



NEW ZEALAND
RUGBY LEAGUE™

Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

2nd November 2016

Newsletter #146

Kiwis Triumph over England!



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz

You Only Have to Win by One

By David Kemeys

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



IT'S BEEN interesting to read reaction to the Kiwis 17-16 win over England.

Lucky bastard Michael Burgess at the Herald is actually in the UK following the team, and he called it one of the best Kiwis performances on English soil, and celebrated us taking a big step towards the Four Nations final.

He used words like captivating and impressive, singled out our defence, highlighted Jason Taumalolo's contribution and was generally a very happy boy.

Which is something no one could ever accuse Chris Rattue of being.

The serial moaner did at least praise Shaun Johnson, but then proceeded to say he remained unconvinced, and he took hundreds of words to do so, as opposed to the two – “that's better” - he served up in praise.

While Burgess was revelling in the glow of a test win, one that took our record against the Poms in England to three out of seven, and came despite the fact we lost to them in 2007, 2009 and 2011, Rattue was using words like erratic, soft-centred, and unreliable.

“Bottom line: he remains a long way short of being a halfback you can always rely on.”

Fair enough, at the least the bloke did find a positive, and it was Martin Taupau, who he described as “fantastic to watch”

See, and you all said Rattue was totally miserable and never had a good word to say about anyone. At least we now know the last part isn't true.

Chris must have given himself an upper-cut because he was quickly back into it, arguing Aussie will win the tournament at a canter, David Kidwell has major problems, Jared Waerea-Hargreaves has to go – but Greg Eastwood is the replacement and he's not much either, that Adam Blair can't defend and Shaun Kenny-Dowall is poop.

Also, Thomas Leuluai took a head knock and don't forget Johnson will probably have another shocker ... so there.

Other than that, first class.

I don't care what anyone says, I love Rattue. He does what a good columnist should, gets you to read.

I could not tip wet cement out of a barrow, whereas these guys are paid to know their stuff, but, and here I'll reach for some clichés, the Kiwis wanted it more, rode the momentum shifts, toughed it out, did what had to be done...

Yes, there were worrying signs, but not as worrying as the signs we saw in Perth. Enjoy it for goodness sake, we are playing the Aussies this weekend and who knows what could happen.

Direct From Sir Peter

I spoke to Pete for his Manukau Courier column and he is having a great time, made even better by Saturday's win certainly.

He told me there were not a lot of Kiwis fans in the sold-out stadium at Huddersfield but there were a lot more after the final whistle, and he was very proud to be a New Zealander and see the way the Kiwis reacted to the fans, even opposition ones. Solomon Kata was a stand-out, on and off the field, seeking out a young boy in wheelchair and giving him his test jersey, while Shaun Johnson spent an age out on the pitch, picking up kids and having his photo taken.

Pete was delighted for Shaun, but even more for coach David Kidwell, who was pilloried in the press after our test loss in Perth, some even saying he was not up to the job.

It was his first test win as head coach, and he obviously had learned his lessons well, keeping Jason Taumalolo involved and rotating his bench superbly.

Pete reckons it was the perfect build-up for our rematch with the Aussies this weekend in Coventry, particularly with the Aussies full of confidence after Perth, and having begun their campaign by flogging Scotland.

“We have a week to get ready and plot how to beat our arch-nemesis, but first we will have to get the players fit, because I can tell you there were some very tired boys after the game, not to mention a fair few bumps and bruises. I have seldom seen a dressing room with so many battered players, but the result made all those niggles worthwhile.”

Johnson Puts It All Down To Defence

I might start putting a dollar in a jar for every time I write defence wins games. But Shaun Johnson knows it, and he praised the Kiwis never say die attitude.

An intercept try, a field goal, a man of the match performance, but Johnson said defence was the difference.

“You saw the pressure they put us under, we held very tough at the end there. The boys just kept showing up for each other.”

Bagging Johnson seems to be a national sport, but no one could deny he was first rate against England.

Often criticised for his lack of nous, he snapped over his goal at the 65 minute mark, and I could hear the same callers who would have been on the phone to talkback complaining if he had left it late, asking why he took it so early.

Had we lost, Johnson would be copping it, but it looks a good decision now doesn't it?

“I've copped it a bit in the media, so it's pleasing. When you hear things often enough you start to believe them.”

Clash Of The Coaches

I'm loving watching Aussie coach Mal Meninga and England coach Wayne Bennett go at it.

Big Mal accused Bennett of trying to undermine him in a newspaper column, then when he got to Blighty said Wayne the Wizard wanted his job.

Not satisfied with that, Mal then took to the Courier Mail, writing a detailed account of their relationship, which included: “He is trying to undermine my authority and my position. Maybe it is just tactical, hoping if he gets under my skin I will take my focus off the job. It's not working.”

Bennett said it was all something of nothing and was his usual taciturn, grumpy self, saying he was only interested in preparing England for the Four Nations, but Mal was not having a bar of that.

“When Wayne says he doesn't want my job, or that we are friends who will embrace after a game, it is just not true. We're not enemies, but we're not friends either. There's no bad blood - there's just no blood at all.”

New Coach Fine By Me

There are now four coaches at the helm of the Warriors – Stephen Kearney, Andrew McFadden, Stacey Jones and Steve McNamara – and I'm all good with that.

If Kearney believes his latest recruit, McNamara, can add something.

The guy has an excellent pedigree. He was pretty-much a second rower, who played for Hull, Bradford, Wakefield, and Huddersfield. Throw in seven odd years in the Great Britain team, and he is clearly no mug.

McNamara joins on a two-year contract, coming over from being an assistant at the Roosters for the last three seasons – which I will try not to hold against him.

He's also been Bradford coach, Great Britain and England assistant, and England coach.

Kearney is pretty pleased with himself. “He brings qualities that will give us a strong and experienced coaching group. There's much to do but with Steve, Cappy and Stacey we have a team that can lift standards.”

The best thing about this is that the club is clearly backing Kearney. He has a team he has picked, which is not entirely true of the players.

Dare we dream?

Twenties To Go

No surprises at the news the Under-20s competition is to be scrapped.

It took Australian Rugby League Commission chairman John Grant to confirm what pretty-much everyone had figured out anyway, that the end of next year will see an end to the comp.

This is terrible news for us here at the Warriors, because we can actually win that, and have done so probably more than our fair share of times.

It has also seen many fine players make our ranks – and even more who we couldn't keep get shipped off to other clubs, with the same guys then coming back to haunt us.

The competition came into question as part of a review last year and in the future Under-20s competitions will be played in NSW and Queensland, with their "Cups" expanded to take on an "elevated" role.

No, sorry, I have no idea what that means either.

But apparently it will lead to more TV exposure, more clubs, and stronger connections through to NRL clubs.

No, sorry, I have no idea how that follows either.

Too Much Too Soon?

In fairness the Under-20s has been criticised for heaping pressure on young players, and that is part of the reason the Australian Rugby League has sought to restrict the money NRL rookies can get.

The Rugby League Players' Association is, and here's a surprise, opposed to capping salaries.

Certainly you can build a case that we stick young men too early into intense competitions, give them unreasonable expectations, and pay them too much to do it.

But if money is the problem, the ARL is going to take less for the TV rights? Didn't think so.

Why not pay a limited salary, and create a trust fund for players?



**Good luck to the All Blacks playing Ireland
this Sunday at 9am NZT**



**We wish the Kiwis all the best for their match
against Australia. 8am NZT this Saturday!**



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Go to Sir Peter Leitch's Facebook page to see all the inside **photos** and **interviews** from the Kiwis tour!



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)

Shaun Johnson, Lion Tamer

*Shaun Johnson during the 2016 Four Nations test against England.
Photo www.photospport.nz*

TAKE A bow, Shaun Johnson. For the second consecutive match on British soil the Kiwis scrum-half has dashed the hopes of England's parochial fans and snatched away from their players a victory which, in all probability, would have propelled them into a major international final. In 2013 it was the World Cup; last weekend it was the Four Nations.

Three years ago Johnson's brilliant last-minute solo try catapulted the Kiwis into the World Cup decider at Old Trafford, Manchester United's Field of Dreams. This time it was a much more measured all-round performance by Johnson which has given New Zealand favouritism to join Australia in the Four Nations showdown at Anfield, home of Liverpool FC.

Once Johnson – perhaps still hearing the echoes of criticism that he and the Warriors failed to take field goal opportunities during the last NRL season – had drop-kicked the Kiwis into a 17-16 lead in the 65th minute, he and his team-mates used just about all of their remaining energies to restrain a desperate Lions side urged on by a capacity Huddersfield crowd.

"I didn't for one second think, 'that's us, we've won the game,'" Johnson said. "It was more to get our nose in front because you take any sort of lead in a game when you are playing up here. The opportunity was there and I took it." By NRL or Super League standards, it was early for a match-winning field goal and Johnson caught everyone by surprise.

Johnson was also responsible for the most spectacular single act of a tense encounter when he intercepted a Gareth Widdop pass and scampered 80 metres for New Zealand's second try. Then there was his superb tactical kicking game which forced England to regularly drop out from its own goal-line and turned the possession statistics around.

In pre-match interviews, Johnson had expressed awareness of the shallow English in-goal areas, though John Smith's Stadium is not as short as Old Trafford and some other soccer fields. He obviously prepared well, and adjusted his range after kicking too long with his first attempt. His fifth-tackle plays were also far smoother than at Perth two weeks earlier.

Johnson was left to do all of the kicking after Thomas Leuluai suffered a head knock early in the second half, and he did it well. He already rates with our most effective scrum-halves to have toured Britain, alongside the likes of Jimmy Haig on the first two post-war tours, Ken Stirling with the 1971 Grand Slam Kiwis and Stacey Jones in the decade from 1995.

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Wing Jordan Rapana became another obvious stand-out by lifting his prolific Canberra try-scoring form into the international arena. His first try was totally orthodox, capitalising on an overlap to dive in at the corner, but for his second he ran onto a deft Manu Ma'u pass, scythed through the front-line defence and left fullback Jonny Lomax grasping.

Having spent the NRL season at wing or centre for the Brisbane Broncos, Jordan Kahu has been a revelation at fullback in the last two Tests. His defusing of the bombs, ably supported by Rapana and Jason Nightingale, was first-class and Kahu's all-round excellence has done much to compensate for the loss of Roger Tuivasa-Sheck.

The one-point margin testified to the closeness of the contest. The Kiwis were on the back foot throughout the opening quarter, with the starting pack locked in a grim struggle against their equally imposing English rivals. The arrival of Marty Taupau and Adam Blair, and later Ma'u, from the bench invigorated the Kiwis and they deserved their victory. Jason Taumalolo was mighty in two stints totalling 74 minutes.

Appointing English referee Robert Hicks to the game when two Australians were available was a ridiculous decision and left the sport, and Hicks, open to ridicule. He was not my favourite human when awarding the home side two early kickable penalties, but the Kiwis at one stage received five consecutive penalties and finished ahead overall by 8-6.

Hicks should never have had the job, especially when 24 of the 34 players were from the NRL. Some of his interpretations were puzzling and after Johnson's field goal he put the whistle away altogether, ignoring blatant interference and loitering in the play-the-balls by both sides. Perhaps he thought that's what they do in the NRL when a field goal is kicked, golden point or no golden point!

The Four Nations moves on to Coventry, a new international rugby league venue, for a double header on Sunday morning (NZ time). England plays Scotland in the first game and New Zealand and Australia clash in the second. Just to prove the organisers are consistently wrong, the Kangaroos and Kiwis will have an Australian referee, Ben Cummins.

Four Nations results:

Game 1 at Hull: Australia 54 (C Cronk 2, J Mansour 2, B Ferguson, J Maloney, J Dugan, T Frizell, M Morgan, J Trbojevic tries; Maloney 7 goals) beat Scotland 12 (R Brierley, B Kavanagh tries; D Brough 2 goals). HT: 30-6. Referee: Ben Thaler (England).

Game 2 at Huddersfield: New Zealand 17 (J Rapana 2, S Johnson tries; J Kahu 2 goals; Johnson field goal) beat England 16 (J McGillvary, R Hall tries; G Widdop 4 goals). HT: 6-4. Referee: Robert Hicks (England).



Man of the Match Artwork by Joyce Puthoe



Johnson Magic Torments England in Four Nations Opener

By Grant Chapman - NZRL Communications Manager



KIWIS HALF Shaun Johnson continued to torment English rugby league fans, proving the key individual in New Zealand's 17-16 win over the home side in their 2016 Four Nations opener at Huddersfield.

Johnson scored a key intercept try early in the second half to give his team the momentum and then kicked the winning drop goal with 15 minutes remaining, while also keeping England on the back foot with his pinpoint kicking game.

It was a performance that only reminded locals of his injury-time converted try that knocked England out of the World Cup three years ago.

"It's just such a privilege to play for your country against a great nation like England, with the hostile crowd you guys get here," Johnson grinned afterwards. "It's always special."

England took the lead after just two minutes, when New Zealand were caught off-side deep in their own half and five-eighth Graham Widdop slotted the goal. Widdop found his mark again after 10 minutes, when he was tackled high by Johnson, stretching the margin to four points.

But the New Zealand defence during his period really kept them in the contest and gradually, the game turned back their way.

Fullback Jordan Kahu finally put them on the board on the half hour, when Elliott Whitehead was caught off-side on his goal-line and penalised.

The Kiwis edged ahead after 33 minutes, when Johnson ran at the defensive line and shifted to Kahu, who found Jordan Rapana open with a long pass. Rapana's first try in the black jersey put his side up 6-4 at half-time.

Soon after the restart, Johnson's try rocked the English, as he snatched a Widdop pass and ran 80 metres untouched. Kahu's conversion put New Zealand up 12-4.

The rivals went try for try through the second half, with Jermaine McGilvary responding for England, then Rapana taking an off-load from Manu Ma'u, breaking a tackle and running 40 metres for his second. Kahu collected the upright with his conversion, a miss that looked costly, when Ryan Hall slid over in the corner and Widdop converted from the side-line to lock the scores up at 16-16.

But rather than wait until the desperate final moments of the contest, Johnson elected to take his opportunity when it next presented itself, taking a pass from Kahu to slot the telling goal.

Then, it was up to the Kiwis defence to hold on, as it had done so well throughout.

New Zealand next face Australia as the second game of a Coventry doubleheader next weekend, while England take on Scotland, knowing they must beat the Kangaroos in two weeks to keep their final hopes alive.

Four Nations

John Smith's Stadium, Huddersfield

Saturday, November 29

NZ Kiwis 17 (Jordan Rapana 2 & Shaun Johnson tries; Jordan Kahu 2 goals; Johnson drop goal) England 16 (Jermaine McGilvary & Ryan Hall tries; Graham Widdop 4 goals)



Want to send a message to the Kiwis?
Email it to nadene@nzrl.co.nz



The Tour Continues...

By Sir Peter Leitch



IF YOU think being on tour with the Kiwis is a bit of a holiday I can tell you it is far from it. Our days begin with breakfast from 7-8.30am so the boys have half-an-hour to be ready for monitoring, hydration and strapping at 9am, before a team preview meeting at 9.30am, and then it is on the bus to travel to the magnificent training facilities that are home to the Manchester City Football Club.

Some of the players have media commitments at the training ground, but everyone goes through a full, and I have to say, hard-out, training session.

Just in case the boys have any spare energy after that it is straight into a weights and conditioning round at about noon, followed by hydrotherapy and cryotherapy.

After that little lot it is back on to the bus for lunch back at the hotel, and some precious rest and recovery time, but everyone has to be on hand to eat together at dinner at 6pm, which is followed by massage.

There is nothing unusual about that day, it is pretty much an average one for all on tour.

We arrived in Manchester on Sunday but head to Birmingham on the bus on Wednesday where we will prepare for our test against Australia. That is going to be huge, and of course England will play Scotland before our game, and will be looking to rack up a big score because for and against might still come into things.

At least the boys can look forward to a bit of a break from Sunday, when we will head to Edinburgh for a bit of sightseeing and rest, before jumping a train to Carlisle to prepare for what I hope certainly will not be our last game, against Scotland.

I have been so impressed by the attitude of the players, and the commitment and energy the coaching team, and particularly David Kidwell, are putting in. David has passed, in my humble opinion, all the tests he has faced, and I can tell you this for nothing, he has blown me away with his desire not to get the Kiwis into the final, but to win it when we get there.

And speaking of being blown away, the facilities Manchester City Football Club have – and remember we have only used their training pitch, not the one they play Premiership football on – are just mind-boggling. You could eat your dinner off the training pitch, it is so flat and well cared for. Just outstanding.

And we have also had access to the Manchester Institute of Health and Performance, and it is superb, the facilities just world class.

The coverage football gets is just staggering, and the kinds of wages the top players are on, are astronomic.

So congratulations to Steven Adams on his new deal with the Oklahoma City Thunder. Somewhere around \$140 million over the next four years is not chicken feed either. It is certainly better than boning lamb out I can tell you.

But he has worked incredibly hard to get where he has and I for one to not begrudge him a cent of it.

You go you good thing, and come on the Kiwis.

Get all the inside action on the Kiwis tour. Follow Sir Peter Leitch! Click on the icons...



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On Tour with the Kiwis



Just caught up with these two Vodafone Warriors fans from NZ Margaret Winia-ta & Manu Winiata.



Just meet Jacqueline Doesburg from the Netherlands a massive Warriors fan who went to the Kiwis v England game.



Luke, a Kiwis fan from Wigan, at the game.



Matthew from Wigan loves the Vodafone Warriors.



Omid Maghsoudi & Rickey Jina from Auckland now living in London. Both big Warriors and Kiwis fans.



Solomone Kata with a fan.



The only Kiwis supporters I've spotted. Mr and Mrs Martin, Mum and Dad of Te Maire Martin.



Just caught up with my mate Jared Waerea-Hargreaves.



The boys on the bus to training.



Thought I would grab hold of the 4 Nations trophy while nobody was looking.



Was honoured to have a photo with David Kidwell on the field after the Kiwis win.



Shaun Johnson being interviewed after the match by the BBC.

Happy NRL Communications Boss

By Barry Ross



THE NRL'S head of media and communications, Peter Grimshaw, has enjoyed a long and successful career in the Australian media. Before moving to Rugby League in January 2014, he was employed as the Star Casino's media man for more than 15 years and then spent 16 months as communications director to the NSW Premier.

Although Rugby League was a completely new environment, Peter has handled things well. While he admits he had some negatives to deal with in 2016, he emphasised the positives far outweighed these problems. Without listing them in order of importance, he mentioned the following achievements in 2016.

1. After the Grand Final the year to date the Nielsen figures showed that the game's TV ratings are up by 14 percent from last year. In 2015 the number was 97,738,722 while this year it is 111,793,902.
2. While NRL games make up only four of the top Free To Air programmes, these four all feature in the top five audiences for the year.
3. NRL matches make up 46 of the top subscription Tv programmes, while the AFL (Aussie Rules) account for 33.
4. The National Peak Audience for the Australia-New Zealand Test match in Perth on 15 October, was 1.674 million (1.076 in the five cities- Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth), while the regional figure was 598,000).
5. The national average for the Perth Test was 1,277 million.
6. In Sydney and Brisbane, the Test was the Number One Programme with people 25-54, 18-49 and 16-39, as well as total people.
7. The NRL Grand Final dominated Sunday night viewing, securing a national average audience of 3.733 million and a national peak of 4.266 million.
8. Rugby League was represented in four of the top Ten Rating Programmes up to the end of October for 2016. State of Origin Game One was second with an audience of 3,943,359, while the Grand Final was third (3,561,621), State of Origin Game two, fourth (3,557,502) and State of Origin Three, fifth (3,107,679).
9. The NRL was officially recognised on the Inter-

national Stage in October, for its School to Work Programme, at the annual Beyond Sports Awards in London. This project provides increased opportunities, through Rugby League, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to access quality programmes aimed at closing the gap between Indigenous and other Australians, across key social indicators such as education, employment and health.

I thought New Zealand were terrific in their tight 17-16 win over England on Saturday. They adapted well to the one referee after playing throughout the year under the two whistle blowers in NRL football. Englishman, Robert Hicks had a good game as referee, but the locals were used to the one man in control, while the Kiwis were not.

How wrong did TV commentator, Iestyn Harris, get it early in the match. After Gareth Widdop put the Poms in front 2-0, in the second minute, Harris said, "I think that's where we have the advantage in our kicking game. Shaun Johnson is not too renown for the kicking game."

How wrong was this. Harris did not do his homework, or if he had, he would have known just how many times during the past NRL season that Shaun's clever in-goal kicks had resulted in the ball coming back to the Warriors from line drop outs.

Shaun was brilliant and while his kicking game caused England plenty of anguish, his general play was also first class.

Defence also played a major role in New Zealand's victory. This was illustrated perfectly in the 19th minute when big English winger, Jermaine McGillvary, seemed certain to score in the right corner, when he appeared to get outside Jason Nightingale only a metre or two from the tryline. But in a flash no less than five Kiwis focussed on the big winger and kept him out. It was hard to pick out the five defenders but I believe they were, Nightingale, Solomone Kata, Thomas Leuluai, Jordan Kahu and Tohu Harris. In the mid-field Kata defended strongly throughout the match.

As expected Australia had no trouble beating Scotland 54-12. It will be an interesting game at Coventry this Sunday when New Zealand play Australia. In the early game, Wayne Bennet's England should have no trouble with Scotland.

Famous Families Feature in Harbour's Championship Win

By John Deaker



A FEATURE OF North Harbour's win in the final of the Mitre 10 Cup's Championship division on Friday night was the amount of players in the Harbour lineup whose father's remain better known names within New Zealand sport than their sons. Sport provides many great positives for our lives but one of its greatest attributes is the ability it has to bond families together.

The victory at the weekend provided a moment when Hugh McGahan, Walter Little, Warren Gatland, To'o Vaega and Dr John Mayhew would all have been extremely proud of their sons. Possibly the most proud of the team's achievement would have been the North Harbour legend Walter Little who played 50 matches for the All Blacks. Little represented North Harbour over 100 times during the 1980's and 1990's and helped solidify the province's presence in Division 1 of the NPC after the Union had been forced to start playing in the 3rd division when it entered the competition in 1985.

Former All Black Warren Gatland played all his provincial rugby for Waikato. However, he's familiar with the need to move province (or country in his case!) to develop your ability in the profession that rugby has become. That's exactly what his son Bryn did by moving up to North Harbour this season and it's exactly what Warren will do when he coaches the Lions against the All Blacks next year.

Hugh McGahan's been involved in rugby union as a coach but he's best known in New Zealand sport for being a successful league player in the NRL and captaining the Kiwis with distinction. Dr John Mayhew might also be more known for his rugby league involvement these days but he rose to prominence in New Zealand sport when he was the sideline doctor for the All Blacks for more than 100 test matches.

Matt Vaega has now been with North Harbour for three years and at 22 years of age is still capable of going on to play international rugby like his father To'o did with such distinction for Manu Samoa.

It's never easy for young men with such successful sporting father's to cut their own paths ; Michael Little is still genuinely rated a chance of one day pulling on an All Black jersey but at the same age his father was already carving up international backlines. Even if none of the 'sons of' go on to represent their countries, Harbour's win on Friday night helped a lot to ensure all 5 men move one step further out of the shadows of their very successful fathers.

With another North Harbour legend, Frank Bunce. Winning the Mitre 10 Championship title at the weekend was the biggest win many of these men have been involved in and they (and their father's!) deserve to be really proud of an achievement that no one was predicting at the start of the season.

Also on the topic of famous sporting families: Israel Folau and Maria Tutaia announced their engagement in the last few weeks. It might be jumping the gun a little bit but it's worth considering what amazing naturally athletic kids these two might have and whether they'd set their sights on representing New Zealand or Australia in their respective sports.

When Andre Agassi and Steffi Graf paired up they were viewed internationally as a combination capable of producing genetic freaks. Jeff and Adine Wilson were one of New Zealand's most talented and successful sporting couples to tie the knot and eventually have kids though some might argue Richie McCaw and Gemma Flynn will give them a good run for their money if they go on to have kids.

Unfortunately from our purely selfish perspective in New Zealand it'd appear more likely that Folau and Tutaia would settle in Australia ; Folau's income is more than ten times what Tutaia can command from playing netball and his marketability and career prospects within Australian sport are probably superior to what Tutaia would have in New Zealand.

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The belief many people have that New Zealand is a more culturally sensitive country to bring up their children might be the biggest consideration that could lean to Folau and Tutaia settling in New Zealand.

Regardless of where they settle, it's not just their exceptional genes that make it likely that at least one of their kids (IF they even have any!) would play sport to a good level. They'd be born with balls of all shapes and sizes around them, have quality coaching on hand from a young age and also positive sporting role-models nearby. The huge positives massively outweigh the main negative that some people often highlight when even just one parent has been a great sportsperson: The pressure the child has placed on them from a young age to follow in the foot-steps of their extremely successful parents is usually huge.

If it's harnessed correctly the pressure for their child to perform and succeed in sport can actually be turned into a positive. Performing under pressure is something they'll need to be good at do well in their sport so it shouldn't be frowned upon too much for them to develop that mind-set at a young age.

What all parents have the ability to do is steer their children towards some sports over others without pressurizing them too much in one direction. This can be done by simply providing more opportunities for their children to go down the path of some sports ahead of others.

Folau has shown his ability to make a career out of 3 sports already : Rugby league, AFL and rugby union. Tutaia has 'only' played netball professionally. However, in Australia at the moment the opportunities have never been so great for young girls to make a career out of many team sports, with particularly AFL, cricket and sevens being the sports to make big strides the last few years. One thing you can almost guarantee is that any children Folau and Tutaia might have would be very likely to be interested in sport. It'd also be a huge surprise if they weren't extremely gifted athletes.

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By Ben Francis

Steven Adams Gets Paid Big

Oklahoma City Thunder Center Steven Adams grabbing a rebound versus Chicago Bulls. Photo www.photosport.nz

IT IS crazy to think it's only been three years since these words were said.

"With the 12th pick in the 2013 NBA Draft, the Oklahoma City Thunder Select Steven Adams from Rotorua New Zealand and the University of Pittsburgh"

Those were the words of then NBA Commissioner David Stern officially welcoming this unknown kid Steven Adams into the NBA.

Adams was a name in New Zealand but to many in America, and the basketball world he was still a unknown.

Now three years and four months later, just after entering his fourth year in the NBA, Steven Adams has become New Zealand's highest paid athlete after signing a four year \$100 million (\$140 million NZD) extension with the Oklahoma City Thunder.

That's right you saw that correctly four year \$100 million (\$140 million NZD) extension.

Adams rookie deal was set to expire at the end of the season, and the Thunder were keen to retain the seven footer quickly as possible.

Many analysts were surprised the Thunder drafted Adams as high as they did and thought Adams would be playing In the NBA's Development league in his first season..... Well they were wrong big time.

Adams got his chance and made the most of it. He impressed in his rookie year making the NBA Rookie Second Team and has only gotten better since.

The 23 year old had a breakout season last year, which included some incredible performances in the Thunders deep run into the playoffs against the Dallas Mavericks, San Antonio Spurs and Golden State Warriors.

The Thunder surprised many people by beating the Spurs, and then surprised more people when they were up 3-1 against the Warriors in the Western Conference Finals before thing just crumbled.

The Thunder lost former MVP Kevin Durant to the Golden State Warriors during the offseason, meaning Steven Adams role with the club will only get bigger this season, and from the few games the Thunder have played this season, Adams is ready and keen to showcase his talents

So with now Russell Westbrook, Victor Oladipo and Steven Adams locked down for the future, the Thunder are set to try make a run for the teams first NBA title.

All we can say, all this is not bad for a kid from Rotorua, New Zealand.

Wales and Ireland Qualify for Next Year's RLWC

By Ben Francis



ONLY ONE spot is left for next year's Rugby League World Cup in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea after Ireland and Wales beat Russia and Italy respectively during the weekend.

Ireland ran in 13 tries to easily beat Russia 70 - 16 in Bray while Wales had to come from behind to beat Italy 20-14 in Monza.

RLWC2017 CEO, Andrew Hill, welcomed the addition of both teams to the sport's pinnacle international event.

"I'd like to congratulate both Ireland and Wales on qualifying for next year's Rugby League World Cup.

"With large expat communities in Australia, we know these two teams will receive strong support and win over a legion of new fans during their respective campaigns.

"The organising committee is preparing to welcome all competing countries and their supporters to what will be the greatest Rugby League World Cup."

It will be Wales first Rugby League World Cup they have played in the Southern Hemisphere since 1975 while it will be Ireland's fourth straight World Cup.

Wales coach John Kear was happy with the way his side performed against Italy.

"I'm glad we've got there and it does give impetus to the work that is going on in Wales," said Kear.

"I was absolutely delighted. I'm really pleased with what the players demonstrated in the second-half with regards to the collective spirit, unity and determination.

"There's no doubts they fully deserved that. It was tough to come here. We've played an Italy team of which 15 of the 17 are heritage players - Australian-based.

"It's been a tough old afternoon, but it's been a rewarding afternoon."

Wales and Ireland are both in the same pool for the World Cup. They will be joined with Papua New Guinea. Wales will face Fiji in their crossover match while Ireland will be facing the final European Qualifier team.

The final European Qualifier will claim the final spot in next year's World Cup will be contested between Russia and Italy at Leigh Sports Village on Saturday 5 November (NZT)

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General Public Tickets For RLWC2017 On Sale

FANS WILL be able to watch the greatest rugby league players from across the globe for as little as \$10 when the Rugby League World Cup 2017 (RLWC2017) is contested across New Zealand, Australia and Papua New Guinea from 27 October until 2 December 2017.

With exactly One Year To Go until rugby league's pinnacle international event kicks off, general public tickets are now available, going on sale this morning, Thursday 27 October 2016. Tickets* start at \$10 for kids and concession card holders and \$20 for adults, while a family of four can see World Cup action from as little as \$45.

Pre-sales for the 15th edition of the tournament have been strong and fans are encouraged to get in early to secure the best seats at the best ticket prices.

[Click here to view the RLWC2017 draw and ticket prices](#)

RLWC2017 CEO, Andrew Hill, said the tournament would be a festival of rugby league with 450,000 fans expected to attend the tournament – a World Cup record.

“With 28 games in 13 cities across three countries, next year’s Rugby League World Cup will give more fans the opportunity to attend an international sporting event and see the greatest rugby league players from around the globe in their own backyard.

“When setting the ticket prices, value for money was our number one priority. We wanted to ensure families had the opportunity to share in this international experience and be part of a major sporting event.

“We’ve experienced higher than anticipated pre-sales, which highlights both the excitement surrounding the Rugby League World Cup and that fans appreciate our affordable, family-friendly ticket prices. I would certainly encourage all fans to secure their tickets early to take advantage of these prices and prepare themselves for what will be the greatest Rugby League World Cup.”

RLWC2017 General Manager – New Zealand Operations, Andrea Nelson, said the RLWC2017 will give New Zealanders the opportunity to cheer on the Kiwis for the first time on home soil since 2014. “The last time the Rugby League World Cup was held in the Southern Hemisphere the Kiwis were victorious

in holding aloft the Paul Barrière Trophy, here’s hoping history repeats itself in 2017.

“Rugby League World Cup games will be played in Auckland, Christchurch, Hamilton and Wellington giving fans across the length and breadth of the country the opportunity to get behind the Kiwis in what is an exciting pool featuring Samoa, Scotland and Tonga.”

With 11 teams already confirmed, the final three teams will come from the European Qualifying tournament currently being contested. Two of the three teams will be confirmed this Saturday 29 October (GMT) when Italy hosts Wales in Monza and Ireland hosts Russia in Bray, with the winners of these two games qualifying for RLWC2017. The losers will play off in Leigh (England) on Friday 4 November (GMT), with the winner of this final qualifying series to secure the final spot in the 14 team RLWC2017.

Single Game tickets went 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).

Group Bookings

Fans can purchase up to 20 tickets per game in one transaction;

. New Zealand Ticketek Group Booking hotline (8.30am – 5.00pm NZT): +649 307 5058

. Australia Ticketek Group Booking hotline (9.00am – 5.00pm AEDT): 1300 364 001 or groupbookings@ticketek.com.au

. Perth tickets only: Australia Ticketmaster Group Booking hotline (9.00am – 5.00pm AWST): 1300 889 278 or groups@ticketmaster.com.au

Ticket details for pool games played in Papua New Guinea, as well as Rugby League Women’s World Cup pool matches and semi-finals will be announced in due course.

*Booking and transactions fees will apply



RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2017

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27 October 2017 – 2 December 2017

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Merchandise Voucher
Entry to VIP Grand Final Festival
Grand Final Tickets (Brisbane 2 December) Cat A+
Former Rugby League Star Tour Escort
\$1495.00 per person (Share Twin/Double)

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www.rugbyleague2017.com



1 Year to Go Until RLWC 2017!

By Harley Wall - Community Engagement Co-ordinator for RLWC2017



THURSDAY THE 27th of October marked one year to go until the Rugby League World Cup kicks off. To celebrate the occasion, 2008 Kiwis World Cup winning captain Nathan Cayless and current Kiwi's player Kodi Nikorima were featured at Mt Smart Stadium alongside the 'Paul Barriere' Rugby League World Cup Trophy.

The Rugby League World Cup will be co-hosted by New Zealand, Australia and Papua New Guinea next year.

Nathan Cayless believes the Kiwis are on track for World Cup success, and co-hosting the event next year will go a long way to assisting their goal of bringing back the cup. "The team is building nicely for the World Cup," said Cayless.

"They have many good young players, plenty of experience and the confidence from a few good wins. It won't be easy at all but having games at home is a big boost...it could be the difference."

Injured Broncos utility Kodi Nikorima echoed the sentiments of Cayless. Nikorima, who has played four tests for the Kiwis since making his debut on last year's tour of England, imagines the tournament will create a huge buzz.

Assuming that they reach the last four, the Kiwis will play five games in New Zealand; with pool matches in Auckland, Christchurch and Hamilton before a quarterfinal match up in Wellington. All going to plan, the Kiwis will host a Semi-Final in Auckland at Mt Smart Stadium.

It's a huge opportunity for New Zealand to get behind the Kiwis, who have played only four tests in New Zealand since 2012. Tickets are now on sale for all RLWC2017 matches from www.RLWC2017.com

RLWC2017 Matches in New Zealand:

- 28 October: New Zealand v Samoa – Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland
- 4 November: Samoa v Tonga – Waikato Stadium, Hamilton
- 4 November: New Zealand v Scotland – Christchurch Stadium, Christchurch
- 11 November: New Zealand v Tonga – Waikato Stadium, Hamilton
- 18 November: Quarterfinal – Wellington Stadium,
- 18 November: Quarterfinal – Christchurch Stadium
- 25 November: Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland



Nathan Cayless & Kodi Nikorima w/ RLWC



NZRL Playgroups w/ Nathan Cayless & Kodi Nikorima

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NZRL Playgroups Celebrate 1 Year to Go

Members from NZRL Playgroups featured alongside Nathan Cayless and Kodi Nikorima at Mt Smart Stadium to celebrate 1 Year to Go. Playgroups from Moyle Park, New Lynn, Mangere East and Waiuku were invited to join in the festivities.

It wasn't just the spectacular trophy on display, but also the children's fabulous artwork to mark the occasion. Their awesome artwork read "ALL FOR THE CUP" which is the official tagline for RLWC2017.



The kids also got the chance to take photos and throw the ball around with these Rugby League stars. A big thank you to all the Playgroup co-ordinators for assisting with this opportunity.

Reader Mail

IT'S MONDAY night in Manchester and I'm about to get ready to out to dinner with The Mad Butcher, Kiwi coach David Kidwell and the Kiwis staff. I sit back and think about that for a minute... I'm on the other side of the world in an incredible city with the Kiwis after a huge win against England in the Four Nations. Does it get any better than this?!

Everyday has been a new experience that all league fans would consider a privilege. The highlight would have to be game day. Arriving at a packed out John Smith's Stadium in Huddersfield filled with 24,000 passionate English supporters all cheering their team on. The only thing bigger than the crowd is the English forward pack rumbling onto the field.

The band strikes up a beat in the stands and there's an eruption of song. Everyone knows the words and they are all shouting it out at the top of their lungs. I'm sitting behind the player's bench taking notes of the game and England score and the sound is deafening. You can literally feel the earth move from the roar of the supporters.

I look in front of me and I see 17 players in black and white jerseys fighting for survival. They look calm, composed and aren't fazed by this tidal wave that's looking to swallow them whole.

Through all the anthems, cheering and drumming the best sound I heard all day was the silence after the whistle when the Kiwis had overcome everything to win by one point.

I have been to Rugby World Cup Finals, State of Origins, NRL Grand Finals, Heavyweight Boxing fights and Taniwharau v Turangawaewae local derbies but nothing compares to what I experienced that day... and I can't wait to do it all again this weekend when the Kiwis face the Kangaroos.

Te Arahi Maipi

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

RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2017

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