



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter

1st February 2017

#155

Nines About to Hit

By David Kemeys

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



IT IS not enough that they are blowing the cobwebs off Ruben Wiki, they have named the bloke captain of our Downer NRL Nines team.

Fair play, Ruben is as close to a legend as it is possible to be in our game, and if they want him as captain, so be it.

There is a fair bit of experience in our squad, and the usual smattering of NYC players, for Eden Park on February 4 and 5.

This is Nines No 4, and four seems to be a number featuring in our side, since Ruben was named in the team just a day or two before he turned 44.

For those of us for whom 44 is just a distant memory, it is still not that far back that I can't recall I would not have lasted two minutes playing Nines.

Lasting two minutes at anything at my age is a problem, but that is another story altogether.

Our new head honcho Stephen Kearney has gone for the experienced Shaun Johnson, Ryan Hoffman, Tuimoala Lolohea, Solomone Kata and Blake Ayshford - who have played in all three of the previous Nines tournaments.

Wiki was no mug at the game back in the day either, even if the day was in 1996-97, when he was part of the Kiwis squad that won World Nines titles.

"I'm still buzzing about having the chance to play the Nines and now being asked to be captain as well takes it to another level," he said.

"It was humbling to be selected in the first place. To be leading the boys at Eden Park will be one of the highlights of my career."

To which I can only add, good on yer mate. Ruben has a special place in my heart. Top bloke, great player, all round good sort. I had the honour many moons ago of having been involved in arranging a testimonial lunch.

To this day Ruben never fails to speak when I see him, and I am not foolish enough to think I feature a lot in his thoughts. But he has always had time for the little guy, and I am looking forward to being there to see him run out of the tunnel at the head of the team.

Kearney said Wiki's appointment was natural.

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“He’s a leader whatever he does and has so much mana. I can’t wait to see him running out with the lads next week and I’m sure everyone else feels the same.”

The rest of our squad is Matt Allwood, James Gavet, Jazz Tevaga, Ata Hingano, Bunty Afoa and Toafofoa Siple – from the NRL squad.

And rounding it all out are Intrust Super Premiership regulars Mason Lino and James Bell, with Junior Pau-ga, Lewis Soosemea, Ofahiki Ogden and Isaiah Papalii, who were all frontline NYC players last year.

“We have a core of players with a lot of NRL experience as well as a good knowledge of Nines,” said Kearney. “We’ve also rewarded a lot of younger players for the way they’ve trained.”

For anyone who has been hiding under a rock and doesn’t know, the Vodafone Warriors are in Pool Piha along with Manly, Parramatta and St George. We start against Manly at 1.15pm on Saturday, have the Eels at 5.10pm, and our last pool match is the Dragons at 11.50am on Sunday.

Club Programme Takes Greats To Grassroots

The club programme that is a feature of the Downer Nines will take some household NRL names to neighbourhood parks.

All 16 teams go out to six local leagues club to take part in various activities, including autograph signing sessions and skills and drills, allowing grassroots fans to get close-up to their heroes.

The club programme has evolved this year, after feedback from local clubs. It has changed from the 16 NRL team visiting 16 local clubs to six public events where any local clubs keen to be involved can take part, each led by a local ‘hosting hub’ club. For 2017, 27 local clubs are involved, including Physical Disabilities Rugby League.

Date: Thursday, 2 and Friday, 3 February

Time: 6.15pm – 7.45pm varies from club to club – details follow

Location: The event will be hosted at six Auckland clubs

Thursday 2 February:

- Walter Massey Park, Mangere 6:15pm-7:45pm
- Mountfort Park, Manurewa 5pm-7:45pm
- Ti Rakau Park, Pakuranga 5-8pm
- Ranui Domain, Waitemata 5:15pm-7:45pm
- Fowlds Park, Mt Albert 5-7pm

Friday 3 February:

- Freyberg Park, East Coast Bays 5-7pm

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Fans Day Offers Free Fun

On Friday, from 9am to 4pm at Aotea Square Fan Day, a free event, offers an opportunity for fans to meet some NRL Nines players and provides a platform to showcase the weekend to come. The Mayor is invited for a walk-around.

Teams will be involved in activities where fans can meet the players, including signing sessions and selfies. There will be onstage interviews with NRL Nines team captains, and a SportsNet and NRL members' lounge with exclusive access for members of all NRL clubs who have travelled to Auckland.

Home Time For Nigel

Former Vodafone Warrior Nigel Vagana is back from Australia on a mission to boost league throughout the country, taking on the role of NZRL Well-being and Education Manager.

The NZRL is committed to developing players throughout their professional careers.

Vagana is a former Kiwi and won the 2001 and 2002 Dally M Centre of the Year, and can boast 13 years of experience at the elite level.

“I lived it and I guess that makes me a good fit for the position. It's about preparing the guys who are looking to be professional athletes in the NRL as best we can here in New Zealand, so that when they begin their careers they're able to make the most of the opportunities that come their way.”

The off field aspect of player's lives is also a focus.

“We have a great opportunity to affect positive change in our communities across the country. I'd like our elite players, past and present, to understand and embrace their responsibilities to become key drivers through their leadership, passion and integrity,” he says.

“I've been away for 16 years but New Zealand has always been home and it's time for a new challenge. I've also been speaking with Kiwis Coach David Kidwell about assisting with making sure the boys have the best possible opportunity to take out the Rugby League World Cup.”

BBC Gets The Rights

Talk about forward planning. The BBC has already secured the rights to the 2021 Rugby League World Cup, so we can all sleep at night with that worry off our minds.

As well as showing the forthcoming Rugby League World Cup in October/November, the new deal means the BBC will retain free-to-air rights to all 31 matches of the 2021 home tournament.

League already has a strong presence, with 40 weeks coverage on TV every year with the Super League Show and Ladbrokes Challenge Cup from February to October.



**Dexter and I ready
are ready to rock
the Downer NRL
Auckland Nines.
See you there!**



Happening this week!



COMMUNITY CLUB PROGRAMME VISITS 2017

MEET YOUR FAVOURITE NRL STARS AT YOUR LOCAL AUCKLAND RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB. **THU 2 & FRI 3 FEB - FREE ATTENDANCE.**

Club	NRL Team	Programme	Location
Manurewa Marlins	South Sydney Rabbitohs	5-6.15pm Thu 2 Feb	Mountfort Park, Manurewa
	Parramatta Eels	6.15-7.15pm Thu 2 Feb	
	Canberra Raiders	6.45-7.45pm Thu 2 Feb	
Mangere East Hawks	Wests Tigers	6.15-7.15pm Thu 2 Feb	Walter Massey Park, Mangere
	Gold Coast Titans	6.45-7.45pm Thu 2 Feb	
	Brisbane Broncos	6.45-7.45pm Thu 2 Feb	
Pakuranga Jaguars	Sydney Roosters	5-6pm Thu 2 Feb	Ti Rakau Park, Pakuranga
	Manly Sea Eagles	6.30-7.15pm Thu 2 Feb	
	Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs	7.15-8pm Thu 2 Feb	
Waitemata Seagulls	Penrith Panthers	5.15-6.15pm Thu 2 Feb	Ranui Domain, Ranui
	Melbourne Storm	6-7pm Thu 2 Feb	
	Cronulla Sharks	6.45-7.45pm Thu 2 Feb	
Mt Albert Lions	North Queensland Cowboys	5-6pm Thu 2 Feb	Fowlds Park, Mt Albert
	New Zealand Vodafone Warriors	6-7pm Thu 2 Feb	
East Coast Bays Barracudas	St George-Illawarra Dragons	5-6pm Fri 3 Feb	Freyberg Park, Browns Bay
	Newcastle Knights	5.30-6.30pm Fri 3 Feb	

2017 DOWNER NRL AUCKLAND NINES
SAT 4 & SUN 5 FEB 2017

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY AT TICKETEK

aucklandnz.com/nines



2017 DOWNER NRL AUCKLAND NINES FAN DAY

ARRIVAL TIME	NRL TEAM
10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcastle Knights • St George-Illawarra Dragons
11am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sydney Roosters • Manly Sea Eagles • North Queensland Cowboys
12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wests Tigers • Penrith Panthers • South Sydney Rabbitohs
1pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne Storm • Canberra Raiders • Australian Jillaroos
2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Coast Titans • Brisbane Broncos • Cronulla Sharks
3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parramatta Eels • Kiwi Ferns • New Zealand Vodafone Warriors • Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs

This Friday - Aotea Square

All Cast Stars for Downer NRL Auckland Nines

A “WHO’S WHO” of International Rugby League stars have now been confirmed for the fourth edition of the Downer NRL Auckland Nines at Eden Park starting Saturday.

To date, 48 Australian internationals; 44 Kiwi test players; 45 State of Origin stars and 68 Pacific Nation reps have appeared in the previous three editions of the tournament.

2016 Premiership winners, the Cronulla Sharks, have named six players who played in their historic 14-12 Grand Final win over the Melbourne Storm last October.

Here are nine players to watch over the 31-game extravaganza.

1: Johnathan Thurston

Halfback 33 years old - 292 first grade games - 36 State of Origin (QLD) - 37 tests

Incumbent Kangaroos halfback

Career Highlights:

- 4-time Daly M Medallist (record)
- 3-time Golden Boot Award (record) - World's Best Player
- 5-time State of Origin Man of the Match winner
- 10-time State of Origin winner
- 2-time NRL Premiership winner

2: Jarryd Hayne - Titans

Fullback 28 years old – 182 first grade games – 20 State of Origin (NSW) 16 tests

Former San Francisco 49ers NFL Running back

Career Highlights:

- 2-time Daly M Medallist
- 2013: World Cup winner
- 2009: Golden Boot Award - World's Best Player

3: Shaun Johnson - Warriors

Halfback 26 years old - 125 first grade games – 19 tests for NZ

Career Highlights:

- 2014: Golden Boot – World's Best player
- 2014: Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines – Tournament MVP

2014: Four Nations winner

2013: NRL All Stars

4: Jack Bird - Sharks

Centre 21 years old - 49 first grade games - 2 State of Origin (NSW)

Career Highlights:

2016: NRL Premiership winner

5: Benji Marshall - Broncos

Standoff 31 years old - 255 first grade games - 27 tests for NZ

Career Highlights:

- 2011: Standoff of the Year - Rugby League International Federation
- 2010: Rugby League World Golden Boot Award – World's Best Player

2010: Four Nations winner (captain)

2008: World Cup winner

2005: NRL Premiership winner (Tigers)

6: Josh Reynolds - Bulldogs

Standoff 27 years old - 121 first grade games - 4 State of Origin (NSW)

Career Highlights:

2014: NRL Premiership finalist

2012: NRL Premiership finalist

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7: Darius Boyd - Broncos

Winger 29 years old - 247 first grade games - 26 State of Origin (QLD) – 21 tests

Career Highlights:

- 2016: Four Nations Winner
- 2010: Premiership winner (Dragons)
- 2006: Premiership winner (Broncos)

9: Ruben Wiki - Warriors

Prop 44 years old – 311 first grade games – 55 tests

First New Zealander to 300 first grade games

Career Highlights:

- 2005: Tri-Nations winner (captain)
- 1994: NRL Premiership winner

8: Tom Burgess – Rabbitohs

Prop 24 years old – 70 first grade games – 13 tests for England

Career Highlights:

- 2014: NRL Premiership winner

Other Confirmed Names Include:

Eels players Bevan French, the top try and point scorer from the 2016 tournament and Corey Norman the 2016 MVP winner.

Plus, Warriors player Solomone Kata, who had the most tackle breaks, was the third highest try scorer, and made the third highest line breaks at the Nines last year.

Adam Blair (Broncos), Jordan Kahu (Broncos), Anthony Milford (Broncos), Sam Kasiano (Bulldogs), David Klemmer (Bulldogs), Kalifa Fai Fai Loa (Dragons), Tyron Frizell (Dragons), Josh Hoffman (Eels), James Tamou (Panthers), Blake Austin (Raiders) Aidan Sezer (Raiders), Aidan Guerra (Roosters), Chris Heighington (Sharks), Wade Graham (Sharks), Luke Lewis (Sharks), Gerald Beale (Sharks), Ken Bromwich (Storm), Elijah Taylor (Tigers), Kane Elgey (Titans), Daniel Vidot (Titans), Will Zillman (Titans), Ryan Hoffman (Warriors), Tui Lolohea (Warriors).

Downer NRL Auckland Nines Statistics

- All 16 NRL clubs together in Auckland
- 31 action packed games
- More speed! More tries! More fun!
- 9-players per team, 9-minute halves
- NZ \$2.6 million dollars + in prize money



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Life On the Ocean Wave

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)



THE AMERICA'S Cup has again been in the news lately, with stories inevitably telling a tale of controversy. The Auckland-based syndicate whose sail bears the name of a Dubai airline has apparently refused to sign an agreement which would clarify the rules for two more challenge series through to 2021. Just as predictably, Team New Zealand's actions were defended in the Auckland daily newspaper. Those overseas bullies are again picking on poor little Enzed. Not much has changed since I covered the tumultuous 2003 event for The Christchurch Press.

That was the one during which ex-pats Russell Coutts and Brad Butterworth were accused of treason for lifting the cup from Team New Zealand and depositing it on the mantelpiece of Swiss billionaire Ernesto Bertarelli. That it took almost three weeks to achieve was only because of Auckland's weather. It was either too calm or too windy for the boats to race. I lived all that time in a comfortable hotel opposite some pleasant rose gardens and each morning trundled down to the Viaduct media centre in quest of a fair breeze – and a story.

Alinghi, as the Swiss yacht was called, was simply too good for KZ-Whatever, as indicated by the damning 5-0 scoreline. And some of those “nils” were thoroughly embarrassing. On one occasion a bucket brigade was needed to avoid the fate of an earlier Australian challenger which sank without trace. I also recall the mast snapping and later a spinnaker pole breaking in other races, both obvious impediments to the chances of out-classed skipper Dean Barker and company enjoying a triumphant post-series ticker tape parade down Queen Street.

Some New Zealand sports teams have a need to blame others for poor preparation and performance. In 2003 Team New Zealand decided its own media was as traitorous as their countrymen aboard Alinghi. They especially had no sense of humour when a Wellington newspaper produced billboards on Auckland streets proclaiming the Cup was a non-event between “Alinghi and A Dinghy”. They imposed a media ban. Sensing his chance, Bertarelli paraded his New Zealand-recruited sailors to provide us with story lines to satisfy our editors.

Curiously, yachting is one of my favourite sports. I say curiously because it played no part in my West Coast upbringing, nor even entered my thoughts during my early years at The Press. But in 1969, when our sports editor was touring with the New Zealand cricket team, his deputy anointed me as the new yachting reporter. When we established that he was not joking, I presumed that I had done something to seriously annoy him and he was aware that I could not swim. Whatever, he did not bother asking the company to invest in a life jacket.

So there I was bobbing around on the Estuary of the Avon and Heathcote rivers or the often more boisterous waters of Lyttelton harbour, or sitting on the banks of the Waimakariri river, making notes about boats rounding buoys and getting to know the yachties of Canterbury. None of them were billionaires. In fact, quite a few of the Lyttelton types worked on the adjacent wharves. They enjoyed a beer, and a boat. Maybe it was a bit different down at the swanky Banks Peninsula Cruising Club, but I had little to do with those weekend admirals.

I watched in awe as a kid named Peter Lester sailed a tiny craft built by his father in their back yard on his way to winning national championships and was even more thrilled to be out on the waters off Takapuna in 1977 when he claimed the world OK dinghy title. Peter went from humble beginnings to become, and remain, an international authority on sailing and it is still a pleasure to hear him on radio and television. Back in 2003 he told me Russell Coutts then ranked alongside 1956 Olympic gold medallist Peter Mander as our greatest sailors.

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There are plenty of other memories of a life on the ocean wave, some forgettable. Such as a national championship in Nelson when on the first day, after a few beers the previous night and a greasy breakfast, I spent hours feeding the fish in Tasman Bay. The sympathetic race officials could not help. We were anchored for the duration of the race on the start-finish line. But back ashore a kindly family mentioned they owned a house on the hill -- and a powerful telescope. It was there I spent the rest of the week, unbeknown to head office in Christchurch.

I have had no involvement in yachting since leaving The Press and the newspaper, sadly, no longer reports on the sport at local or even national levels. The Olympics and America's Cup are covered from other parts of the world. Nevertheless, I watched as much live television as possible from the Rio regatta, fist-pumping the NZL crews home to another batch of medals. With more funding now available, our Olympic aspirants no longer sleep under their boats on foreign beaches -- but these young men and women have truly battled their way to the top.

In contrast, Team New Zealand has lost me. Four years ago I saw the America's Cup teams' smaller boats racing in Venice, not even knowing the event was on. But the big red sail with Emirates emblazoned on it brought no feelings of patriotism and few of the tourists lining the canal would have known it had anything to do with New Zealand. The cup designs do not look like yachts in the traditional sense. But there is one constant -- (now Sir) Russell Coutts continues to prove he is a significant step ahead of the team he left behind so many years ago.

Rugby League World Cup Education Resources

AS PART of the Rugby League World Cup 2017 legacy plan, NZRL has developed a resource that can be used by development officers (DO's) and teachers in primary and intermediate schools to grow awareness of rugby league and the special characteristics of its players.

Its purpose is to build awareness of rugby league and, specifically, the RLWC2017. The resource also plans to engage Years 4-6 in a social science programme and to recruit new players from schools into junior rugby league programmes.

The resource will consist of two sections:

1. RLWC2017

The objective is to educate primary/intermediate students about the tournament, to support the tournament's vision of entertaining the world, inspire communities and celebrate rugby league.

This content will only be available for 2017 and will be targeted at Years 1-8 students

2. A social science resource

Through its current and past players, rugby league

will create learning modules for students, focusing on the importance of leadership, resilience and well-being, beginning the Leaguewise message.

The programme will be delivered by teachers in class and supported by DO's out of class, through practical league sessions. It will culminate with a league festival day, introducing them to their local junior league programme.

This resource is designed to be in schools for three years, following students from Years 4-6.

The goal of the resource is to grow the game by creating classroom learning opportunities, building the profile of the Rugby League World Cup 2017 and introducing more players to rugby league. To register interest in the new RLWC2017 classroom resource, contact us at rlwc2017@nzrl.co.nz.



THE WORLD'S BEST ARE COMING TO NZ!

RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2017



NEW ZEALAND WILL HOST THE **RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP IN 2017**

AND YOUR SCHOOL CAN SHARE IN THE
FUN WITH OUR CLASSROOM IDEAS!

The following **FREE** Rugby League resources
will be available for all schools:

- **RESOURCE CARDS** based on the themes of Resilience, Well-being and Leadership (years 4-6)
- **TOURNAMENT BOOKLET** with fun activities related to the Rugby League World Cup 2017

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST AND
BE IN TO WIN
A CLASS TRIP TO YOUR
NEAREST RLWC2017 MATCH!

Conditions apply | Registrations close 1 April 2017

Register your name, school
and contact details at
rlwc2017@nzrl.co.nz



Any questions, contact Kirsty Sharp (kirsty.sharp@nzrl.co.nz).
For more information on the tournament, visit RLWC2017.com.
Rugby League World Cup 2017 • 27 October - 2 December 2017

Turn over for two activities to get you started ...





By Miles Davis

Serena Williams

Serena Williams during the ASB Classic WTA Womens Tournament Day 3.

Photo www.photosport.nz

THERE IS no way I can say this without upsetting many people but it needs to be said. Serena Williams is one of the greatest FEMALE athletes ever. There is no doubt that women have been oppressed, suppressed and unfairly discriminated against for thousands of years. The pendulum of life desperately needed to swing majorly in their direction in order to restore parity and justice. Now the pendulum in certain areas has swung too far and honesty has been a casualty. There is a basic fact of genetics that by and large men are stronger and faster than women. This means that in most sports they are able to compete at a more intense and proficient level. Williams insists that she should be referred to as one of the greatest athletes ever rather than categorised in the female section. How can she be one of the greatest athletes ever and yet not even in the top 100 in the history of her own sport? She may be able to beat some men but it is doubtful whether she could beat any of the current top 20 let alone many of the previous generations of champions.

Women should have the opportunity to participate in sport just as much as men. They should be given access to the same facilities and opportunities as men but to be afforded the same status in terms of athleticism without competing in the same competition as the men is ridiculous. There are examples of a level playing field where women compete with men and excel. The equine sports being one of them with female jockeys and showjumpers being more than capable of holding their own or besting their male counterparts. But in most sports this is not the case and to believe differently is delusional and adds no value to society.

I would have thought Williams would have been grateful to have got away with one of the biggest inequalities in sport – getting the same prize-money as men in Grand Slam events. The 3 sets versus 5 sets argument has some merit but the undoubted superior quality and marketability of the men's game means that men are being under-valued if they are paid the same as women. At Grand Slam events the women's game leverages off the men's game. I guarantee you if they were held as separate events the women's game would struggle to attract the same income and interest as the men's. That is not to say women's tennis is not a marketable commodity just that it is not as marketable as the men's. Anyone who watched the 2 men's semi-finals in Melbourne as compared to the women's equivalent would understand that to be an undeniable truth.

If women do the same job as a man they should be paid the same wage and for that not to happen is a disgrace. But to demand equal status in sports where they are clearly inferior is taking liberties and needs to stop.

Women are much better at many things in life than men but most sports are not one of them.

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Personally Signed by
Ruben Wiki**



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edition. Only 100
have been produced!**

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To enter: YOU MUST subscribe to
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Then post a stamped addressed
envelope with your name, address, phone
number and email to the
address on the left.

Winner will be drawn on 8/02/17



By Miles Davis

Ruben Wiki

Ruben Wiki puts on the jersey for the Warriors for the 2017 NRL Auckland Nines. Photo www.photosport.nz

THERE WERE some eyebrows raised in rugby league circles when a 44 year old who had retired in 2008 was named as captain of the Warriors side to contest the Downer NRL 9's. But Ruben James Wiki is no ordinary man.

As a 19 year old he left the comforting embrace of Otahuhu rugby league to join the Canberra Raiders. He soon forced his way into the starting line-up forming a lethal midfield partnership with Australian and Queensland legend Mal Meninga. After battering the living daylights out of the backline for several years, Wiki moved himself into the front row where he proved to be equally explosive and confrontational. After 224 games with the Raiders he moved back to his home city of Auckland to join up with the Warriors where he played another 87 games making him a member of the NRL's exclusive 300plus club (the most by any New Zealander).

While he was forging a legendary club career Wiki was also setting the International scene alight. His 55 games for the Kiwis is a record and also place him 2nd behind Darren Lockyer for all-time international caps. He captained the side in 18 of those tests including one of the greatest results in Kiwi rugby league history, the 24-0 demolishing of Australia in the final of the 2005 Tri-Nations.

But what about his fitness I hear you ask? Wiki is renowned for his dedicated approach to keeping in shape and upskilled himself on retirement eventually becoming the Warriors strength and conditioning coach in 2012. He has been putting in extra hours at

the Warriors gym to ensure he is in the best possible shape and has impressed many of the younger members of the squad with his appetite for hard work.

Warriors coach Stephen Kearney is no mug and had no qualms when selecting him to represent the Warriors in the high-profile season-opening event. Once he was in the squad giving him the captaincy was a no-brainer for Kearney "Having selected him to make his comeback it was natural to make him captain. He's a leader whatever he does and has so much mana. I can't wait to see him running out with the lads next week and I'm sure everyone else feels the same."

His coach is more than happy but what about the man himself? "It was a huge buzz when Mooks (Kearney) asked me. I might have dropped the hint in the past that I'd like to have a go, especially when guys like Brad Fittler and Steve Menzies were picked, but I didn't think it would happen."

Before he was able to take up the challenge he still had to get clearance from the whanau "It took me a while, I had to get permission from the three people important in my life. I went with my daughter's answer which was 'YOLO (You Only Live Once)'.

So for those whippersnappers on opposition sides who feel like taking on the 'old man' in the middle of Eden Park this weekend I have a message - Underestimate him at your peril.



IT WAS a privilege to watch the final of the Australian Open Mens Tennis on Sunday night. It was a magnificent match and something many will remember for a long time. Two superb athletes, who played the game very hard, but with respect for their opponent. Although English is not their native tongue, they both speak it well and after the match, they spoke with humility and passion. I hope our Australian player, Nick Kyrgios, was watching.

Now 35, Federer was magnificent in winning his fifth Australian Open and 18th Grand Slam title. As winners, both Federer and Serena Williams, will collect \$2.67 million US dollars each from the total tournament prizemoney of \$37 million US. Like Federer, Serena is 35 and Saturday's win in the final against her sister Venus, was her seventh Australian title and her 23rd Grand Slam win. She now has won over \$85 million US in prizemoney, while Federer has cracked the \$100 million US in prizemoney. Both have probably earned this amount again and more in endorsements etc. Federer was playing his 100th match in Australian Opens in Sunday's final.

I would like to see the TV rating figures for the Federer-Nadal game. They will not only be huge in our part of the globe, but will be big worldwide, as the clash attracted attention everywhere. No matter what time of the day or night it was, people would have had their TVs on regardless of where they lived. The commentators continually referred to the electric atmosphere and they were right. You could feel it at home. Australia and Melbourne Storm captain, Cameron Smith, was a keen spectator at Rod Laver arena. Now 78, Laver was at the match. Born in Rockhampton Queensland, he has live in America for many years. He was at the game on Sunday and the way he was revered and respected by both Federer and Nadal during the after-match speeches was something to remember. They both may be among the world's best athletes but the history of the game and the players before them, obviously means a lot to both men.

Before I leave the tennis, I must mention the ages of many of the finalists. Federer is 35 and his opponent, Nadal, 30, while in the Women's final Serena 35, defeated her older sister, Venus, 37. In the Mixed Doubles final, Abigail Spears, 35 and her partner, Juan Cabal won the Championship, while in the Men's Doubles final, the twin Bryan brothers, Bob and Mike, both 38, were beaten by Australia's John

Peers and Henri Kontinen from Finland.

New Zealand now lead the three match Hadlee-Chappell (as they say in New Zealand) series by one to nothing but 27 year old Perth-born Marcus Stoinis, certainly had the Kiwis worried. He played a magnificent innings in just his second ODI game for Australia with his 146 not out coming from 117 balls and including 11 sixes and nine fours. That is over one hundred in boundaries. Add to that his three wickets for 49, including 25 dot balls from the 60 balls he bowled and it is easy to see what an impact he had at Eden Park.

With six wickets down for just 67, the Aussies looked down and out. But no-one counted on Stoinis. He took the Australians to within seven runs of an unlikely victory. Aussie fans will be hoping for better things at Napier on Thursday and Wellington on Sunday.

Still on cricket, Kiwi, Sue Bates, has made a great impression in the recently completed Women's Big Bash League. As captain of the Perth Scorchers, she led her side to the final where they were defeated narrowly by the Sydney Sixers, Bates scored 310 runs with a strike rate of 92.5 and took 13 wickets with an economy rate of 6.6 runs per over. As captain, she impressed both her team-mates and the local supporters.

I see there is a third Trbojevic on the way up at Manly. Tom, 22, and Jake, 20, have already made their mark on the NRL scene but a third brother, Ben, is doing well with the Manly Harold Matthews side. Only 15, Ben was invited to the recent NSW under 16s Origin Pathways Camp. He can handle second row or lock and plays with the Mona Vale club in the Manly junior League.

In a Sydney Sunday newspaper, it was reported that the Wests Tigers have given a three year deal worth \$1.3 million to an 18 year old who is yet to play first grade. He is Mosese Suli and the Tigers wanted to retain him on their books. It was said that he rejected good offers from the Storm and the Bulldogs to stay with the Tigers. A talented centre, Suli will probably play with his club in this week's Auckland Nines. Still only 18, Suli played just two NYC games for the Tigers last season in the easy wins over the Storm and the Raiders. He scored a try in both matches.



By Ben Francis



Kiwi Miguel Porteous Claims X Games SuperPipe Silver Medal

Nico Porteous, Russ Henshaw and Miguel Porteous (right) pose for a portrait in Wanaka. Photo from www.redbullcontentpool.com

LITTLE KNOWN Christchurch teenager Miguel Porteous has pulled off a remarkable achievement at the X Games in Aspen, Colorado over the weekend.

Porteous, was a late inclusion in the Men's Ski SuperPipe field after American Kyle Smaine pulled out with injury and the 17-year old made the most of the opportunity by winning Silver in the final.

Porteous surprised the field by scoring 81.00 in his final run to clinch second place. He finished 3.66 points behind American Aaron Blunk.

"I just can't really fathom it right now, it's unbelievable," said Porteous.

"I was excited to get a chance to compete. My goal was just to put a run down in the X Games environment which is unlike anything I've experienced before."

A field of 11 struggled in icy conditions, with only one competitor landing a full run in the first of two rounds. Porteous scored 30.33 in his first run.

"I wasn't really in the right head space to start with," said Porteous.

"I was still feeling a little bit of disbelief about being there and it was cold. After the first run I got back to the top of the pipe and just tried to relax. I dance around a bit and listened to some Billy Idol before I dropped in."

Porteous was the youngest competing in the field and improved on his 11th place finish at the same event last year. What made his second place finish more impressive was the fact Porteous was competing in a cast after breaking his wrist last month.

If you think Miguel is impressive you should check out his younger brother Nico.

The 15-year is the youngest ever and only Kiwi to land a triple cork 1440, which he achieved when he was only 14. Nico is also sponsored by Red Bull.

Both Miguel and Nico are defiantly ones to watch for the future and both are currently on track to compete at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea.

If you would like to see Porteous' final run, you can click the link below

<https://youtu.be/vZcQD6nQpmc> - Click here!

Thank God Roger Federer didn't listen to his critics!

By John Deaker



LAST WEEK I wrote about how inspirational Ruben Wiki is to me as a person, even before he steps on the field to make his rugby league comeback this week.

In regards to sportspeople's legacies I wrote: 'Everyone has different opinions on comebacks or great sportspeople having a crack at fresh challenges. One consistent theme I often hear voiced is that athletes are risking or even destroying their legacy. Sometimes people say this so critically and aggressively you'd think it was THEIR legacy!'

Another type of person that I didn't specifically highlight in the article was people like Roger Federer: ageing athletes that don't retain the same consistent phenomenal success they had at the peak of their powers and therefore seem to attract all sorts of people calling for them to retire. Thank God Federer didn't listen to the great number of people who said he should retire; the world would have been denied a memorable sporting occasion at the weekend as he beat Rafael Nadal in 5 sets to secure the Australian Open, his 18th Grand Slam tennis title. Federer's last Grand Slam victory prior to the weekend was in 2012 when he won Wimbledon.

Federer is 35 years old and even if he hadn't won another Grand Slam the fact remains that it's still his right to keep playing the sport he clearly loves. He's not only known for the beauty of his strokes and movement around the court, he's also renowned for being a great ambassador for tennis. That also overlooks the fact that before his performance at the weekend he was still earning huge money out of the game through prizemoney and endorsements.

The person that often springs to my mind when people talk of the need to 'protect legacies' is 2005 US Golf Open Champion Michael Campbell. If many New Zealanders had their way he'd have retired from golf years ago as he's struggled to produce performances anything like the one he did at Pinehurst in 2005. Numerous calls have come for his retirement despite the fact that being a professional golfer is often singled out as being the profession that most men would love to be pursuing.

Watching Federer defy many of his critics at the Australian Open I couldn't help but think of Tiger Woods. He is another man who many people have said should retire to protect his legacy. Like all of us who watched were lucky enough to watch a classic sporting clash I'm sure Woods will take inspiration from seeing what Federer was able to achieve at the weekend.



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Waitara Bears

By John & Terri

WITH 2017 season approaching the WAITARA Rugby League 'BEARS' are anticipating an exciting year.

The development of a multi sports complex at Clifton Park has the town buzzing.

Foundations have been laid for the six million dollar build, which will include a full sized gymnastics facility and covered netball, basketball and tennis courts. Negotiations are ongoing with the Waitara Rugby League club as to further upgrades to their present facilities. This will certainly be appreciated by the loyal 'Bears' supporters.

Preseason is underway and our juniors muster have started.

We wish all clubs a happy new year and a prosperous season.

Grrrrrrrr-H4TB. Honey for the Bears.

Construction of the Waitara Sports facilities is under way. The 'Bears Clubroom' is on the back left. The old Clifton Bowling club on the right. The gymnastic facility will be the first constructed and link into the two mentioned clubs.





Saturday 4 Feb 7:30pm

THE MAN COMES AROUND

Peter Caulton's acoustic Johnny Cash Tribute show

\$15

Come along for a great night out



Tickets available from the club on 372 7108 or txt 021 771 132
Get in early...tickets are limited
Bat open at 4pm
A special country themed menu will be on sale from 6pm...from the Bowlers Restaurant. Prize for the best dressed country outfit raffles available.

Waiheke Bowling Club 2 Marama Ave, Surfdale

SPECIAL THANKS TO FULLERS
for their sponsorship for this tournament

Fullers Bowling Tournament

Saturday 4 February

Single entry in by Friday 6pm
All bowlers welcome
Call 021 805 598 for details

9:30am start



Waiheke Bowling and Cosmopolitan Club
KNOCK OUT DARTS TOURNAMENT

Sponsored by Margray Sheetmetals NZ Ltd

Saturday 18 February

3pm

Limited to first 30 paid entries
1st prize \$300

Prizes for highest start / finish / first 180
All players - straight start / double finish / 301 / best of 3 games
Knock out tournament with final two playing
For 1st prize - 501 / best of 5 games
Bowlers Restaurant open at 6pm - bar open at 3pm

Phone Club 372 7108 or Marg 021 771 132 to enter

entry fee \$10



In Auckland this weekend and not going to the Downer NRL Auckland Nines?

Then what about a visit to beautiful Waiheke Island? Make a day of it, play bowls during the day then see a great show that night!

NOTE ! EVENT DATE

FORMER ALL BLACK LEGEND



**PAT WALSH
MEMORIAL
BOWLS
TOURNAMENT**



***BRIDGE PARK BOWLING CLUB
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SUNDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2017

9.30am START

**OPEN TO FIRST 32 TEAMS
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MARK WALSH 021 959 110 - DICK GARRATT 278 6591 / 0274 901 237

Reader Mail



CHEERS BUTCH - love the Jersey - Dave Saunders



BUTCH, AS you can see I am in pre-season Warriors supporter training.

Top of Mt Maunganui, **Rob**

Rob, time you updated your Vodafone Warriors gear mate - Butch



BUTCH THANKS for the nines tickets. Might see you there.

Russell Martin



STOCKED TO win the Downer NRL Auckland Nines tickets. Ill be driving up from Wellington.

Love the newsletters.

Fats



HI. JUST wanted to say a huge thank you for the NZ Warriors Heritage jersey I won for my son Hunter. He absolutely loves it.

Thanks again. Shayne Kyle

AND GO THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

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



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See all the latest blockbusters with 2 for 1 movie vouchers, available at over 40 cinemas nationwide. You'll also get the opportunity to enter exclusive competitions. Sweet!



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Access NZ's hottest gigs this summer with exclusive presales, ticket deals and money can't buy experiences with kiwi and international artists - like Ellie Goulding or Rudimental.



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Check your latest rewards at vodafone.co.nz/ff or use the My Vodafone App now.

More Reader Mail

Kia Ora Sir Butch!

APOLOGIES FOR the delay in getting the winning photo through to you . . let's just say that teenagers seem to speak a completely different language

I received a call from you on Monday night whilst driving home from work so I pulled over on Savill Dr (in Mangere) to hear your dulcet tones (yes, it is true that you are not at 100% volume all of the time)

What a coincidence that it leads on to Rosella Rd where your first shop was located

I had won a Warriors NRL 9's jersey and you hoped that the sizing would be OK as it was a very popular competition and if I could send in a picture that would be great

I continued on my journey home (to the Otara Mansion District) and lo and behold, there was the package containing the jersey, size XL (or size "kiss love" as we call it in Southside)

The good news is that XL fit me like a glove so I started showing it off to my resident teenage-mutant-ninja-giants (no longer turtles I'm afraid)

The tried to out-jersey me with their offerings, my daughter Rionne with her AGGS Basketball singlet and my son Devlyn with his All Blacks jersey

Needless to say, the Warriors NRL 9's jersey and the Rugby League World Cup pin for 2017 trumped their valiant efforts

Once again, than you to you and the Newsletter team

Love your work Sir Butch

Go the Otara Scorpions and go the Mighty Vodafone Warriors!

Regards

Paul Papa and Whanau

P.S. And yes, Mrs Papa was stoked with the jersey when she saw it as well!



Rionne Myself and Devlyn

I got this request last week and am more than happy to support. I posted some stamps the next day - Butch

WITH ALL those postal competitions you run throughout the season I was just wondering if you would be able to help the hearing dogs NZ out with all the used stamps you get.

They are trying to raise funds by collecting NZ and international stamps.

My wife will be getting a hearing dog the week after the nines tournament so I am trying to see if I can help them out in any way as these dogs cost around \$30,000 each to train.

I have attached their information, so if you can send your used stamps to them in New Plymouth or alternatively I can collect them after a game near the end of the season whichever is easier.

Thanks, Steve

If you have any old stamps or a collection that you would like to donate to a charity, Hearing Dogs are looking for your help.

We need your Stamps!



Hearing Dogs
www.hearingdogs.org.nz

We are in need of stamps to raise funds - please help us to help others by sending your stamps to:
Hearing Dogs New Zealand
PO Box 8117, New Plymouth 4342
Or drop them out to the office at: 7 Hydro Road, New Plymouth

Sir Peter Leitch Lounge in Hamilton

**Vodafone Warriors
VS
St. George Illawarra Dragons**

Fri 19 May 2017 8:00pm

Be entertained by the one and only Sir Peter Leitch QSM, the 19th Vodafone Warrior. Located on level three of the Brian Perry Stand, the Sir Peter Leitch Lounge gives you the opportunity to enjoy pre and post-match hospitality with covered grandstand seating to take in the match. Your ticket includes a delicious carvery and drink on arrival along with access to your own private bar.

Package includes:

- Hosted by Sir Peter Leitch – the 19th Vodafone Warrior
- Exclusive access to the Sir Peter Leitch Lounge
- Covered grandstand seating
- Buffet style carvery
- Complimentary drink on arrival and cash bar facilities
- Special guests, post-match interviews and live entertainment

Get Your Tickets Now!

<http://bit.ly/2kJ7Hdu>



Steve McNamara and Norm



Steve McNamara and Peter

VODAFONE WARRIORS Asst coach Steve McNamara was on Waiheke Island over the weekend, he took the time to pop in and see two good Rugby League men who have been battling bad health recently. Norm Stephens who has coached the junior Kiwis and also some local clubs, he has given his life to league. Also Peter Vears who was a trainer, he started his career at Waitemata Rugby League Club (where he is a life member) but achieved his success at Glenora Bears helping the team to win two Foxes and a Lion Red Cup. If you know these guys you can give them a ring Norm 09 3727533 and Peter on 09 3726425. I'm sure they would love to hear from you.

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The Newsletter Team

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

- Sir Peter Leitch** - Editor
- David Kemeys** - Editor at Large
- Hayden Woodhead** - Graphic Designer
- Stephan Maier** - Distribution

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