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# Sir Peter Leitch Club

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17<sup>th</sup> November 2016

# Newsletter #148

## Kiwis v Scotland



Photos courtesy of [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

**F**IRSTLY, ON behalf of all the Kiwi boys and everyone on tour we offer our best wishes and thoughts to all the people around New Zealand who have been affected by the earthquakes.

My wife Janice was in Wellington and she thought our sister-in-law's house was going to collapse around them, and a relative of ours lost an extended family member.

You are all in our thoughts here in the UK and we wish you well, and I hope you can get over the tragic earthquakes.

We have arrived in Liverpool where we will be based to continue our preparation for the Four Nations grand final on Sunday, which will be played at the Liverpool Football Club's home ground Anfield, which has just had a makeover and can now seat more than 54,000.

It is an incredibly famous ground and The Reds have been playing on it since their formation in 1892.

I had the pleasure of being there a few weeks ago for a tournament launch function, and it is an amazing stadium.

We will train at Wigan's training ground, and hopefully I'll catch up with Sam Tomkins and the Wigan coach Shaun Wane, two top blokes.

And talking of top blokes, Thomas Leuluai has had his operation on his broken jaw and is back in the camp to support the boys. He will be sadly missed and is in my opinion a much under-rated player.

After our training at Wigan we will be moving to Liverpool's training ground, where we also trained last year. That too was an incredible experience and I am very much looking forward to going back because last time I even got to eat lunch with Liverpool's captain and co-captain of the time.

Coach David Kidwell has come under attack from many quarters but in my opinion that is unwarranted. I have been involved in rugby league in many positions, chairman of Counties NZ Heroes in the Lion Red Cup to football manager, assistant manager and even media manager of the Kiwis. So I've worked with a lot of coaches and from what I've seen on tour with David he has ticked every box.

A coach can only coach the team so far, but when the players cross that white line on to the field it's up to them to do their bit, and here's hoping the Kiwi boys do their bit on Sunday and bring home the bacon, as the Butcher says.

David has a good management team around him, led by former Kiwi Fern captain Nadene Conlon – who pulled on the jersey in 36 tests – and she is doing a great job.

It's all GO for the rest of the week as the management team do every thing they can to get the Kiwis ready for the grand final on Monday morning NZT.

So enjoy the game and go the KIWIS!

- **Sir Peter Leitch**



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# Best News I've Heard in a Long While

By David Kemeys

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



**R**EADING THE Herald and there it was, a story from Vodafone Warriors coach Stephen Kearney that player attitudes and mental application need to improve.

Hands up all those who have muttered that line at some stage – thought so, that's everyone.

Kearney reckons for our club to start performing week in week out changes are needed, and that means a better mindset and more mental strength.

“There needs to be change and that change for the most part is from an attitude perspective.”

Talk about common sense, and he said what we all know – the best teams have that sort of hard-edged culture.

That's all well and good, but the guy actually has a plan on how to achieve it. He says greater emphasis goes on preparing players physically, and improving their fitness and playing skills, but he wants to promote mental growth through training that requires teamwork and responses made under pressure and fatigue.

“We make them lift weights, we do tackle technique and wrestle, but very little time is spent on the mental side of the game.

“We want to put them in a position where they don't feel real comfortable and it's a matter of them working through that process so they do respond correctly. That's a big part of mental training.”

If I was chuffed to read that I was less impressed to read what Frank Endacott had to say.

“Happy Frank” was anything but, writing off the Kiwis chances in the Four Nations finals.

The one-time Warriors and Kiwis coach was dumbfounded by how poor we were against Scotland and said we would need the Kangaroos to have an off day.

Hard to argue, but who is to say they won't? Ireland beating the All Blacks, the Chicago Cubs winning the World Series...

“If Australia play like last night I can't see us beating them,” he told Radio Sport Breakfast.

He slammed our showing against Scotland – which is hardly an exclusive club – calling it one of the “poorest displays I've ever seen from a Kiwi side”. I think that's a bit unfair, apart from lacking ideas, structure, finesse, discipline and enthusiasm they were good.

Don't forget Endacott is Shaun Johnson's manager. That did not stop him laying into him, saying he should have taken better control after poor Tommy Leuluai left all busted up.

“It should have been the signal for Shaun to stand up and direct the team around the park but in fairness to Shaun, the forwards didn't give him any platform.”

Despite it all we are a puncher's chance are we not?

We are in the final and 80 minutes from pulling off what would be an undoubted upset.

But we have done it before and maybe I am just eternally optimistic - few people who have endured year after year of dismal Warriors showings aren't – but we can win.

We have a better chance of doing it than England or Scotland that's for sure.

It has been far from great, but everything will be forgiven if we can do the unlikely, so, to borrow a phrase from our old mate the Mad Butcher, go the Kiwis.

## **Ruthless Edge Missing**

I am told the Herald's Michael Burgess got himself to England to cover the tour. You have to admire that.

And he has been getting good copy too, and nailed a really good interview with Tohu Harris after the 18-18 draw against Scotland, getting the big second-rower to concede the Kiwis have no ruthless edge.

Harris said our major problem was a complete inability to make pressure count.

“Right from the start we lacked the ruthlessness I think Australia has. That is the biggest difference between us and them.”

Harris said the game was all about applying pressure and “putting the foot on the throat”.

“We were able to build pressure but we let ourselves down and let that pressure off.”

### **Mentor Needed?**

Good opinion piece on Stuff from someone who I do not know from a bar of soap named Tony Smith. But he posed the question does Kiwis coach David Kidwell need help?

It would have been a bloody short article if I was editing, because the answer is an emphatic yes.

Poor Kidwell got the coaching gig and pretty much everyone is quick to forget he is only four games into it.

That's why calls for his head are just stupid.

Jesus, give the poor guy a go.

I dare you to question his commitment?

But remember when Stephen Kearney took over he had Wayne Bennett to help. Kidwell has Justin Morgan. Not really the same thing is it?

Having defended the bloke, a blind man can see we have been less than impressive.

Smith said in his piece that the NZRL should be sounding out someone like Craig Bellamy, Ricky Stuart or Ivan Cleary.

He's not wrong.

The Perth test was a stunner, but Kidwell learned his bench lesson quickly.

We ground it out against England – and not that many people have test wins over Wayne Bennett; we did not play that great against Australia and nearly nicked a draw; and against Scotland we were far from our best, but in terrible conditions.

There is no denying Kidwell is green, and those who argue he lacks experience have a valid point. But he has the job now, and the NZRL should at least give the guy some support.

### **Johns Puts The Boot In**

Bagging Shaun Johnson is a national sport – our national sport. So when the Aussies join in, it just pisses me off.

Motor-mouth Andrew Johns, admittedly a bit special in his playing days, slammed the Kiwis after the 18-all draw with Scotland, saying our attitude did not warrant the right result against a supposedly weaker opposition.

“They just thought they'd turn up and win. Well done to Scotland. They played well, and with a lot of spirit. But you look at the line-ups and if New Zealand had their heads on they would've won by 40.”

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Oh yeah, just like England did.

“I know conditions were tough but their attitude stunk. The Kiwis need a huge attitude readjustment.”

Johns then turned on Johnson. “I was talking to a couple of really good judges the last couple of weeks and they all say Shaun Johnson's a five-eighth, not a halfback.”

Apparently he doesn't manage the game well enough, and his kicking game is rubbish.

You might be right, but we can criticise him, you can't. Stick to commenting on your own lot.

### **Broken Jaw Sidelines Tommy**

Thomas Leuluai, who has looked superb in our defensive line- which is not easy the way we have been going – broke his jaw in two places against Scotland.

I am tired of hearing about how we disrespected the opposition by resting key players, and how it is the first time ever the “fourth nation” in a Four Nations campaign has got a point.

Poor Tommy endured some tough breaks at the Vodafone Warriors before deciding to return to the United Kingdom for Super League duty, but arriving at his new club with a broken jaw is not going to make him any friends.

Now we are going to have to find a new halves partner for Shaun Johnson.

As if Kidwell does not have enough on his plate.

Te Maire Martin is the only remaining specialist standoff. He came off the bench against Scotland but has only six first grade games for the Panthers. Good luck lining him up against Cooper Cronk and Johnathan Thurston.

Second rower Tohu Harris has played at No 6, but it is hardly ideal is it?

I do think Tommy's injury underlines our lack of quality halves. Big forwards no sweat, nippy halves, not so much.

### **Ground Cover**

David Kidwell was unhappy with the ground, which was not exactly first class.

“We're always looking to grow the game but we've got world class players out there and we need world class fields to make sure test football stays where it wants to be, and that's at the pinnacle, with pinnacle fields.”

That's when Scotland coach Steve McCormack, who understandably loves the place, given his side has been unbeaten in four games at the ground, came out swinging.

“That's a bit disrespectful. This venue and this area is a fantastic hotbed for league. If anybody had seen how hard the people had worked to get this game on. There's no better place to play league.”

I beg to differ Steve. I can name you a dozen better places to play.

### **No Love Lost**

Anyone else enjoying the Wayne Bennett show? He says he doesn't have a problem with Mal Meninga, but he sure does with the way the new Kangaroos coach decision was made.

Bennett was at his snarky best, claiming he had had peace talks with Meninga, who had accused him of undermining him and not moving on after missing out on the Kangaroos job.

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“With the Roos job I was at a different place than the process they went through. I have to be careful what type of word I use, anyway I moved on. The process is a story worth telling but I am not going to tell it today.” Bennett also fired at those who say he did not promote England.

The best bit is that the Bennett grunt, which we are all used to, has gone down like a lead balloon in England. “I have been getting that criticism for 38 years. The critics are sitting at home drinking wine and I’m out here getting the job done.” Priceless.

### **Dragons On Opening Day**

The round one schedule was apparently leaked to the Daily Telegraph, with the Warriors hosting the Dragons at Mt Smart on March 4.

In fairness, the NRL does say the draw has not been finalised. The leaked draw has Sharks v Broncos on the Thursday night; Canterbury v Melbourne and Souths v Tigers on the Friday, us against the Dragons, Titans v Roosters and North Queensland v Raiders on the Saturday; with Manly v Parramatta and Panthers v Knights to round it out on Sunday.

### **Nice To Be Wanted**

Did you catch up with the news Kiwi-raised teenager Kayln Ponga, who is at the Cowboys, will become one of the highest paid players in the NRL at just 18 – and after only two first-grade games.

His contract was apparently bumped up to almost \$1m this year, and now the Cowboys are trying to extend it as other clubs circle.

Apparently four other clubs are willing to offer big deals for the fullback, reports say \$2m has been mentioned.

Ponga hit the news this year when there was a squabble between us and Australia over eligibility because Queensland approached him to declare for them.

To be fair he was born in Australia, Perth to be exact, but he was moved to Palmerston North as a child.

If it’s not bad enough that he’s a superstar in the making, he can also claim to have won the New Zealand under 13 golf title back in 2010.

He went to Queensland soon after, and made the Australian under 15 league team in 2012, but was named to play for the Junior Kiwis against the Kangaroos this year.

He declined while he mulled over which country to play for and Ponga later went with Queensland and Australia. James Taumo anyone?

### **Sterlo Gets Origin Call-up**

Respected commentator Peter Sterling has been appointed as NSW Blues coach Laurie Daley’s new adviser for the 2017 State of Origin.

“Sterlo” replaces Bob Fulton, a former Blues captain who played 13 Origin games between 1981 and 88, 18 tests and 227 games for Parramatta. He stood down because of increased responsibilities with Manly as head of football.

The NSWRL Board convened a meeting to confirm Sterling’s appointment, which follows their decision to make two other staff changes after a review of the 2016 campaign.

Sterling will now join Manly’s John Cartwright, the new assistant coach, and Victoria Cross recipient Mark Donaldson, the new assistant team manager.

Sterling says he’s keen to be part of Daley’s Origin campaign. “I feel like I have been asked to step into a situation that is on the verge of something special.”

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*By John Coffey QSM*

Author of ten rugby league books, Christchurch Press sports writer (44 years), NZ correspondent for Rugby League Week (Australia) and Open Rugby (England)



## Biggest Shock in 354 Kiwis Tests

*Kiwis looking dejected as their side draws against Scotland.*

*Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)*

**L**AST WEEKEND the Kiwis played their 354th Test match. Never before in their 109-year history have they suffered a bigger shock than being held to an 18-18 draw by Scotland in the Four Nations game at Workington. It was even bigger than the 1986 loss to Papua New Guinea at Port Moresby. At least PNG has a serious domestic competition – not surprising considering it embraces rugby league as its national sport – and the Kumuls were also playing on home soil when they upset Graham Lowe’s Kiwis in such dramatic and chaotic circumstances.

Scotland fielded a rag-tag bunch of professionals, semi-professionals and part-timers from the NRL, Super League and English second-tier competitions. Workington is near, but not in, Scotland. It sits somewhat unattractively on the Cumbrian coast about 87km south of the border. Yet these blokes with Aussie and Yorkshire accents mustered greater pride in their adopted national jersey than the Kiwis, from the moment they sung their Flower of Scotland anthem until captain Danny Brough kicked the last-minute conversion to tie the scores.

It was wet, windy and cold in Workington, a town which famed English historian Geoffrey Moorhouse compared to Greymouth on our South Island’s West Coast. Cumbria was also once a coal mining and rugby league stronghold but these days the mines are long closed and both Workington Town and fierce rival Whitehaven play down the grades. Ageing Derwent Park is encircled by a speedway track, the surface is uneven, the dressing rooms are cramped, and I doubt whether Mal Meninga would have agreed to the Kangaroos playing there.

Brough, the stocky Huddersfield stand-off half who rejected possible England honours so he could lead the land of his heritage, was saying all week he wanted a wet and windy night. He knew the cold was inevitable. How the Scots relished the conditions, even the likes of fullback Lachlan Coote and centre Kane Linnett, who ply their trade with the Cowboys in tropical north Queensland. They trailed only 6-4 at halftime, went ahead at 12-10 in the 70th minute and recovered from conceding two quick tries to snatch a draw just before full-time.

The Kiwis have had some previous problems with tier-two nations at major tournaments. It took a near miracle, and some magic Matthew Ridge kicking, to nudge out Tonga 25-24 at Warrington during the 1995 World Cup, while a late Shaun Kenny-Dowall try spared our blushes in a squeaky 14-12 win over Toa Samoa at Whangarei during the 2014 Four Nations. The Kiwis were defending that 2014 title and their No. 1 world ranking last weekend, though that would not have been apparent to any non-committed spectators at Derwent Park.

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While Shaun Johnson can be a frustrating watch for those who want him to test the defensive line more often, there is no escaping the fact he was vitally involved in all four tries, two of them to rookie wing David Fusitu'a and two to his right-side centre partner, Gerard Beale. But Johnson was named Man of Match after the Kiwis had regained the lead and looked sure to win. Had the award been made after fulltime, it must have gone to the brave Brough, who had painkilling injections in an injured heel before the game and at halftime.

I was quite content with coach David Kidwell's decision to rest some established players and give Fusitu'a, Te Maire Martin, James Fisher-Harris and Joseph Tapine their debuts. Nor do I blame the newcomers for the gob-smacking result. Of the quartet, only Fusitu'a was on the field during yet another poor opening quarter by the Kiwis. They gave up the first four penalties (in an overall 10-5 count) from erratic Australian referee Ben Cummins, allowed the Scots to dominate possession, and failed to grab half-chances on rare attacking raids.

Kidwell presumably pointed out how important it was to win – let alone by a margin large enough to secure a place in the final – during the halftime break. Yet within minutes of the restart Solomone Kata shoved Coote over the dead-ball hoardings to concede another penalty, Fusitu'a was rolled into touch after fielding a kick and Tapine was penalised while in possession of the ball after a fracas at a play-the-ball. The Kiwis lost the ball in the first sets after their first two tries, and Manu Ma'u cost two points for not rolling clear of a tackle.

Only when behind 12-10 into the closing minutes did the much vaunted Kiwis forwards display some real power running, notably by Adam Blair and Greg Eastwood leading up to Beale's try-scoring double. Johnson chimed in to rip apart the Scottish defence and over-laps were created on the right flank. But the Kiwis collectively were not desperate enough on defence when Brough did not kick on the last tackle but instead provided the space for Aitken to score what is now the most famous try in the brief history of Scottish rugby league.

The serious jaw injury suffered by Thomas Leuluai after 57 minutes, when the Kiwis were up 10-4, was more than unfortunate on the eve of his return to his second home in Wigan. If that was to be the last of his 38 Tests since 2003 then he will probably remember it with even less enthusiasm than the four debutants. But Leuluai should be proud of his contributions during 15 appearances at scrum-half, 13 at hooker, four at stand-off and six off the bench. That versatility deserves to be kept in mind when the 2017 World Cup squad is being selected.

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*By John Coffey QSM*  
Author of ten rugby league books, Christchurch Press sports writer (44 years), NZ correspondent for Rugby League Week (Australia) and Open Rugby (England)

## Kangaroos Hot Favourites for Final

*Blake Ferguson of Australia scores his teams first try. England v Australia.*

*Photo [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)*

**T**HE KIWIS have won three major tournaments in the past 11 years after losing to the Kangaroos in qualifying matches, the 2005 Tri-Nations, the 2008 World Cup and the 2010 Four Nations. Only in the 2014 Four Nations triumph were they unbeaten, though there were many nervous moments against Australia, Samoa and England. On Monday morning (3.30am NZ time) the current Kiwis have to revert to that old formula of peaking for the final.

But despite the gutsy opening one-point victory over England and a tenacious six-point loss to Australia earlier in this tournament, there was no hint of steady improvement when held to an 18-18 draw by Scotland at wintry Workington last weekend. The Kangaroos restored normality by sweeping England aside 36-18 at London's Olympic Stadium two days later. The Aussies must be at least a 20-point favourite to win the final at Anfield in Liverpool.

It was ominous that scrum-half Cooper Cronk, who did not play against the Kiwis but was Man of the Match in the beating of England, said after fulltime the Kangaroos were improving with every match and would be firing at Anfield. In the opposing dressing room, England coach Wayne Bennett echoed decades of British frustration by blaming poor mental attitude and basic errors for the loss. He could have been talking about the Kiwis.

Remember when former world heavyweight boxing champion Lennox Lewis said of New Zealand's David Tua after their one-sided contest for the undisputed title, "you need more than a good left hook and a bad haircut to beat me"? Well, Kangaroos coach Mal Meninga might well have commented to his Kiwis and Lions rivals, "you need more than a big but over-rated forward pack (and even a number one world ranking) to challenge us."

Yet the Kiwis have reached the final, something their predecessors failed to do in the 2009 and 2011 Four Nations tournaments on British soil and on that basis will have fair claim to second ranking going into the 2017 World Cup – when, interestingly enough, they will be confronted again by Scotland in Christchurch. Hasn't that game assumed far greater importance for both nations than it had when the draw was initially announced?

England experienced its usual moments of hope last weekend. Jermaine McGillvary scored the first try of the match for a 6-2 lead. Australia was 10-6 in front at halftime but would have fallen behind again had Sam Burgess not dropped Josh Hodgson's pass in the shadow of the cross-bar. That was where the home side's challenge ended. The scoreline was 28-6 before England added to its total and the Kangaroos were in cruise control by then.

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The Kiwis could do with Workington conditions for the final. But Anfield does not have a speedway track around it, and will be as smooth as a bowling green. The weather will not worry the Kangaroos any more than the Kiwis. After three attempts (16-0 at Newcastle, 26-6 at Perth and 14-8 at Huddersfield) the current Kiwis game plan is clearly not overly troubling the Australian defence. Notably, the Kiwis and Lions scored four of their five tries out near the corner posts.

Thomas Leuluai (broken jaw) is a serious loss if the Kiwis were to maintain their recent game plan. His absence throws even more responsibility on Shaun Johnson. Coach David Kidwell must choose between rookie Te Maire Martin and second-rower Tohu Harris to wear the number six jersey. Harris has been tried there without success. Martin was involved in what should have been the winning try against the Scots and will offer something different. What is there to lose?

Four Nations results:

New Zealand 18 (David Fusitu'a 2, Gerard Beale 2 tries; Issac Luke goal) drew with Scotland 18 (Lewis Tierney, Ben Halleswell, Euan Aitken tries; Danny Brough 3 goals). HT: NZ 6-4. Referee: Ben Cummins (Australia).

Australia 36 (Blake Ferguson, Greg Inglis, Matt Scott, Josh Dugan, Matt Gillett, Valentine Holmes tries; Johnathan Thurston 6 goals) beat England 18 (Jermaine McGillvary, Gareth Widdop, Ryan Hall tries; Widdop 3 goals). HT: 10-6. Referee: Richard Hicks (England).

Qualifying points: Australia 6, New Zealand 3, England 2, Scotland 1.

Final: Australia v New Zealand at Anfield, Liverpool, Monday 3.30am (NZ time).

## Good Year By Barry Ross



**I**T HAS been a good year for Valentine Holmes, with International football and Grand Final success coming his way in 2016. Just 21 years of age, he is of Cook Island, Maori and Samoan descent. He was born in Townsville and played junior football with the local Western Lions club. After being signed by Cronulla, he moved to Sydney in 2013 and played for the Sharks SG Ball team. Later that same year, he moved up to the club's NYC Side, collecting 17 tries in his 10 matches. Also in 2013, he represented the Queensland under 18s and as his father is a New Zealander, he was named in the 2013 Junior Kiwis train-on squad. In December 2013, he was chosen in the 2014 Queensland Academy of Sport under 20s Emerging Origin squad.

February 2014, saw him play at the Auckland Nines with Cronulla and a few months later he was the Queensland under 20 fullback in their 30-8 loss to their NSW counterparts at Penrith on 3 May. Three months after this under 20 interstate clash, Valentine made his first grade debut on 2 August 2014, in the 32-12 loss to Parramatta at Cronulla. He retained his place in the top grade for the remainder of the season and finished the year with three tries in his six games. In September 2014, he was named in both the Junior Kangaroos and the Junior Kiwis squads but decided to play for Australia and scored two tries in the 15-14 loss to the Junior Kiwis on 18 October. Last year, he played 25 top grade games, scoring 16 tries, 11 goals and three field goals, while this year he picked up 19 tries and two goals in his 26 matches. He now has played 57 NRL matches scoring 38 tries, 13 goals and three field goals for a total of 181 points. He also represented the Junior Kangaroos in 2015, crossing for a try and kicking a goal in their 22-20 victory.

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Perth was the venue for his Test debut on 15 October, where he scored a try and ran for 169 metres in Australia's 26-6 win over New Zealand. He also played in Australia's 14-8 win over the Kiwis in the Four Nations clash at Coventry on 5 November and last Sunday picked up his third Test Cap and his second Test try, in the Four Nations 36-18 win over England at London's 2012 Olympic Stadium. He will probably play his fourth Test this weekend in the Four Nations Final at Liverpool's Anfield Stadium.

The only hiccup for the talented 21 year old this year came on 31 January in Brisbane, where he broke curfew at a Queensland Emerging Origin camp. He was fined for public nuisance and the Queensland League banned him from their representative programme. But that is now behind him and no doubt he will be looking to make his Origin debut for the Maroons in 2017. His current Sharks contract expires at the end of 2017 and the club want to extend his deal, probably soon after he returns from England and this will see him receive a much healthier pay packet.

Now that the preliminary matches have been completed, the Four Nations Final at Liverpool this Sunday afternoon (early Monday morning our time) will be a much anticipated clash. Despite England signing Wayne Bennett as their coach, it is the Final that most Rugby League fans predicted before the Tournament began. Forget the Kiwis draw with Scotland. Over the past few years, New Zealand have risen to the occasion for several big games. They did it on 15 November 2014, defeating the Aussies 22-18 at Wellington and before that at Brisbane's Lang Park on 13 November 2010 when they beat the Kangaroos 16-12. Both of these games were Four Nations Finals. At Brisbane on 22 November 2008, the Australians were defeated 34-20 in the World Cup Final.

Shaun Johnson will play a major role in the result and Kangaroo coach, Mal Meninga, will have his team well aware of the Kiwi halfback's ability. The New Zealand forwards will have to finish on top of the Aussie six to give Shaun the time and space he needs. Thomas Leuluai will be missed but coach David Kidwell will come up with a solution. Both teams will be up for the game. If the Kiwis win, they will retain their number one position in World Rugby League, while if the Kangaroos are the victors, they will become the world's best side. This is a big incentive to Mal Meninga and his men. The weather forecast for Liverpool six days out is reasonable for the north west of England at this time of the year. It is cloudy with some sun and showers. The likely high temperature is 8 degrees and the sun, if you can see it, goes down around 4.10pm.

Although the Wallabies had some luck, they continued their unbeaten European tour with their 23-22 win over Scotland. They have a big week in front of them with a Test in Paris against France on Saturday night 19 November, followed by a match with the French Barbarians at Bordeaux on Thursday 17 November and then a Test against Ireland in Dublin on 26 November. Former star Melbourne Storm winger, Marika Koroiibete, will probably make his Wallaby debut in the Barbarians match.

Great West Indian cricketer, Brian Charles Lara, now 47, is in Sydney with his 20 year old daughter, Sydney, to show her the city after which she was named. In his 131 Tests, Lara scored 11,953 runs at an average of 52.9 and holds the individual Test score record of 400 not out which he established against England at St. John's Antigua in April 2004. He faced 582 balls in this innings and hammered 43 fours and four sixes. There is not too much to say about our male cricketers at the moment, but I am looking forward to the Australian womens play when they begin a five match one day series against the South Africans this Friday in Canberra. The South African women began their tour in Sydney last Sunday with a match against the Governor General's XI. South Africa batted first and finished with seven for 203 from their 50 overs and the Governor General's XI took 48.1 overs to win the match with eight down for 204. Beth Mooney, a 22 year old Victorian, top scored with 95 not out.



Want to send a message to the Kiwis?  
Email it to [nadene@nzrl.co.nz](mailto:nadene@nzrl.co.nz)





By Ben Francis

## Conor McGregor Making a Name for Himself

Conor McGregor celebrates winning Photo: ©INPHO/Tom Hogan from [www.photosport.nz](http://www.photosport.nz)

**F**IRSTLY MY thoughts go out to the people of Kaikoura and the rest of the effected by the devastating earthquake in the early hours of Monday morning. I once lived in a backpackers for 11 months and I had a number of messages from people who I had met making sure I was safe and I really appreciated the messages.

If he wasn't already, UFC Superstar Conor McGregor should be considered to be one of the best athletes on the planet after he became the first athlete in UFC to hold two championship belts in two different weight classes at the same time following his second-round KO victory over Eddie Alvarez at UFC205 in New York.

He is the face of UFC and is a big reason why so many people watch the sport today. McGregor is a man when you see him walk into the ring, he never looks scared, intimidated or nervous. He is as calm as anything and that is something which can worry other fighters when heading into the ring.

Remember the UFC has grown in popularity over the last 10-15 years and company recently sold for \$4 billion USD - which is just a little under the worth of Formula One (probably the biggest Motorsport brand in the world) which is currently worth \$4.05 billion.

Guys like Jon 'Bones' Jones and Anderson Silva helped make UFC a big sport, and McGregor has made the sport even bigger. It's like how people say Magic Johnson and Larry Bird made the NBA very popular and then Michael Jordan took it to a new level, and that has been followed up with LeBron James.

And that is the category McGregor can be put in now, with the likes of LeBron James (The most marketable athlete in the world) and Tiger Woods during his prime, Lionel Messi, Roger Federer.

McGregor is currently the king of UFC, and after dominating two weight divisions, the next question will be can he keep it up? As we have seen in the Woman's Bantamweight division we had Ronda Rousey, Holy Holm, Miesha Tate and Amanda Nunes all hold the belt in the last 12 months. But in McGregor's case we can't see another fighter coming along and dominating him.

McGregor is nothing like we have ever seen before, from his strike power, to his swagger, his promotional abilities. He has had one big loss, in a weight class he wasn't ready for against Nate Diaz which he couldn't prepare for. And straight after the loss, he called for a rematch right away and beat him five months later.

After his win on the weekend, he grabbed his second belt, put both of them around his shoulders and stood proudly like a king. He said he would be the first to hold two belts and he did that, people though he was being cocky more than anything but he did the impossible. It looks like McGregor will be the king of UFC for a long long time.

# On Tour with the Kiwis

We had 4 debutantes against Scotland and here they receive their test jerseys from Hitro Okesene former Kiwi and Warriors player at the test dinner.



David Fusitu'a



James Fisher Harris



Joseph Tapine



Te Maire Martin



Receiving his first Kiwis Test Jersey was a very proud moment for James Fisher Harris. His parents Adelaide & Sam had flown over from NZ to be there.



Was a big moment for Te Maire Martin receiving his first Kiwis jersey. His parents Lesley and Greg had flown over from NZ to follow the tour and were guests at the dinner.



Two of our Vodafone Warriors players showing of their Jerseys. Carlisle David Fusitu'a received his first test jersey while Solomone Kata received his 4th.



Adam Blair presented Hitro Okesene with a signed kiwis jersey as a thank you for coming and talking to us at the test dinner in Carlisle.



Jordan Rapanapa's parents Eli and Leearn Rapanapa flew over from the Gold Coast to support their son.



It was nice to see team manager Nadene Conlon receive flowers from family back in NZ. She captained and played 36 games for the Kiwi Ferns.



Click here!

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

# On Tour with the Kiwis



Out for a staff dinner in Manchester at a very good Spanish restaurant.



Me and my little princess Kristin Leitch, my granddaughter, checking out Manchester city.



All the tickets from the Scotland Test.



Christmas in Liverpool.



Albert Dock in Liverpool.



Welcome to Liverpool.



Liverpool at Night.

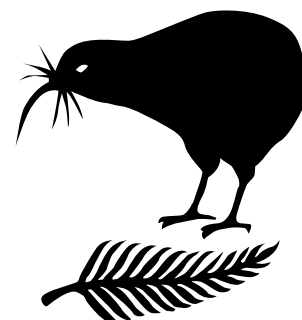


Was great to meet Saint Helens Player of the Year, Kyle Amor. He's played 84 games for the side and surprised me by wanting the photo. Usually it's the other way round.



Was nice to catch up with former Warriors player Denis Betts. He played 42 games for the club but now coaches Widnes in the English Super League as well as Assistant Coach for England.

Good luck to the Kiwis playing in the Four Nations Grand final this Monday 3.30am NZ time.



NEW ZEALAND RUGBY LEAGUE™



The Newsletter Team sends their best wishes to everyone effected by the recent earthquake.

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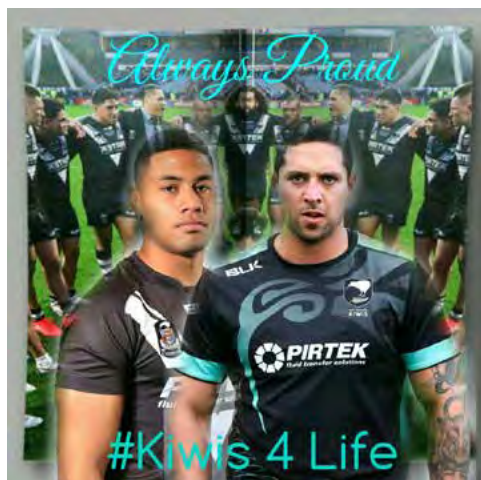
**Congratulations to the All Blacks on being named World Rugby Team of the Year. Congratulations especially to Steve Hansen who was named Coach of the Year and Beauden Barrett named Player of the Year.**

We also wish them luck against Ireland this Sunday at 6.30am NZ time.

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### Kiwis Artwork by Joyce Putohe

Congratulations - David Fusitu'a go out and unleash your talent on the field of play this weekend - Joyce



Click here!

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



# THE GREATEST WEEKEND!

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# 2016 AOTEAROA MĀORI SPORTS AWARDS ANNOUNCES OLYMPIC & WORLD-CLASS FINALISTS



Māori Olympics medallists and Māori World Champions head the list of finalists who will vie for top honours at the 2016 Aotearoa Māori Sports Awards this November.

Māori representation at this year's Rio Summer Olympics, totalling 43 athletes, 8 officials, 2 Māori representing Australia and 4 Māori in the Rio Paralympics.

Lisa Carrington was the closing ceremony flag bearer at the Rio Summer Olympics, and Holly Robinson the opening ceremony flag bearer at the Rio Paralympics.

The 2016 Māori Sports Awards recipients and finalists are:

## ACC SPORTSMART MAORI OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC MEDALLISTS:

Lisa Carrington (*Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga ā Māhaki*) CANOE RACING

Cameron Leslie (*Ngapuhi*) PARA-SWIMMING

Holly Robinson (*Ngāi Tahu*) PARA-ATHLETICS

Emma Foy (*Ngapuhi*) PARA-CYCLING:

NZ WOMENS SEVENS;

Sarah Goss (C) (*Ngāti Kahungunu*)

Shakira Baker (*Ngāti Kahungunu*)

Gayle Broughton (*Ngāti Ruahine, Ngāti Ruanui*)

Kayla McAllister (*Te Atiawa*)

Huriana Manuel (*Ngapuhi, Ngati Tuwharetoa*)

Tyla Nathan-Wong (*Ngapuhi*)

Terina Te Tamaki (*Te Arawa, Waikato, Ngati Maniapoto*)

Ruby Tui (*Ngāi Tahu*)

Portia Woodman (*Ngāpuhi*)

Shiray Tane (*Ngati Maniapoto*)

## INDIVIDUAL MĀORI WORLD CHAMPIONS:

Tokomaru Taylor (*Tainui, Taranaki*) MUAY THAI

Tyrell Rapana (*Ngati Wai*) FIELD ARCHER

Sam Gaze (*Te Atiawa*) CYCLING

Lisa Carrington (*Ngati Porou, Te Aitanga a Mahaki*) CANOE RACING

Akayshia Williams (*Ngati Porou, Te Aitanga a Hauiti*) WAKA AMA

Nyree King (*Waikato*) WAKA AMA

Tia Akurangi (*Ngati Porou, Ngai Tamanuhiri, Ngapuhi*) WAKA AMA

Sonny (Richard) Pehi (*Ngapuhi*) WAKA AMA

Byron Chivers (*Ngati Porou*) MMA

Rota Jnr Elliott (*Ngati Awa, Whakatohea, Ngati Rangitīhi*) BODYBUILDING

## MĀORI WORLD CHAMPION TEAMS:

AOTEAROA NZ ELITE MENS V6 500 WAKA AMA TEAM

AOTEAROA NZ ELITE WOMEN V6 500 & 1500 WAKA AMA TEAM

AOTEAROA NZ JUNIOR 19 WOMENS 500 & 1000m WAKA AMA TEAM

## NGĀ KAIWHIWHI MŌ NGĀ KARAHIPĪ

### – Māori Sports Awards Scholarships:

Manukau Institute of Technology Scholarships:

Bryston Takinui (*Tainui*) MANGERE COLLEGE

Robert Downes (*Ngapuhi, Ngati Tuwharetoa*) PAPA KURA HIGH SCHOOL

Skills Active Aotearoa Scholarship:

Ronin Ihaka Ainsley (*Ngai Te Rangī*) WRESTLING

Manukatoa MSA Watson & Son, Combat Sports Scholarship:

Reilly Polaschek (*Ngai Te Rangī*) KARATE

## MĀUI TIKITIKI-Ā-TARANGA

### – Māori Sports Administrator of the Year:

Marinna Millanta-Lowrey (*Te Whanau-a-Apanui, Ngati Porou*) WAKA AMA

Trevor Shailer (*Ngati Kauwhata, Ngati Hauti*) OLYMPIC GAMES

Harko Brown (*Raukawa ki Waikato me Ngati Whatua ki Kaipara*) KI-O-RAHI

# Māori Sports Awards

Te Tohu Taakaro o Aotearoa Charitable Trust

**2016 National Māori Sports Awards**  
**Vodafone Events Centre - Manukau**  
**Saturday 26 November 2016**

## TE TOIHUAREWA – Disabled Māori Sports Person of the Year:

Cameron Leslie (*Ngapuhi*) PARA-SWIMMING

Holly Robinson (*Ngāi Tahu*) PARA-ATHLETICS

Emma Foy (*Ngapuhi*) PARA-CYCLING

## TE ARATIATIA – Māori Sports Umpire/Referee of the Year:

Glen Warrick Jackson (*Ngāi Tahu*) RUGBY

Amber Church (*Te Aitanga-ā-Māhaki*) HOCKEY

Kathy Cross (*Ngati Maniapoto*) CRICKET

## NGĀ IKA Ā WHIRO – Māori Sports Team of the Year:

Aotearoa NZ Elite Mens V6 500 WAKA AMA TEAM

Māori All Blacks

Aotearoa NZ Elite Women V6 500 & 1500 WAKA AMA TEAM

## TE MARU Ō TŪMATAUENGA – Māori Sports Coach of the Year:

Colin Cooper (*Ngati Pukenga*) MĀORI ALL BLACKS

Sean Horan (*Ngai Tahu*) RUGBY SEVENS

Kiwi Campbell (*Ngai Tuhoē, Ngati Porou*) WAKA AMA

## TE TAMAHINE-Ā-PAPATŪĀNUKU

### – Junior Māori Sportswoman of the Year:

Maia Wilson (*Te Wai-o-Hua, Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi*) NETBALL

Akayshia Williams (*Ngati Porou, Te Aitanga a Hauiti*) WAKA AMA

Gayle Broughton (*Ngāti Ruahine, Ngāti Ruanui*) RUGBY SEVENS

## TE TAMA-Ā-RANGINUI – Junior Māori Sportsman of the Year:

Reiko Ioane (*Ngapuhi, Te Whanau a Apanui*) RUGBY, RUGBY SEVENS

Faine KAHIA (*Ngati Tuwharetoa*) MOTOR RACING

Tokomaru Taylor (*Tainui, Taranaki*) MUAY THAI

## HINEAHUONE – Senior Māori Sportswoman of the Year:

Lisa Carrington (*Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Porou*) CANOEING RACING

Portia Woodman (*Ngapuhi*) RUGBY, RUGBY SEVENS

Joelle King (*Ngati Porou*) SQUASH

Susie Bates (*Ngai Tahu*) CRICKET

Abbey Erceg (*Ngapuhi*) FOOTBALL

## TE TAMA-Ā-TANENUIĀRANGI – Senior Māori Sportsman of the Year:

Dane Coles (*Ngati Porou*) RUGBY

Shannon McIlroy (*Ngati Porou*) LAWN BOWLS

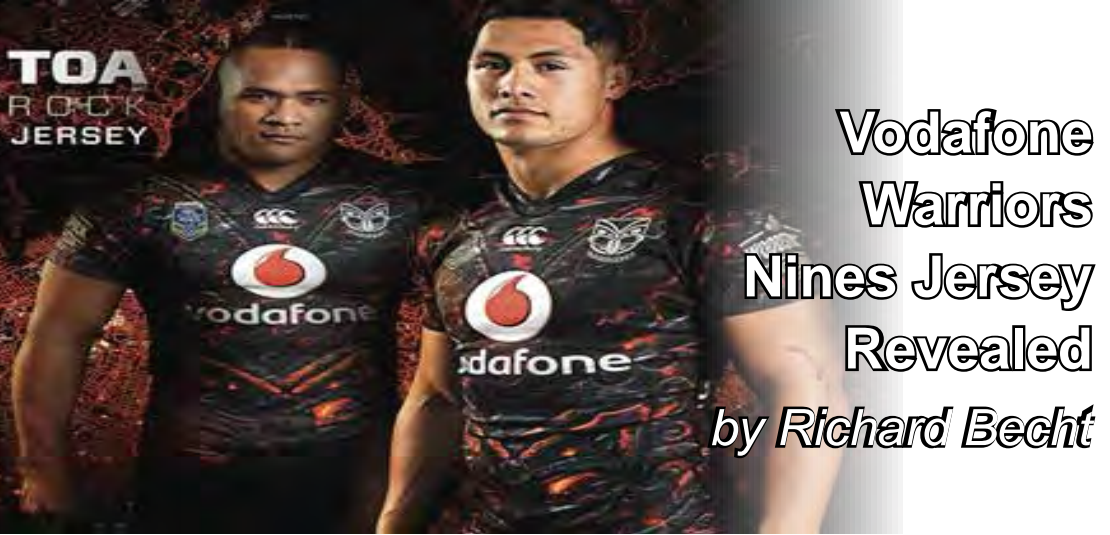
Trent Bolt (*Ngai Te Rangī, Ngati Maru*) CRICKET

Winstone Reid (*Tainui, Te Rarawa*) FOOTBALL

Jesse Bromwich (*Ngāti Porou, Ngapuhi*) RUGBY LEAGUE

[www.maorisportsawards.co.nz](http://www.maorisportsawards.co.nz)

# TE TOKA TU TOA THE WARRIOR ROCK 2017 AUCKLAND NINES JERSEY



PRE ORDER  
**NOW**

## Vodafone Warriors Nines Jersey Revealed *by Richard Becht*

**I**NTRODUCING ‘Te Toka Tu Toa’, the jersey the Vodafone Warriors will wear into battle at the 2017 Downer NRL Auckland Nines at Eden Park on February 4 and 5.

Centre Solomone Kata and fullback Roger Tuivasa-Sheck model the stunning Canterbury of New Zealand-designed ‘Te Toka Tu Toa’ – The Warrior Rock – which can now be pre-ordered through [www.warriors-store.co.nz](http://www.warriors-store.co.nz)

The design continues the theme of incorporating natural elements into the Nines kit, like 2016’s ‘Spirit of the Warrior’ and 2015’s ‘Tangaroa’.

The 2017 jersey takes its name from a modified Maori whakatauki (proverb) comparing people to immovable and permanent geographical rock formations: “Ahakoa te aha, te toka tu toa, tu tonu.” It translates to: “No matter what, the warrior rock will endure.”

The proverb continues: “Ahakoa te awha te toka tu moana tu tonu, tu te ao, tu te po.” Or: “Through all storms, the sentinel rock stands, through day and night it endures all.”

‘Te Toka Tu Toa’ is a statement that, no matter what the opposition throws at the team, like te toka tu moana (the sentinel rock) the players and the team will endure all and be ready to fight again the next game.

The jersey features rock-inspired graphics with carved designs highlighting the Vodafone Warriors’ origins on the front and a mangopare tohu along the spine at the rear urging the players to “fight like the hammerhead shark” and never give up.

The Vodafone Warriors’ 2017 NRL home and away jerseys plus the full training range were revealed earlier this month and are also available on pre-order now.



[PRE-ORDER NOW CLICK HERE](#)

PRESENTS

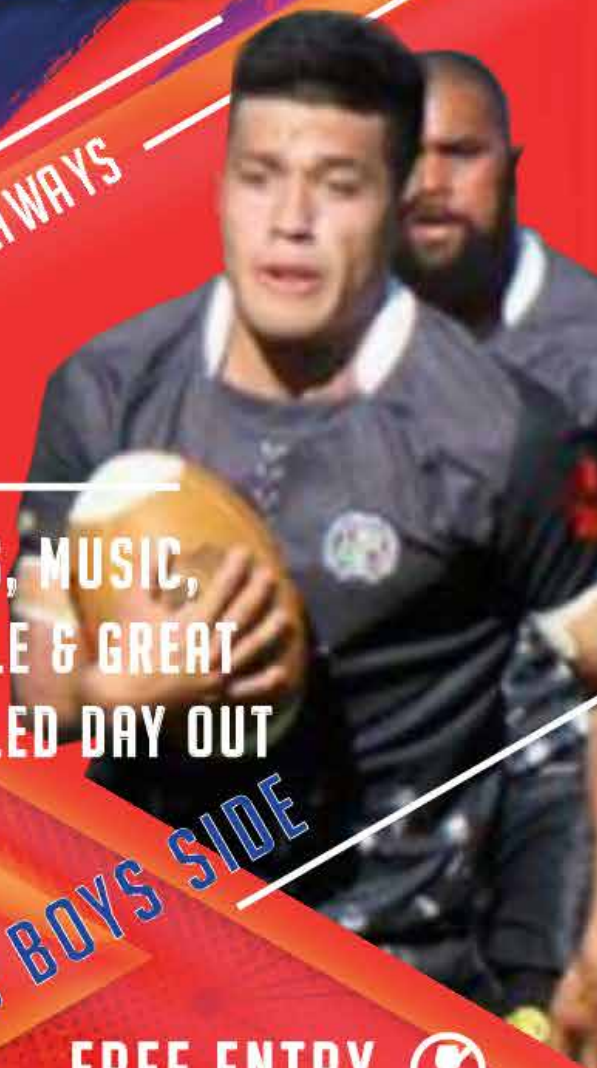


# RUGBY LEAGUE CARNIVAL

TROPHY, PRIZES & GIVEAWAYS

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BOUNCY CASTLE & GREAT  
FAMILY FUN FILLED DAY OUT



WARRIORS OLD BOYS SIDE

FREE ENTRY 

# SATURDAY 26TH NOVEMBER

10 TEAMS COMPETING INC

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:



BEARDS BEAT  
**DECEMBER BEARD**  
BOWEL CANCER



**Bowel Cancer**

N E W Z E A L A N D

## Grow a beard for the month of December, raise funds and help us beat Bowel Cancer!

**B**EARDS AREN'T just for hipsters, those with tattoos, men that ride motorbikes or people that are too lazy to shave. Anyone can help make real change happen. All you need to do is grow a beard (some chin stubble or bum fluff), and promote your facial hair to raise awareness and funds for New Zealand's most common cancer.

In its third year, global initiative Decembeard™, aims to encourage men throughout New Zealand to raise much needed funds and awareness for Bowel Cancer New Zealand (BCNZ), by growing a beard through December.

Simply click the register button below, create an individual or team profile, explain why you are getting involved and set yourself a target. Then share your page with your friends to start raising money. Follow us on our [Decembeard NZ Facebook page](#) and get some beard growing inspiration.

Bowel Cancer New Zealand is a national charity for people and their families/whānau affected by bowel cancer. We are working to raise awareness of symptoms, promote early diagnosis and encourage fair and affordable access to treatment.

Native for Men will also be offering a 20 per cent discount on all products from their Native for Mens range with 20 per cent of each sale going directly to BCNZ. Please use the code dcbeard16 when checking out at <https://nativeformen.com>.

Please support Bowel Cancer New Zealand to help save lives and to improve the health and wellbeing of people living with bowel cancer.

And if you have a personal story you would like to share, please email [louise.cargo@elevenpr.co.nz](mailto:louise.cargo@elevenpr.co.nz), your story could inspire someone else to register.

Register now, start growing and start making a difference!

[Register now - Click Here](#)



**E**X SOUTH African cricket captain, Graeme Smith and Barry Ross at the Bradman dinner last week in the new Members Stand at the northern end of the Sydney Cricket ground. The stand officially opened around March last year, when the LA Dodgers baseball team played the Arizona Diamondbacks.



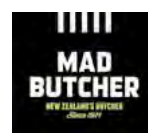
**G**REAT NEWS for my mate Rodney Green, after 12 weeks in hospital not eating anything or drink anything, this Tuesday on his birthday he was able to have a bowl of jelly and ice cream and drink. What a birthday present. He still has a way to go before he leaves Auckland hospital to return to his home in Napier.

If you wish to **subscribe** or **unsubscribe** please email Stephan Maier at [stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz](mailto:stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz)

## Our Sponsors

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Without the help of these brands the Sir Peter Leitch Club and Newsletter wouldn't be as fantastic as it is. If you do get the opportunity please support them whenever you can.



## 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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**Colin MacKenzie** - Assistant Editor  
**Hayden Woodhead** - Graphic Designer  
**Stephan Maier** - Distribution

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**John Coffey** - Southern Correspondent  
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