Monty Porter medal for the Sharks Player of the Year.

Prior's season stats showed he made 2,563 metres from his 277 runs in his 25 matches, which is, like Fifita, more than nine metres a run. Prior had 1,106 minutes of game time, which means he averaged 55 percent of on-field time each match and made 629 tackles.

Paul Gallen's figures were 3,509 metres from 392 runs (average close to 9 metres a game) and 600 tackles, which is an average of 30 tackles a game in his 20 matches. The Cronulla captain played 1,269 minutes which is just over 79 percent of each game. Wade Graham, who must have been unlucky to miss out on Australian team selection, made 664 tackles in his 26 games. He also ran for 3,216 metres at an average of eight and a half metres each time. Graham played for 1,976 minutes, which is 95 percent of each match.

Retiring hooker, Michael Ennis made the club's season high tackles of 947 in his 26 games, which averages out at more than 36 per game. He played out all of his matches. Now 32 years of age, Ennis finished his career with 273 first grade games and 36 tries, in 14 seasons with five different clubs (Newcastle, St. George/Illawarra, Brisbane, Canterbury and Cronulla). He also played eight State of Origin games for NSW, four matches with NSW Country, one match for the Prime Ministers XIII in 2010 and one with the NRL All Stars in 2011. Clive Churchill Medal winner in the Grand Final, Luke Lewis, ran for 2,446 metres at an average of more than eight and a half metres per run and made 673 tackles in his 26 games. Lewis also won the Sharks Tackle of the Year Award for his hit on Matt Moylan in the 20-18 win over the Panthers at Shark Park on 24 April. Lewis played 1,759 minutes or about 85 percent of each match.

Fullback Ben Barba and half, Chad Townsend, were the only two Sharks to play in all 27 games in 2016, although Ben Barba played the most minutes of all Sharks men with 2,151 beating Townsend's 2,145 minutes by six. Barba made 1,870 metres at an average of around 8.8 metres each time, scored 16 tries, made 18 line breaks, 27 offloads and 18 try assists.

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New Australian team member, Valentine Holmes, finished with 80 points from 19 tries and two goals in his 26 games and 2,071 minutes. He remained on the field for the entire 80 minutes of all games, except for one when he was replaced for the final nine minutes. Holmes ran for 3,391 metres (average of close to 12 metres a run) and plenty of these metres was from dummy half when he helped his forwards take the ball up. James Maloney was the Sharks highest point scorer with 219 (7 tries, 94 goals, 3 field goals) this year. The 30 year old Maloney now has 1,502 points from his 183 first grade games with Melbourne, the Warriors, the Roosters and the Sharks. He deserved selection in the Australian side.

Statistics can be boring but the above figures show in particular, how good the Sharks forwards were during their charge to their first ever First grade Premiership.

Already Cronulla have moved to retain their stars. James Maloney, Andrew Fifita and Ricky Leutele are locked in until the end of 2018, while Ben Barba, Sosaia Feki, Jack Bird, Valentine Holmes, Chad Townsend, Matt Prior, Luke Lewis, Wade Graham, Paul Gallen, Gerard Beale, Sam Tagataese and probably Chris Heighington, will play at least until the end of next season.

Congratulations to Sky Sports commentator Mike Stephenson, who called his final game in the English Super League Grand Final at Old Trafford last Saturday night. Stephenson retired after 26 years calling the English football for Sky and was given the honour, after the match, of presenting the Harry Sunderland Medal to Man of the Match, Wigan second rower, Liam Farrell. Stephenson, who lives in the Sydney northern beaches region, has spent around six months of these 26 years based in England and then returning to Sydney for the southern hemisphere summer. Wigan took the title with their tight 12-6 victory, before a crowd of 70,202. There was no fairy tale ending for opponents, Warrington, who last won the English Premiership back in 1955. Wigan winger, Lewis Tierney, a son of League and Union international Jason Robinson, joined his father as a Grand Final winner. Robinson, who represented England and the Lions at Rugby and Great Britain at Rugby League, was in the Wigan side of 1998, who beat Leeds in the inaugural Super League Grand Final. Saturday's match, was the 19th Super League Grand Final to be played at Old Trafford.

Tierney, who turns 22 next week, has had little contact with his father after his parents split up when he was a young boy.

During the English Super League season, which began in February and finished at Old Trafford last Saturday, both Wigan and Warrington played 36 matches.

At Sydney's ANZ Stadium on Saturday night 8 October, a crowd of 61,880 turned up to see Sydney FC defeat the Wanderers by 4-0 in the opening round of Australia's A-League soccer. This is the same venue where six days before, on 2 October, 83,625 fans saw the Sharks beat the Storm.

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By Laurie Reid

Kevin Proctor

Kevin Proctor gets past James Maloney. Storm v Sharks NRL rugby league Grand Final match. Photo www.photosport.nz

KEVIN PROCTOR will be a vital element of the New Zealand forward pack this Saturday, as the Kiwis aim to avenge their 16-0 loss to the Kangaroos in the Anzac test in May. Proctor has played 12 tests since his debut four years ago, and is recognised as one of the best back rowers in the world. The 27-year-old was aiming to claim a second premiership with the Melbourne Storm two weeks ago, after winning in 2012, but fell short in the dramatic 14-12 loss to the Sharks.

Kevin, how do you reflect on the grand final?

It was tough, a really tough battle. We gave our all but it wasn't enough...that's always hard to accept.

What was missing from the Storm effort?

[Cronulla] started really strong but the boys did well to get back into the game and we were feeling confident. But then to let in a soft try like the one [Andrew] Fifita scored, that was disappointing. It was still a hell of an effort for him to score that but we pride ourselves on not letting tries through the middle. It was kind of heartbreaking and the story of our night; they ran harder than us and we just weren't as prepared for it as we should have been.

It was an incredibly intense match; how does it compare with other big games in your career?

I think it was the fastest game I have ever played in. It was relentless and didn't seem to stop. So for them to have all the ball made it particularly hard.

Despite the result, how do you look back on the 2016 season?

It was the most enjoyable season I have had footy wise. We had a great year and enjoyed everything about it; the training, the games, being together. We had a great bunch of lads but we couldn't get over the final hurdle.

How do you move on from that defeat and focus on playing for your country?

Coming into camp with the Kiwis is a whole new story. You have to move on pretty fast and it helps being around all of the other boys. All of the club footy is put behind you — you try and forget about it as much as you can — and do well for the Kiwis.

How do you look back on the test in Newcastle earlier this year?

There are no excuses but we didn't have a great preparation, and we had players pulling out late in the week and replacements coming in. That kind of thing happens but it doesn't help. On the night Australia were pretty good and we struggled to build any pressure.

Despite that result, what do you think of the Kiwis chance in the Four Nations?

The Kiwis side is pretty strong. There is a lot of depth now and it has been building over the last couple of years. The boys they have been picking have been doing pretty well. Hopefully we can hold onto that No1 ranking and play well during the Four Nations, but we know how tough Australia and England are going to be.

Italian Rugby Great Joins Italy League Squad

By Ben Francis



ONE OF the biggest names in Italian Rugby has made the transition to Rugby League to help The Azzuri qualify for next year's Rugby League World Cup in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Mirco Bergamasco is one of 22 players named in the Italian squad, along with former Raiders playmaker Terry Campese who will captain the side.

Bergamasco has played in 89 Test matches for Italy and also in three world cups. His older brother Mauro has played in over 100 Tests and in a record five Rugby World Cups.

Mirco (33) took to Instagram to celebrate his latest achievement. "Very proud to be part of this group to defend the Italian jersey in the Rugby XIII World Cup"

Italy qualified for their first ever Rugby League World Cup in 2013 winning one game against Wales (32-16) drawing against Scotland (30-30) and losing to Tonga (16-0).

Nine players from the 2013 squad will return for the World Cup qualifying which include Josh Mantellato, Joel Riethmuller, Brenden Santi, Dean Parata, Christophe Calegari, Gavin Hiscox, Gioele Celerino, Ryan Tramonte and Chris Centrone.

The team will be coached by Panthers assistant coach Cameron Ciraldo after impressing as Panthers NYC coach, leading them to two grand finals. Ciraldo played in seven Tests for Italy including in the 2013 World Cup.

The Azzuri will face Serbia in Belgrade and Wales in Monza later in the month. If Italy win both games, they should automatically qualify for the World Cup, and for Mirco Bergamasco to represent your county in two World Cups in two different sports will be a remarkable achievement.



*Mirco Bergamasco of Italy during the 2012 All Blacks Air New Zealand European Tour.
Photo www.photosport.nz*



HAMILTON

SAMOA V TONGA
4 NOVEMBER

NEW ZEALAND V TONGA
11 NOVEMBER

TICKETS ON SALE 27 OCTOBER 2016

GET BEHIND THE
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Rugby League World Cup 2017 Ticket Prices Announced

RUGBY LEAGUE World Cup 2017 (RLWC2017) has announced its fan-friendly ticket pricing for next year's tournament to be co-hosted by New Zealand and Australia from 27 October to 2 December.

Fans are encouraged to purchase early to secure the best seats at the lowest prices, starting from \$10 for kids and concessions, \$20 for adults and \$45 for a family of four. The ticket pricing reflects the RLWC2017 organising committee's vision of having next year's tournament seen by more fans than ever before.

RLWC2017 CEO, Andrew Hill, said the tournament would be a festival of rugby league with some 450,000 fans expected to attend the 28 games across 13 host cities – a World Cup record.

“When setting ticket prices, value for money was our number one priority. We wanted to make next year's tournament accessible to all fans, particularly families, giving them the opportunity to attend a World Cup and see the greatest rugby league players from around the globe.

“A family of four can watch the Kiwis in a pool match from just \$45, attend a quarter-final from \$60 or the semi-final at Mt. Smart from only \$120. Our venue packs are also extremely affordable, where fans can see all matches at selected venues at a discounted rate, starting from as little as \$17 for kids and concessions

or \$34 for adults.

“This will be the first time since 2014 that the Kiwis will have played an International on home soil and as the current number one ranked nation, we know they will have plenty of support as they look to progress out of their exciting pool that also features Samoa, Scotland and Tonga.

“To get the best seats at the best value, fans are urged to buy tickets when they go on sale to the general public on Thursday 27 October 2016,” concluded Hill.

Other highlights of the ticket prices* include:

- Quarter Finals from \$20 for adults and \$60 for a family of four
- Semi Finals from \$40 for adults and \$120 for a family of four
- Final from \$70 for adults and \$180 for a family of four (includes both women's and men's finals)

Venue Packs go on sale to the general public at 10am (at local time of chosen RLWC2017 venue), Thursday 13 October 2016 from RLWC2017.com or via Ticketek.

Single Game tickets go on sale to the general public at 10am (at local time of chosen RLWC2017 venue), Thursday 27 October 2016 from RLWC2017.com or via Ticketek (Ticketmaster in Western Australia).

Date	Match Summary	City	Cat. A Adult	Cat. B Adult	Cat. B Kids/Conc	Cat. C Adult	Cat. C Kids/Conc	Cat. C Family
Fri 27 Oct	Australia vs England	Melbourne	\$132.55	\$81.60	\$40.80			
Sat 28 Oct	PNG vs Euro Q1	Pt Moresby						
Sat 28 Oct	New Zealand vs Samoa	Auckland	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sat 28 Oct	Fiji vs USA	Townsville	\$40.80	\$30.60	\$20.40	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sun 29 Oct	Scotland vs Tonga Euro Q2 vs Euro Q3	Cairns	\$40.80	\$30.60	\$20.40	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sun 29 Oct	France vs Lebanon	Canberra	\$40.80	\$30.60	\$20.40	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Fri 3 Nov	Australia vs France	Canberra	\$71.40	\$51.00	\$30.60	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sat 4 Nov	New Zealand vs Scotland	Christchurch	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sat 4 Nov	Samoa vs Tonga	Hamilton	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sat 4 Nov	England vs Lebanon	Sydney	\$51.00	\$40.80	\$30.60	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sun 5 Nov	PNG vs Euro Q2	Pt Moresby						
Sun 5 Nov	Euro Q3 vs USA Fiji vs Euro Q1	Townsville	\$40.80	\$30.60	\$20.40	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Fri 10 Nov	Fiji vs Euro Q3	Canberra	\$40.80	\$30.60	\$20.40	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sat 11 Nov	Samoa vs Scotland	Cairns	\$40.80	\$30.60	\$20.40	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sat 11 Nov	New Zealand vs Tonga	Hamilton	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sat 11 Nov	Australia vs Lebanon	Sydney	\$71.40	\$51.00	\$30.60	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Sun 12 Nov	PNG vs USA	Pt Moresby						
Sun 12 Nov	Euro Q1 vs Euro Q2 England vs France	Perth	\$59.50	\$48.96	\$38.76	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$66.30
Fri 17 Nov	Quarter Final	Darwin	\$61.20	\$40.00	\$20.00			\$80.00
Sat 18 Nov	Quarter Final	Christchurch	\$50.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$60.00
Sat 18 Nov	Quarter Final	Wellington	\$60.00	\$40.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$60.00
Sun 19 Nov	Quarter Final	Melbourne	\$51.00	\$30.60	\$20.40	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$60.00
Fri 24 Nov	Semi Final	Brisbane	\$81.60	\$61.20	\$51.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$120.00
Sat 25 Nov	Semi Final	Auckland	\$80.00	\$60.00	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$120.00
Sat 2 Dec	Final	Brisbane	\$152.95	\$112.15	\$81.60	\$70.00	\$40.00	\$180.00



Ticket prices are quoted in either NZD/AUS

2016 Kiwis Association Reunion



Some of The 2005 Tri-Nation Champions, who beat the Aussies 24 points to nil. Ruben Wiki #655, Paul Whatuira #705, Stacey Jones #665, Sir Peter Charles Leitch (the football manager) Lui Anderson #709, Shontayne Hape #711



Former Kiwi Captains. Back row: Richard Barnett, Fred Ah'Kuoi, Francis Leota (bombed the photo), Ruben Wiki, Graeme West, Hugh McGahn, Stacey Jones, Duane Mann Junior, Dane O'Hara. Front row Shane Varley, Roy Christian, Bruce Castle, Don Hammond



Former Kiwi Graham Brown came all the way up from Cromwell in the South Island for the Kiwi get together, I asked him why he came up. His reply was "these are my friends and family". What a fantastic answer love my Kiwi brothers



Alan Riechelmann (#347), Bill Hattaway (#392), Tom Hadfield (#375), Roy Moore (#346).



Brian Keane (Treasurer Kiwis Association), Shane Cooper (#584), Ray Haffenden former kiwis manager now chairman of the Kiwis Assn.



Dale Husband our MC for the day talks to Dane O'Hara.



Dane O'Hara (#528) and Richard Becht (former Media Manager).



Don Mann (#492), Eric Carson (#463) and the great Roger Bailey (#402).



Eric Carson (#463) & Tom McKeown former Kiwis Manager.

Watch Dale Husband, the MC on the day, singing his heart out!
Check it out on my website www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz

Former Kiwis Reunion

By Richard Becht - Former Kiwis Media Manager



A COLLECTION OF former New Zealand representatives featuring the amazing 93-year-old Ray Cranch and 12 former Kiwi captains gathered to share stories from yesteryear at the annual ex-Kiwis' reunion in Auckland on Sunday.

Also among the band of brothers were former Kiwi managers as well as other staff members from previous Kiwi campaigns.

The highlight of the afternoon was a riveting presentation from 2005-2007 Kiwi Paul Whatuira (#705).

The Wainuiomata product had the distinction of achieving NRL grand final success with two different clubs – Penrith in 2003 and Wests Tigers in 2005 – as well as savouring glory with the Kiwis when they blanked the Kangaroos 24-0 in the 2005 Tri Nations final in Leeds.

Whatuira (35), now working in an education and wellbeing role with Wests Tigers, has had well-documented health issues with depression and psychosis.

He has been making a presentation to NRL clubs and many other organisations in Australia and New Zealand about his inner battles and the way he has fought back from them through shunning medication and instead adopting a positive and natural way of putting his life back on track.

Yesterday represented another significant step in his new life as he stood in front of men who, like him, had worn the Kiwi jersey, the oldest of them Cranch, Roy Moore and Alan Riechelman who were Kiwis as long ago as the early 1950s.

Whatuira's address was compelling as he spoke about his struggles and his recovery, finishing it with an emotional, personal haka.

Among those in attendance were some of Whatuira's former Kiwi team-mates. One of them was former Vodafone Warrior Louis Anderson, back home after finishing his fifth Super League season with Les Catalans Dragons in France before returning for one more season with the club in 2017.

Among the 12 former captains was the great Fred Ah Kuoi, now settled back home after spending many years with his wife and family in the United States.

EX KIWIS' 2016 REUNION | ROLL OF HONOUR

Ray Cranch (#341)	Richard Bolton (#499)	Francis Leota (#618)
Roy Moore (#346)	Graeme West (#517)	Paddy Tuimavave (#623)
Alan Riechelman (#347)	Fred Ah Kuoi (#522)	Mike Patton (#625)
Tom Hadfield (#375)	Dane O'Hara (#528)	Jason Lowrie (#650)
Keith Bell (#382)	Shane Varley (#543)	Ruben Wiki (#655)
Bill Hattaway (#392)	Toa Fepuleai (#545)	Tony Tatupu (#657)
Don Hammond (#393)	Nolan Tupaea (#557)	Richie Barnett (#664)
Roger Bailey (#402)	Hugh McGahan (#566)	Stacey Jones (#665)
Bruce Castle (#407)	Mark Bourneville (#583)	Logan Swann (#669)
Roy Christian (#435)	Shane Cooper (#584)	Monty Betham (#691)
Graham Brown (#453)	Tea Ropati (#596)	Paul Whatuira (#705)
Eric Carson (#463)	Peter Brown (#600)	Louis Anderson (#709)
Paul Schultz (#434)	Tony Iro (#606)	Shontayne Hape (#711)
Don Mann (#492)	Duane Mann (#609)	* Former Captains in bold

The number in brackets is their Kiwi number. It represents the order in which they joined the Kiwis.



Every one enjoying a bite to eat a great time to catch up with and talk about old times.



Richie Barnett #664 and Francis Leota #618.



Graham Brown (#453), Don Hammond (#393) Former Chairman of the Kiwi Association now President of the Association, a man that has given so much to the game.



Hugh McGahan former Kiwi captain #566 and Fred Ah Kuoi former Kiwi captain #522.



John Wilson (#504), Richard Bolton (#499) and Bruce Castle (#407).



Michael Patton (#625), Mark Bourneville (#583), Tea Ropati (#596), Louis Anderson (#711).



Paul Whatuira (#705) & Tony Tatupu (#657) at the Kiwi Reunion.



Paul Whatuira (#705), Richie Barnett (#664), Francis Leota (#618), Logan Swann (#669), Shontayne Hape (#711), Duane Mann (#609), Stacey Jones (#665)



Ray Cranch (#341) the oldest living former Kiwi (played in 51&52), one of the nicest people you could meet. With another great guy and former Kiwi Roy Christian (#435).



The last photo of the day and was great to see Monty Betham arrive late but it's better to be late than not to come at all thanks for the memories boys #lovethekiwis.



Shontayne Hape (Dual International - Kiwis & England Rugby). Mark HORSE Bourneville (NZ Kiwis 85/86 and went on to play for France 93/94).



Shane Varley (#543) and Paddy Tuimavave (#623).



By Grant Chapman
 NZRL
 Communications
 Manager

Minister Opens NZRL Museum Extensions

WHEN SPORTS minister Jonathan Coleman dropped by to officially open the NZRL Museum extensions, he was careful to pay homage to his own family rugby league connection.

The Jack Fagan Room, named after one of the museum's founding fathers who died last November, was previously the NZ Kiwis storage room, but now houses several new exhibits, including a Maori Rugby League display.

The new museum wing also stands as a tribute to another driving force behind the facility and another former Kiwi, Brian "Speedy" Reidy, who also passed away in June.

Coleman offered his condolences to the families of both these loyal servants of the game and revealed his own personal piece of league history. Kiwi #98 Stan Walters, who played eight tests from 1913-21, was the minister's grandmother's cousin.

"There's a bit of a family story, so I was really pleased to come to the museum, because I wanted to find out a bit more about him," said Coleman. "So my grandmother was very excited, because she was going to the Auckland Domain to see her cousin play.

"She was so excited, she invited her boyfriend at the time to come along and watch the test match. Things were going quite well, until an opposition player ended up unconscious on the floor of the domain, the ref turned around and Stan Walters was being marched back to the dressing rooms, not to appear again.

"This was obviously a huge family disgrace and a major embarrassment, but fortunately, the boyfriend stayed around and became my grandfather. So, as a result, I'm here."

In greeting the minister and other visitors to the new extension, museum committee chairman John Bray paid tribute to his former colleagues and team-mates Fagan (Kiwi #401) and Reidy (Kiwi #383) for their vision and direction of the project.

"They were great, outstanding rugby league players and great, outstanding administrators," said Bray. "They helped the game at all levels, but not only were they great players and administrators, they were great people and I'd like to think rugby league helped shape their character.

"It is with great pleasure that their families are here and we acknowledge them today."

The NZRL Museum, located at 7 Beasley Ave, Penrose, is open on Mondays,

Wednesdays and Fridays, but is also available by appointment for tours or functions. Simply phone curator Don Hammond (+64 9 571 3857) or email at museum@nzrl.co.nz.

Continued on next page...



WOULD YOU like to help organise one of Bowel Cancer NZ's biggest fundraising events this year?

We are looking for somebody who has great organisational skills that would like to be part of our growing volunteer team for the 2016 Auckland Marathon and beyond.

Ideally your role this year would be to help out and learn the ropes from our lovely Auckland Marathon coordinator Sue Soper, and then take on the role for the 2017 Marathon. This is a great opportunity to gain some experience in event planning while also supporting a very worth cause!

By joining us as a volunteer for the ASB Auckland Marathon you'll be helping us to raise awareness about Bowel Cancer, and raise the funds we need to provide vital support for New Zealand's families & whanau affected by bowel cancer

If this sounds like you, please email info@beatbowelcancer.org to find out more information.

Maori side With International Flavour

By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



FORMER NZ Kiwi Curtis Rona, and recent Junior Kiwis Taane Milne and Zach Dockar-Clay have been named in the NZ Maori XIII to take on NZ Residents in Huntly on Saturday.

Rona, who toured with the national side to England last year, has just finished his second season with the Canterbury Bulldogs and is about to switch codes to play for the Perth-based Western Force in Super Rugby.

Milne made his NRL first-grade debut in the centres for St George Dragons, having played for the Junior Kiwis in 2014-15. Dockar-Clay has yet to rise to the top grade for Penrith Panthers, but captained the JKs in their 2015 encounter with the Junior Kangaroos.

The Residents side consists of the best players from this year's NZRL National Premiership and will assemble in Hamilton this week for the fixtures at Davies Park, 3pm kick-off.

NZ Residents: 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 Maori: 1-Malakai Watene-Zeleniak (Ngati Maru), 2- George Edwards (Tainui/Tuwharetoa), 3- Taane Milne, 4-Curtis Rona (Te Atiawa), 5-Tomasi Aoake (Ngati Ranginui), 6-Carlos Hotene (Ngapuhi/Ngati Awa), 7-Zac Dockar-Clay (Te Atiawa/Ngati Porou), 8-Tony Tuia (Ngati Whatua/Ngati Porou), 9-Kurt Kara (Tainui/Tuwharetoa), 10-Kouma Samson (Te Arawa/Ngapuhi), 11-Piki Rogers (Ngapuhi/Tuhoe), 13-Dion Snell (Ngapuhi), 14-James Bell (Tuwharetoa/Tainui), 15-Carne Doyle-Manga (Ngati Raukawa/Ngati Kapumanawawhiti), 16-Keanu Dawson (Tainui), 17-Trent Bishop (Ngapuhi/Ngati Kahu), 18-Delaney Edwards (Tainui/Ngati Mahanga), 19-Manaia Osbourne (Ngati Raukawa/Ngati Rangitihia)



Pic: Curtis Rona at NZ Kiwis training (Photosport)

Kiwis V Kangaroos this
Sunday at the Cashmere Club
in Christchurch

[Click here to learn more](#)



Two Debutants In Perth Test Line-Up

By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



NEW HEAD coach David Kidwell has selected his first NZ Kiwis team, including seven changes from side that faced Australia in the Downer Trans-Tasman Test in May.

The starting line-up includes two players making their debuts for New Zealand, Solomone Kata and Jordan Rapana.

Seventeen-test veteran Jared Waerea-Hargreaves (Kiwi #755) makes his return to the international arena, last wearing the black-and-white jersey at the 2013 World Cup.

Re-joining him in the front row is the most-capped player in the side, Issac Luke (Kiwi #749), playing his 37th test match.

Jesse Bromwich (Kiwi #775) captains the team, supported by two other Melbourne Storm players who featured in the NRL Grand Final, Kevin Proctor (Kiwi #771) and Tohu Harris (Kiwi #778).

The 2016 joint Dally M medallist and RLPA Player of the Year Jason Taumalolo (Kiwi #786) starts at loose forward.

Adding experience in the spine is Thomas Leuluai (Kiwi #704), who first played for the Kiwis back in 2003. He will pair up with his NZ Warriors team-mate Shaun Johnson (Kiwi #774) in the halves.

NZ Kiwis v Australian Kangaroos 10pm NZ, Saturday, October 15

- 1 - Jordan Kahu
- 2 - Jason Nightingale
- 3 - Solomone Kata
- 4 - Shaun Kenny-Dowall
- 5 - Jordan Rapana
- 6 - Thomas Leuluai
- 7 - Shaun Johnson
- 8 - Jesse Bromwich (c)
- 9 - Issac Luke
- 10 - Jared Waerea-Hargreaves



- 11 - Kevin Proctor
- 12 - Tohu Harris
- 13 - Jason Taumalolo
- 14 - Lewis Brown
- 15 - Martin Taupau
- 16 - Manu Ma'u
- 17 - Adam Blair
- 18 - Joseph Tapine
- 19 - Gerard Beale

Match Officials:

REFEREE: Matt Cecchin

TOUCH JUDGES: Jeff Younis and Shane Rehm

REVIEW OFFICIALS: Luke Patten and Steve Chiddy

SENIOR REVIEW OFFICIAL: Bernard Sutton

STANDBY: Ashley Klein



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DALLY M AWARDS



Dally M delight

The glitz and glamour of rugby league's night of nights rewarded some seriously good talent, too. By **MARIA TSIALIS**

As the hundreds of people ate and drank at The Star while Dally M votes were slowly revealed round by round, two people felt a little bit hot under the collar.

The Storm's veteran halfback Cooper Cronk and the Cowboys' rampaging forward Jason Taumalolo locked eyes and couldn't help but smile as the big reveal came closer and closer.

"We had a little special moment when it went to the last round, we were sort of asking each other, 'Did you play well? What did you do?'" Cronk said. "At the end of it we couldn't work out whether we gained points or not and had a little shake of the hands and said, 'I hope I share it with you.'"

And that they did. The two superstars of the game shared the Dally M Medal for Player of the Year for just the second time in its history. At 23, Taumalolo was the more shell-shocked of the two.

"I've obviously grown up seeing [Cronk] run around and he's been dominating the game for a while now. To share this moment with him is unbelievable," he said.

Raiders hooker Josh Hodgson led the count before voting went behind closed doors, but fell away after a suspension and the likes of Cronk, Taumalolo, Johnathan Thurston, Cameron Smith, Anthony Milford and Ryan James crept up the leaderboard.

In other awards, the Raiders took home plenty of statues after a stellar season. Ricky Stuart took out Coach of the Year while Jarrod Croker won Captain of the Year and the Provan-Summons award for favourite player as voted by the fans.

Joel Thompson from St George Illawarra won the prestigious Ken Stephen Medal for the community work he does off the field. Check out the full list of winners.

Dally M Player of the Year: Cooper Cronk (Melbourne) and Jason Taumalolo (North Queensland)

Female Player of the Year: Kezie Apps

Rookie of the Year: Ashley Taylor (Gold Coast)

Captain of the Year: Jarrod Croker (Canberra)

Coach of the Year: Ricky Stuart (Canberra)

Ken Stephen Medal: Joel Thompson (St George Illawarra)

Provan-Summons People's Choice Medal: Jarrod Croker (Canberra)

Representative Player of the Year: Cameron Smith (Queensland/Australia)

Holden Cup Player of the Year: Jayden Brailey (Cronulla-Sutherland)

Peter Frilingos Headline Moment: Anthony Milford (Brisbane, Rd 4)

Dally M Team of the Year

Fullback of the Year: James Tedesco (Wests Tigers)

Winger of the Year: Josh Mansour (Penrith)

Centre of the Year: Joey Leilua (Canberra)

Five-eighth of the Year: James Maloney (Cronulla-Sutherland)

Halfback of the Year: Cooper Cronk (Melbourne)

Lock of the Year: Jason Taumalolo (North Queensland)

Second-rower of the Year: Matt Gillett (Brisbane)

Prop of the Year: Jesse Bromwich (Melbourne)

Hooker of the Year: Cameron Smith (Melbourne)

Top Pointscorer: Jarrod Croker (Canberra)

Top Tryscorer: Suliasi Vunivalu (Melbourne)

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2016 SEASON REVIEW Grand Final In Pictures

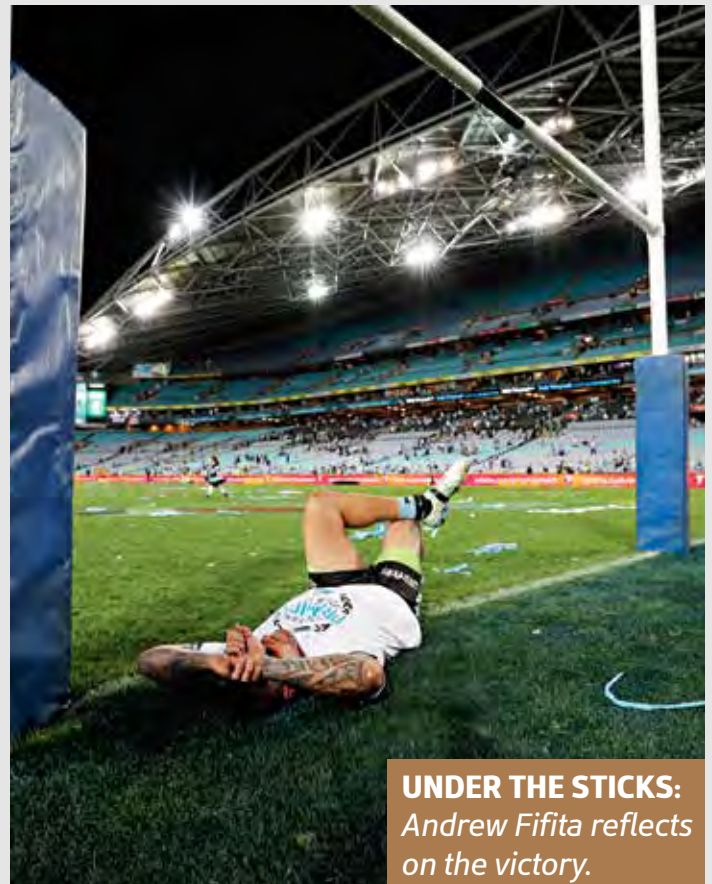
AT LAST:
Paul Gallen admires his precious trophy.



ROCK ON:
Keith Urban gets the party started.



IT'S OVER:
Ben Barba offers Will Chambers a shoulder to cry on.



UNDER THE STICKS:
Andrew Fifita reflects on the victory.

PHOTOS: NRLPhotos.com

Article Courtesy of Big League Magazine

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BREAKTHROUGH:
The Sharks celebrate Ben Barba's opening try.



WHACK:
Cooper Cronk is put off his game with a heavy tackle.



SUPERSTAR:
Luke Lewis with the Clive Churchill Medal.



MIS-MATCH:
Jack Bird shapes up to Jesse Bromwich.



HERE AGAIN:
Cameron Smith prepares for another restart.



WHAT A RIDE:
Retiring players do a lap of honour.

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WARRIORS



NEW YEAR, SAME DISAPPOINTMENT

With some impressive recruitment and young talent, the Warriors were ready to start a new era of success. Unfortunately for them it ended up following the script of previous failures. By **WILL EVANS**

CHANGE a few names and scorelines around and any of the previous four years' season reviews could be used as template to recap the Warriors' 2016 campaign.

A poor start to the year garnered just four wins by Round 11, but they then rallied with a trademark mid-season charge before capitulating spectacularly over the last month of the regular season.

It was a carbon copy of the club's 2012-15 seasons, leaving them in the NRL's bottom half for the fifth straight year – during which time they've won 39 per cent of their games prior to Origin, 69 per cent during the Origin period and just 22 per cent post-Origin.

The pattern ultimately cost coach Andrew McFadden his job after three seasons, though he'll remain an assistant to his replacement – New Zealand Test mentor and foundation Warriors player Stephen Kearney.

'Cappy' attributed another year of Warrior underachievement to his side's sluggish start. "We had to go on a big run mid-year just to get ourselves in a position (to make the finals) and that caught up with us in the end," says McFadden.

A 42-0 Anzac Day defeat to Melbourne, followed by the axing of five first-graders for an ill-fated night on the town in Auckland left the club at one of its lowest ebbs.

The latter result sparked an extraordinary turnaround that pitched the Warriors into top eight contention. There were three golden-point losses in four outings, but they still went unbeaten in regulation time for nine straight games.

"We were consistent for a good period. We found different ways to win, which isn't normal for Warriors teams, so there were definitely signs of improvement," says McFadden.

But after a big, character-laden away win

over Gold Coast in Round 22 that ranked alongside any of their best performances of recent years, the Warriors imploded.

A 41-22 loss to a Souths outfit on a nine-match losing streak came from nowhere, a late collapse against Wests Tigers when a finals berth was at their mercy and an insipid 40-18 loss to Parramatta – all at home – had long-suffering fans back in a familiar state of bitter disappointment.

Conceding 151 points across the last four rounds after leaking only 150 in their previous nine games contributed to the departure of assistant coach Justin Morgan after one season.

"Our defence needs to improve, there's no doubt about that," McFadden concedes.

"We had a good period, but there were still lapses. Some of that was individual, and some of those were technical things."



BURDEN TO BEAR: Shaun Johnson had to cope most with the weight of expectation.

Marquee recruit Roger Tuivasa-Sheck's season-ending knee injury in Round 7 was a savage blow. Youngsters David Fusitu'a and Tuimoala Lolohea had their moments, but back-line instability was a major bugbear.

Hooker Issac Luke experienced an up-and-down debut year, while stalwarts Ben Matulino and Manu Vatuevi had an indifferent 2016 on and off the field. Veteran half Jeff Robson's arrival as a foil for Shaun Johnson was an abject failure and he left mid-season. Johnson produced some sparkling performances despite battling a quad injury, but shouldered an unfair amount of the blame for the Warriors' fadeout.

The acquisition of Kieran Foran – an enormous coup for the club – will ease the pressure on Johnson, but the Warriors' forwards were often outplayed this year and must lay a better platform in 2017.

There was no shortage of individual standouts, however. Solomone Kata, Sam Lisone, Albert Vete and Fusitu'a were superb, while rookies Nathaniel Roache, Jazz Tevaga, Bunty Afoa and Ata Hingano regularly showed up their more seasoned team-mates.

"The experience they had this year is going to be invaluable," McFadden says.

New skipper Ryan Hoffman excelled during the back half of the season.

"At the start of the year I probably didn't handle (the captaincy) well, but I certainly improved," Hoffman says.

CEO Jim Doyle and owner Eric Watson lured Kearney to Auckland, confident his eight-year tenure with the Kiwis and assistant roles at Melbourne and Brisbane will help the Warriors take that elusive next step.

"Stephen's definitely the right man for the job," McFadden says.

"We're not that far away, we just need a few things tweaked. We'll find it next year." ❖

PHOTOS: Scott Davis (Hingano), Robb Cox (Johnson), Shane Wenzelick (Kata)

AT A GLANCE

- Before he was injured, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck was averaging 175.7 running metres per game, the highest of any Warrior and the highest in the competition but still well below his 2015 average of 240.
- The Warriors made the second-highest number of line-breaks of any club in the regular season (119).



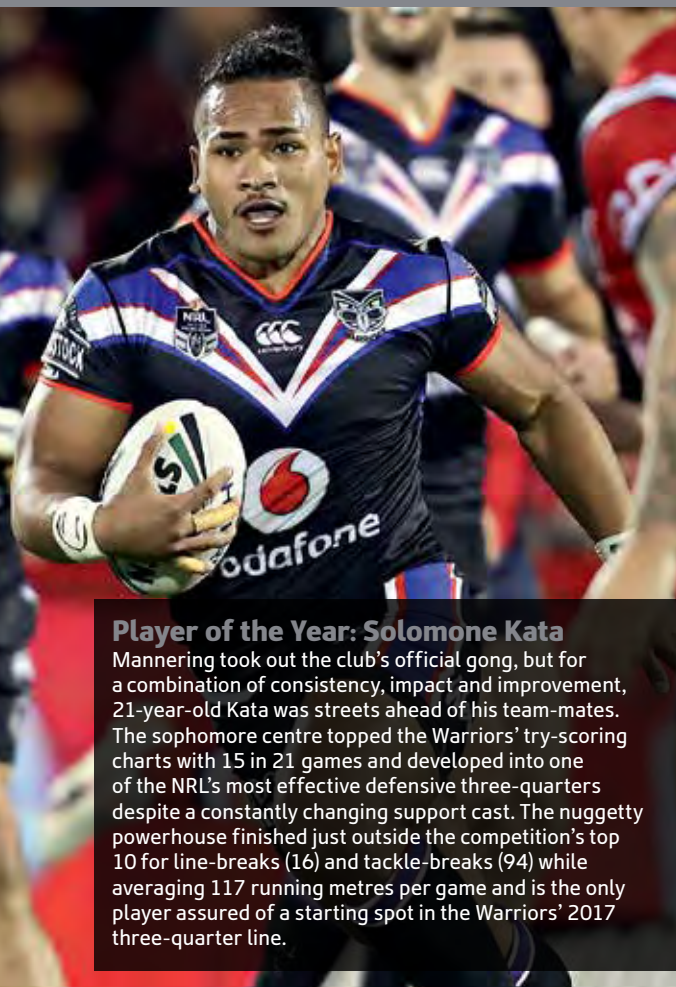
- They also shifted the ball more than any other team in the competition in 2016 (665 shifts).
- Issac Luke ran from dummy half 123 times – the third-highest in the competition.
- Simmon Mannerling maintained his standard as a defensive workhorse, finishing second in total tackles (1,041) and making 13 turnover tackles.

ROSTER CHANGES

Gains: Kieran Foran (Parramatta – pending approval)

Losses: Shaun Lane (Manly), Ali Lauititi (retired), Thomas Leuluai (Wigan), Konrad Hurrell (Titans), Raymond Faitala-Mariner (Bulldogs), Ben Henry (retired), Jeff Robson (released), Jonathan Wright (Manly)

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Player of the Year: Solomone Kata

Manning took out the club's official gong, but for a combination of consistency, impact and improvement, 21-year-old Kata was streets ahead of his team-mates. The sophomore centre topped the Warriors' try-scoring charts with 15 in 21 games and developed into one of the NRL's most effective defensive three-quarters despite a constantly changing support cast. The nuggetty powerhouse finished just outside the competition's top 10 for line-breaks (16) and tackle-breaks (94) while averaging 117 running metres per game and is the only player assured of a starting spot in the Warriors' 2017 three-quarter line.

WHAT THEY SAID...

"That was a huge move to drop those players and it just shows the care the coach has for this team and this club and the standards we hold dear."

– **Captain Ryan Hoffman** after six players were reprimanded for a misguided night out after their Anzac Day loss to Melbourne.

"Obviously we've put him in a very vulnerable position." – **Shaun Johnson** with something of a premonition for coach **Andrew McFadden**.

WHAT LIES AHEAD...

Things once again look incredibly promising with Foran's impending arrival completing the New Zealand Test spine and Kearney's return as coach bringing fresh hope. But fans have been burned by the Warriors' potential too many times to approach 2017 without trepidation – and muted expectations may be exactly what the club needs. Foran's influence – provided he conquers his off-field problems – and a fit Tuivasa-Sheck provide the Warriors with the most talented line-up in their history, meaning Kearney's grace period will be short.

LOWER GRADES

The Warriors failed to reach the NYC finals for the first time in the competition's nine-season history. The three-time under-20s premiers endured massive turnover in their squad, while the club also focused on bolstering its reserve-grade side. The upshot was a 14th-place finish in the Holden Cup with an 8-1-15 record, while Stacey Jones' Intrust Super Premiership side came fifth after a seven-match mid-season winning streak. After eliminating Penrith in the first week of the playoffs, they lost to Newtown in the semi-final.

WATCH OUT FOR...

Speedy half **Ata Hingano** played most of the season with the Warriors' Intrust Super Premiership team and even though he's only 19 years old, he didn't play a minute of under-20s. In 18 games he finished with 18 try assists, 38 tackle-breaks and 15 line-break assists, posing a constant threat. He was rewarded for his reserve-grade form with an NRL debut against the Cowboys in Round 24 and managed to retain his spot for the crucial fixture against the Wests Tigers the following week. He'll provide a perfect foil for the first grade halves in 2017 and could earn more starts if things don't go to plan.



SEASON RESULTS

Rd	TEAM	RESULT	CROWD
1	Wests Tigers (Campbelltown)	LOST 26-34	10,917
2	Broncos (Suncorp)	LOST 10-25	35,230
3	Storm (Mt Smart)	LOST 14-21	16,214
4	Knights (Mt Smart)	WON 40-18	13,895
5	Roosters (Central Coast)	WON 32-28	10,113
6	Sea Eagles (Mt Smart)	LOST 18-34	16,112
7	Bulldogs (Westpac, Wellington)	WON 24-20	18,212
8	Storm (AAMI)	LOST 0-42	21,233
9	Dragons (Mt Smart)	WON 26-10	12,752
10	Panthers (AMI, Christchurch)	LOST 18-30	17,669
11	Raiders (Yarrow, New Plymouth)	LOST 12-38	12,833
12	BYE		
13	Broncos (Mt Smart)	WON 36-18	15,097
14	Knights (Hunter)	WON 50-14	12,222
15	Roosters (Mt Smart)	WON 12-10	14,026
16	Sharks (Southern Cross)	LOST 18-19	12,074
18	BYE		
17	Titans (Mt Smart)	WON 27-18	15,107
19	Sea Eagles (nib, Perth)	LOST 14-15	11,109
20	Raiders (GIO)	LOST 22-26	9,471
21	Panthers (Mt Smart)	WON 20-16	13,026
22	Titans (Cbus)	WON 27-18	25,109
23	Rabbitohs (Mt Smart)	LOST 22-41	17,409
24	Cowboys (1300SMILES)	LOST 6-34	15,676
25	Wests Tigers (Mt Smart)	LOST 24-36	14,020
26	Eels (Mt Smart)	LOST 18-40	11,129
PLAYED 24: WON 10, LOST 14			

PLAYER-BY-PLAYER STATS

Name	App	T	G	FG	Pts	Offloads	Running Metres	Avg Mts Gained	Avg Tackles	Tackle-Breaks	Line-Breaks	Try Assists
Albert VETE	15	2	0	0	8	26	1255.5	83.7	17.9	15	2	1
Ben HENRY	1	0	0	0	0	0	7.7	7.7	17	0	0	0
Ben MATULINO	23	1	0	0	4	22	2688.7	116.9	28.6	16	1	0
Blake AYSHFORD	23	8	0	0	32	8	1700.7	73.9	14.3	24	8	8
Bodene THOMPSON	18	6	0	0	24	16	1581.8	87.9	38.1	36	8	1
Bunty AFOA	4	2	0	0	8	0	276.1	69	26.5	3	2	0
Charlie GUBB	14	1	0	0	4	3	692.3	49.5	15.9	11	2	1
David FUSITU'A	18	11	0	0	44	2	2447.4	136	5.4	48	14	3
Issac LUKE	20	3	28	0	68	24	1501.7	75.1	30.6	40	4	8
Jacob LILLYMAN	22	1	0	0	4	3	2331	106	27.4	10	1	2
James GAVET	10	0	0	0	0	3	670.7	67.1	17.9	6	0	0
Jazz TEVAGA	11	1	0	0	4	4	523	47.5	23.5	14	0	0
Jeff ROBSON	16	2	0	0	8	3	571.8	35.7	19.1	13	2	3
John PALAVI	3	0	0	0	0	0	146.8	48.9	22.7	0	0	0
Jonathan WRIGHT	9	4	0	0	16	5	869.3	96.6	4.1	14	3	0
Ken MAUMALO	10	1	0	0	4	5	1237.2	123.7	3.6	16	1	0
Konrad HURRELL	3	0	0	0	0	0	151	50.3	4.7	2	0	0
Ligi SAO	2	0	0	0	0	0	82.3	41.2	10	0	0	0
Ata HINGANO	2	0	1	0	2	0	74.3	37.1	10	2	1	1
Manu VATUVEI	15	6	0	0	24	9	1830.1	122	3.6	44	7	0
Matthew ALLWOOD	4	1	0	0	4	0	274.8	68.7	7	7	1	0
Nathaniel ROACHE	11	0	0	0	0	1	336.3	30.6	13.2	2	1	0
Raymond FAITALA-MARINER	1	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	24	0	0	0
Roger TUIVASA-SHECK	7	1	0	0	4	4	1229.9	175.7	1.6	24	1	3
Ryan HOFFMAN	23	2	0	0	8	22	2545.6	110.7	22.2	22	4	1
Sam LISONE	21	0	0	0	0	7	1715.8	81.7	16	29	1	1
Shaun JOHNSON	24	10	42	1	125	18	1609.9	67.1	16.1	62	15	18
Shaun LANE	1	0	0	0	0	0	29	29	9	0	0	0
Simon MANNERING	22	5	0	0	20	13	1980	90	47.4	18	4	2
Sione LOUSI	1	0	0	0	0	1	41.7	41.7	11	1	0	0
Solomone KATA	21	15	0	0	60	4	2447.3	116.5	8.3	94	16	2
Thomas LEULUAI	18	3	0	0	12	7	1182	65.7	15.4	19	6	6
Toafofoa SIPLEY	2	0	0	0	0	0	128.7	64.4	4	6	1	0
Tuimoala LOLOHEA	22	5	5	0	30	14	2079.9	94.5	3.6	56	14	9

HOCKEY

Have a go!

FREE OPEN DAY SATURDAY 15th OCT 11am - 3pm

PRIZES & GIVEAWAYS
No experience or equipment required
Food, drink and fun

Join in the fun of a free open day at your local Hockey turf

**Give Hockey
a Go!**



ON THE heels of the Rio Olympics Hockey New Zealand is running a Hockey Have a Go day at associations around the country.

Events will be running on Saturday 15th October from 11am until 3pm providing skill sessions and fun games for the whole family to enjoy.

Participating associations are Northland, North Harbour, Waikato, Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, Poverty Bay, Nelson and Marlborough.

Black Sticks and New Zealand development squad will be participating at selected events to provide some coaching and to share their experiences.

The Have a Go day is hoped to build on the strong growth seen through the Small Sticks programme while the production of summer hockey fives and renegade formats has seen the game grow and appeal to a broad audience of ages and backgrounds.

Games and skills modules will run throughout the day to cater for all ages and skill levels. Events require no previous experience and equipment is provided.

Don't miss the chance to experience the fun and excitement of hockey!

To find out more and to register go to www.hockeynz.co.nz/haveago

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PRESENTS THE ONLY NEW ZEALAND ENTERTAINER TO HAVE HEADLINED IN LAS VEGAS, USA - THIS CENTURY

**KIWI
COMEDIAN
AND
HYPNOTIST**

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CATER**



**THE ULTIMATE
COMEDY SHOW**



**THE COMEDY SHOW and the
HILARIOUS HYPNOTISM SHOW**

Appearing for One Night Only at

THE CASHMERE CLUB

FRIDAY 21st OCTOBER 2016

SHOWTIME 7.30pm

TICKETS ONLY \$15

WATCH 'THE GUY CATER TELEVISION SHOW' 9pm WEDNESDAY NIGHTS ON SKY CHANNEL 083

Coaching Staff Confirmed for ISP and NYC Teams *by Richard Becht*

COACHING APPOINTMENTS have been confirmed for the Vodafone Warriors' Intrust Super Premiership and NYC teams for the 2017 season.

Ricky Henry takes charge of the ISP team following Stacey Jones' appointment as one of the club's NRL assistant coaches.

Henry, one of Jones' assistant coaches for the 2016 ISP campaign, has a long history with the Vodafone Warriors stretching back to development roles he held from 2008-2012. He coached the Auckland Vulcans in the New South Wales Cup in 2012 before having a stint as a Vodafone Warriors NRL assistant coach in 2013-2014.

Joining Henry (38) in the ISP assistant coach's position is former Vodafone Warrior Jerome Ropati.

Ropati (31), who played 145 NRL games for the club before retiring in 2014, will combine his new ISP coaching role with his work as a Vodafone Warriors community ambassador.

Stepping into the NYC team's coaching position is Grant Pocklington, who guided the Point Chevalier Pirates to three consecutive Fox Memorial titles in the Auckland competition in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Pocklington was on Jones' ISP coaching staff this year and was also assistant coach for the Kiwi Ferns for their three-match campaign against the Jillaroos at the Downer NRL Auckland Nines in February and the Anzac Test against Australia in May.

Continuing as the NYC team's assistant coach is former Vodafone Warrior Boycie Nelson.



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FOUNDATION

CELEBRITY GALA LUNCH

Special Guests

Richie McCaw ~
& **Gemma Flynn**

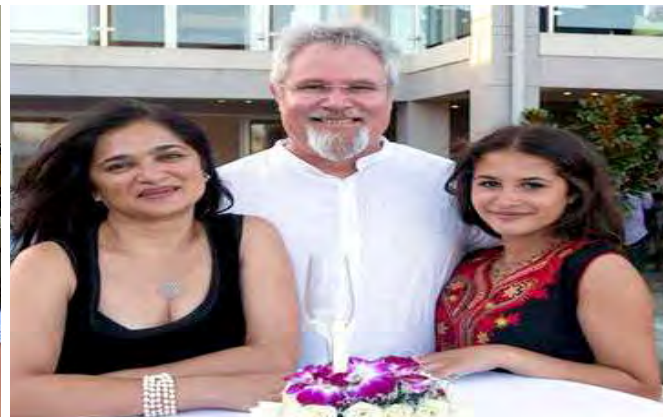
Lisa Carrington ~
& **Michael Buck**

Brendon McCullum ~
& **Ellissa McCullum**



A one-of-a-kind three course luncheon, with cuisine carefully prepared by the chef's brigade at SkyCity and featuring exclusive wines chosen by Negotiants New Zealand. Join your inimitable MC for the afternoon, **Toni Street**.

Hear from **Professor Richie Poulton**, Co-Chair of the Plunket Foundation and Director of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit.



Friday 25 November 2016, 12-4PM.
SKY CITY CONVENTION CENTRE,
The Auckland Room, Federal Street, Auckland.
\$5,000 (+GST) per table of 10

All funds will support Plunket's work with children and families most in need, making the difference of a lifetime.

A special thank you to our celebrities for donating their time.

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL
To secure your table of 10, please contact
Carolyn Mettrick 027 687 5631 or
email gala.lunch@plunket.org.nz

With very special guest, singer and songwriter, **Lizzie Marvely**.



AUCKLAND

NEW ZEALAND V SAMOA
28 OCTOBER

SEMI FINAL
25 NOVEMBER

TICKETS ON SALE 27 OCTOBER 2016

GET BEHIND THE
KIWIS



We are sending a team to the 2017 Festival of World Cups in Australia.

We are three-time winners.

But we have a hunger to win the title back.

We would love to have your support.



Universities World Cup

- 1986: Winners: New Zealand – Runners Up: Australia
- 1989: Winners: Australia – Runners Up: England
- 1992: Winners: Australia – Runners Up: Tonga
- 1996: Winners: Australia – Runners Up: Samoa
- 1999: Winners: New Zealand – Runners Up: England
- 2005: Winners: New Zealand – Runners Up: Australia
- 2008: Winners: Australia – Runners Up: England
- 2013: Winners: Australia – Runners Up: England



Do you own a business built on a tertiary education?

Can you give something back to the game that gave you many memories?

Are you in position to support the next generation of rugby league-playing tertiary students?

We would be grateful for any contribution to our World Cup challenge.

Consider sponsorship!

Make a donation!

A \$500 contribution puts your business in the draw to have your logo on all team apparel,
plus free advertising on our website <http://nzutsrl.org.nz/>

All donations can be made online to the NZUTSRL account at BNZ: 02-0506-0020463-083

Please provide reference details for acknowledgement.

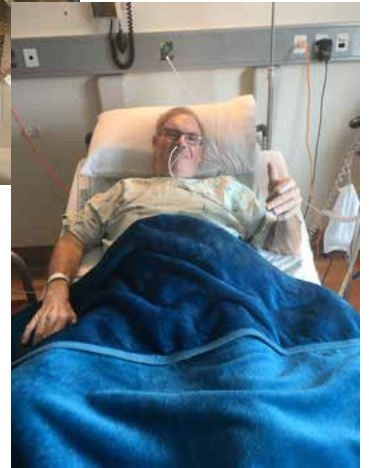
Chair: Dr Barry Hughes b.hughes@auckland.ac.nz
Secretary: Carey Clements cnathanclements@hotmail.com

Find and LIKE us on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nzutsrl/>





Rugby League Bill from Christchurch sent in this photo with his 2 Sharkie mates. Wade Graham, WAW, Todd Carney.



A big thanks to everyone that sent best wishes to my mate Rodney and a big thank you to Duco events for the flowers they sent him.

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

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The Newsletter Team

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

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