

VODAFONE



Sir Peter Leitch Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter

24th May 2017

#171

Vodafone Warriors vs Dragons in Hamilton



Ben Matulino scores a try.



Issac Luke looks to pass.



Issac Luke tackles Hame Sele.



Shaun Johnson kicks.

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz

**PINK
SHIRT
DAY '17**

Friday 26 May

 **Mental Health Foundation**
mauri tū, mauri ora OF NEW ZEALAND

SPEAK UP
Stand together
**STOP
BULLYING**

Our website is full of bright pink material to either download or order for free to display around the office or classroom. This includes stickers and a poster you can download/print. You can find these things here: <https://www.pinkshirtday.org.nz/swag/>.

You can buy our official Pink Shirt Day t-shirts from Mr Vintage. They are \$25 and 25% of each sale goes towards the Pink Shirt Day campaign – they also do discounts for bulk orders: <http://www.mrvintage.co.nz/collections/charitee/pink-shirt-day-2017.html>.

In terms of Pink Shirt Day activities, download one of our toolkits and you'll find some inspiration: <https://www.pinkshirtday.org.nz/take-action/>. Inside are ideas such as: Displaying the 'Getting Help and Advice' information sheet around the office for your colleagues, create a 'compliments box' in your classroom, contact your local media so they know what you're doing, or simply wear pink and upload your photos to your social media sites (make sure you use our hashtag #PinkShirtDayNZ).

Here are some fundraising ideas:

1. Hold a disco or advertise a community pink Zumba class and donate the proceeds.
2. A morning tea, pink drinks or a sausage sizzle for your staff and charge a donation.
3. A gold coin donation pink booth! Braid hair, paint nails and have pink props for selfies.
4. Sell pink cupcakes, biscuits, strawberry milkshakes or flowers and donate the proceeds.

Celebrities Taking Part in #PinkShirtDayNZ: Valerie Adams, Mike McRoberts, players from the Silver Ferns, Julia & Libby, Urzila Carlson, Sir Peter Leitch and the Shortland Street cast just to name a few!

Join these celebs and upload YOUR photos and videos with the hashtag #PinkShirtDayNZ so we can see it and share it on our pages.



Mrs Cottrell the librarian at Red Beach School and Constable Bryan (from Bryan and Bobby) get the Red Beach lunchtime library club ready for #pinkshirtdaynz this Friday. The book Anne Fine is all about building resilience and stopping bullying at school.

PINKSHIRTDAY.ORG.NZ



Ben Matulino runs out with kids.



Club members waiting for the team above the tunnel.



Fans wearing heritage jersey.



Vodafone Warriors supporter waiting for the team to run out.



Young fans with sign.



Vodafone Warriors fan and Dragons fan.



Simon Mannering catching up with his Kiwis teammate



In the Waikato!

Sir Peter Leitch Club In Hamilton!



Allan Rhind ex West Coaster living in Hamilton wins the \$50 Tab ticket on Bodene Thompson for 1st try scorer.



An Invercargill accounting firm were in Hamilton for the weekend.



Andrew O'Beirne with Sir Peter.



Angela Taverner and Sir Peter with another birthday boy Wayne.



Barbara Collett from Whangamata receives a great birthday package from Sir Peter.



Brodie from the TVNZ Breakfast Show with Sir Peter.



Grant Wilson from Te Rapa Wholesale Cars gets a Selley's BBQ cleaner.



Heather Cave, Dragons supporter, gave the Butcher hell after the game!



Justin Morgan gave us a preview of the game. Justin is an ex Warrior and assistant coach, Kiwi assistant coach, NRL and Super League player, coach in Super league and Welsh international.



Ken Maumalu with Sir Peter.



Linda Dick from Invercargill wins a signed Warriors Heritage jersey.



Opera singer Angela Taverner sings Alwin a happy 50th birthday.

Sir Peter Leitch Club In Hamilton!



Peter and Tony Hynes from Paroa on the West Coast talks with Sir Peter..



Phil Coffin ex All Black. Member of the 1996 tour of South Africa.



Rick Robinson from Levin surprised his wife Leanna with a trip to Hamilton..



Tawera Nikau speaks with Tony Feasey.



Mike Langley (chairperson of the Waikato branch of the Child Cancer foundation), Jerry Pickford, Vince Tuioti. Jerry donated his entrance to World Cup Game to Vince.



Abby Kereama, Aaron Kereama, Sir Peter, Jerry Pickford, Aisling Potter, Darryl Morris & Daisy Morris.



FOR THE third consecutive year Waikato Child Cancer Foundation fathers attended a Vodafone Warriors match. For the past two years fathers have attended games at Mt Smart, this year Waikato CCF fathers attended the game at FMG Stadium, Hamilton. Fathers frequented the Sir Peter Leitch Lounge prior to the match.

Attending a Warriors game gives Child Cancer fathers an opportunity to interact with other fathers who have children on the cancer journey. Fathers who attended have children at all different stages of their journey, some of the children are in treatment, some are post treatment, some of the fathers are bereaved parents. Catching up with each other, many meeting each other for the first time gives fathers hope and belief that their children will make it successfully through this horrific journey. For bereaved fathers this environment gives comfort and support with other bereaved Dads. A Warriors game provides a perfect platform for fathers to kick back in a positive environment that promotes conversation between usually reserved Dads.

Sir Peter Leitch hosted the twenty fathers magnificently and made CCF fathers feel welcome and special through his acknowledgement and gifts.

Our deepest thanks to Sir Peter and the Vodafone Warriors for hosting our Waikato Child Cancer Foundation fathers. - Vince Tuioti



Road Trip Blues

By David Kemeys

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



SURELY IT could not be as bad as the capitulation against Penrith? Time to show the boys some love and front up and drive to Hamilton like a real fan.

Well at least I can say on the positive side that I am firmly convinced there are now only two areas we need to focus on to improve markedly.

Attack and defence.

The site of Rusty Packer lifting his arms aloft on the final whistle to celebrate a victory was galling.

Remember this is a Dragons side that most expected to struggle.

So how can they be going great guns, while the Warriors, a side most tipped to be in the reckoning, be going like, well, the Warriors we are so familiar with?

Eighty minutes of misery in Hamilton and a good chunk of the crowd of 11,000 or so had already done the Warrior shuffle and headed for the exits.

You are just left scratching your head.

At least I got a laugh from former defence coach Justin Morgan, who was watching the game from a seat in front of me, by shouting: Bring back Justin Morgan, the defence is a shambles.

Crushed after a defensive showing that was at best inadequate, and at worst, pitiful.

Apparently we missed 57 tackles. I'll take that as accurate because I certainly wasn't counting.

So we were lucky in fact not to get belted worse than we did with that lack of defensive spine.

It is also depressingly familiar, a mountain to climb from here to make the finals.

And on that showing, as desperate as I am to find a positive, it is hard to believe the finals fairy is going to be visiting Mt Smart this year.

We got beat up in the forwards, and we got beat up in the backs. The Dragons off-loaded at will but more than anything, they played like a team.

Their support play was outstanding, they looked hungry, and they got about their work like professional NRL players.

That we could do that, surely it's not too much to ask.

There was a positive, young winger Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad, bagging a double. Even then it was balanced by some pretty poor defensive reads, four tries to the Dragons down his side.

It's hard to blame him for that though, when the forwards were so poor.

Our lack of form is a, and I use the word reluctantly, "concern", but coach Stephen Kearney has resisted the urge to wield the axe, making few changes – much to a lot of people's surprise, including mine.

Kearney has made a couple of slight changes for the Broncos on Saturday night.

Simon Mannering is back, thank heavens for that.

James Gavet is back in the starting line-up while Albert Vete is on the interchange bench.

Jacob Lillyman is unavailable on Queensland Origin duty, but prop Charlie Gubb is out.

Having listened to the callers after Penrith pillory the Warriors, it was heartbreaking to hear it all again. Please, just be the side that repelled the Roosters a few weeks ago.

I'm tired of square one.

That's Enough Whinging

Yeah we are going like busted cats and during the week one radio host ventured the opinion that the Warriors get too much love, somehow the loyalty fans show now meaningless to the players.

To which I would say, bollocks.

I am a member of the Butcher's camp on this one. Through thick and thin.

And I do not for minute believe that the players don't hurt just as much as us long-suffering fans when we lose.

Kearney has called for more commitment as a collective, a call backed up by Ryan Hoffman, who said: "We need 17 blokes committed every weekend. We as leaders, we've got to lead better, but it's all got to start with our actions."

It isn't good enough at the moment. But just like us, Hoffman knows there is potential to do a whole heap better. It's just that us fans are getting a bit sick of waiting for the potential to be realised.

"We know we can turn it around, it's just a matter of doing it," the Hoff said.

Budge Is In My Camp

League writer Dale Budge wrote another good piece after the Dragons, but he will be disappointed, because he called for changes.

Budge used the word clueless, said confidence must be down, and urged Kearney to make changes.

According to Budge, who winds me up no end by being proved right way too often, other than Gavet, there's no go-forward. He was damning of our one-out running, and lack of punch.

That, he says, is the root of the problem.

And the bald bard is rapidly running out of patience with Isaac Luke, calling him "a giant waste of money", although conceding his game needs a dominant pack.

He was scathing too about Shaun Johnson, saying he was trying hard – "maybe too hard".

Kieran Foran didn't escape either, slated for not taking more control of last tackle options when we are struggling – which is all the time.

Me and Budge would both argue throw out all the plans and get some boppers. Concentrating on replacing Foran won't solve anything if we continue to have a forward pack that can't dominate.

Matt Is A Man Of Action

Now Matt Loader and his family live in Sydney, and they are big Warriors supporters, but also Reserve grade fans, who try and get to those games too.

Matt is not happy the Reserve boys get so little publicity so he decided to do something about it, setting up his own Facebook page featuring match reports to let other fans know there is more to the club than first grade.

Good on him. He has had excellent feedback since he's been doing it. Check it out under the alias Fan In The Stand. Here is the link: <https://www.facebook.com/FanInTheStand/?ref=bookmarks>

Well Done Ben

I have not always been Ben Matulino's biggest fan, often finding him inconsistent, but he brought up 200 NRL games for us against the Dragons.

Credit where it is due, that is a hell of an achievement.

Matulino leaves for the Tigers next year, and he was still good enough to score a great try on Friday.

What most forget is that Ben became our first NYC graduate to reach 100, then 150 NRL games, and he's also been our player of the year in 2012 and 2015.

Red Faces All Round

Speaking of props, James Gavet says Penrith and the Dragons were "pretty embarrassing".

Gavet has become a bit of a crowd favourite and at least he fronted after the Dragons.

"It feels like everything is a bit frantic at the moment. If we can knuckle down on those simple small details, things you learn in junior footy like locking up the ball, we can stay in the contest."

Gavet has inked a new deal to the end of 2019, and we have finally announced Titans forward Leivaha Pulu is on his way to Mt Smart too, signing for the next three seasons.

Aussies Put The Boot In

Just when you thought it could not get any worse, along come the Daily Telegraph's Phil Rothfield and the Courier-Mail's Mike Coleman calling for the Warriors to be axed. You could read what they said if I could be bothered to put the link in, but I can't.

Paraphrased, it's that no one watches us on TV in Oz, that with RTS, Foran, Luke and Johnson, we should be better than we are, and that there are no excuses.

I can't remember which one it was, but one of them called the entire history of our club a "worthless experiment".

Two words – Newcastle Knights.

NRL Boss To The Rescue

NRL CEO Todd Greenberg has defended us, saying we are here to stay.

"Every team has its highs and lows and we would all like to see the Warriors performing at their best. I have no doubt that will happen."

Steady on Todd, you are in danger of becoming an Aussie with something sensible to say.

Back To The Future?

The latest name linked to the Warriors is our former stand-off James Maloney's.

Maloney did a three-year stint with us, and has won titles since with the Roosters and Sharks.

He has a year to run on his contract and the Sharks are balking at an upgrade.

So the Sharks, who have let Jack Bird go, are going to let Maloney come to Mt Smart are they?

Just what we need, the NRL's most penalised player - 21 so far this year.

Funnily enough I am waiting for the club to offer me a contract too.

No You Can't Go...

Tuimoala Lolohea is going nowhere until we sign a replacement.

He has offers with the Tigers, Cowboys and Raiders, and clearly isn't wanted at Mt Smart, but recruitment and development manager Tony Iro says we are out shopping but the deadline to bring in a player is June 30 and that any deal would basically mean not only agreeing terms with a new player, but them getting an early release from their own club too.

More on the next page...

Our Thoughts Go Out to Rugby League Good Guy

- **Bill Whitehead QSM:** Bill is in ward 24 of Christchurch Hospital after suffering a stroke. Bill will hopefully soon be heading to Foe Burwood Hospital for rehabilitation. We wish him a speedy recovery. Get well soon Rugby League Bill!

Lillyman Gets Origin Call

Reward for Jacob Lillyman, picked in the Queensland State of Origin side. He cops endless criticism, and to be fair he is a bit one-dimensional, but he's still more consistent than the rest of our lot.

Queensland team: Darius Boyd, Corey Oates, Will Chambers, Justin O'Neill, Dane Gagai, Milford, Cooper Cronk, Dylan Napa, Cameron Smith (c), Nate Myles, Josh Papalii, Matt Gillett, Josh McGuire. Interchange: Michael Morgan, Sam Thaiday, Aidan Guerra, Lillyman. 18th man: Thurston.

NSW team: Who cares?

Vodafone Signs Rugby Deal

News Vodafone is teaming up with the All Blacks seems to have made some assume the telecommunications giant is ditching the Vodafone Warriors. Not so.

The deal with rugby is Vodafone becoming a comms partner.

Vodafone is committed to us until the end of next year and you can be certain our boss Jim Doyle stays in regular touch with our naming rights sponsor.

The Warriors were working on an app with Vodafone but it went on hold during the proposed Sky-Vodafone merger, which of course did not go ahead.

Now Vodafone has signed a four-year deal with New Zealand Rugby, part of which will see it power a new All Blacks app, which should be up and running ahead of the Lions tour.

Rugby fans at live games will be able to watch highlights from different camera angles.

One media report said Sky might be a bit nervous though because by the time TV rights for rugby next come up three-quarters of the country will be able to stream live sport on fibre internet.

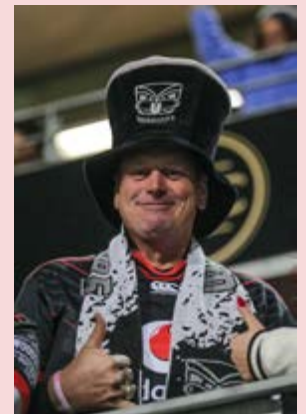
Maybe New Zealand Rugby won't even need a traditional broadcaster.

Graeme's Got It!

I've decided to give the last word to Graeme Lee. Never heard of him? He's the bloke with the Warriors Proud sign, who always wears a big top hat. There was a good piece on him online about being a fan, a true fan, one of the people Peter is always banging on about.

Lee travels from Tauranga for all the games and said something I wholeheartedly agree with.

"As long as my team goes out there and gives it a solid crack, that is all I can ask for."



Vodafone Warriors v Brisbane Broncos THIS Saturday NIGHT AT Mt Smart Stadium

Gates Open: 3.00pm

NYC Kick Off: 3.15pm

ISP Kick Off: 5.10pm

NRL Kick Off: 8.00pm





Mannering Back for Broncos

by Richard Becht

SIMON MANNERING is back from injury, James Gavet returns to the starting line-up and Albert Vete is named on the bench for the Vodafone Warriors' 12th-round NRL match against Brisbane at Mount Smart Stadium on Saturday night (7.30pm kick-off; match day sponsor: Canterbury of New Zealand).

This is the Vodafone Warriors' 2017 heritage match which will see the team bedecked in a special Canterbury of New Zealand jersey – the 'Pacific Warrior' – as the club pays homage to its Pasifika players past and present.

This will be the 39th encounter since the original Auckland Warriors made their debut against the Broncos on March 10, 1995.

Fittingly it was against Brisbane that the 30-year-old Mannering played his first NRL game on June 26, 2005, the 10th anniversary match between the two foes.

Mannering is back from the hamstring injury which sidelined him for the losses to the Penrith Panthers and the St George Illawarra Dragons.

With veteran prop Jacob Lillyman named in Queensland's State of Origin side, James Gavet, re-signed on a new two-year contract, joins 200-game man Ben Matulino in the starting front row.

In line for his 40th career match is Albert Vete whose most recent NRL outing was in round three against Canterbury-Bankstown in Dunedin.

He returns after impressing for the club's Intrust Super Premiership side in its 20-18 win over Wentworthville on Sunday, a match in which he played 48 minutes, making 172 metres from 14 runs as well as 13 tackles without a miss.

"We certainly missed Simon's presence in our last

two matches," said Vodafone Warriors head coach Stephen Kearney.

"He adds a lot to our group and it's good to have him back this week.

"With Jake out through Origin, James slots back in to the starting front row and Albie has earned his opportunity with his performances for our ISP side."

Still out of contention are centre Solomone Kata and Manu Vatuvei, both recovering from calf injuries.

Second rower Ryan Hoffman makes his 298th career appearance this week as he edges towards the NRL's 300-game club, a milestone he's on track to reach in the away match against Gold Coast on June 10.

The Vodafone Warriors' 36-18 win over the Broncos last June was their 16th in the 38 meetings between the two sides. In 19 encounters at Mount Smart Stadium, the Vodafone Warriors have an 11-8 advantage.

Vodafone Warriors

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 Roger Tuivasa-Sheck | C | 17 Bunty Afoa |
| 2 Charnze Nicoll-Klokstad | | 18 Tuimoala Lolohea |
| 3 Blake Ayshford | | 20 Toafofoa Siple |
| 4 David Fusitu'a | | 21 Ligi Sao |
| 5 Ken Maumalo | | 22 Mason Lino |
| 6 Kieran Foran | | |
| 7 Shaun Johnson | | |
| 8 James Gavet | | |
| 9 Issac Luke | | |
| 10 Ben Matulino | | |
| 11 Bodene Thompson | | |
| 12 Ryan Hoffman | | |
| 13 Simon Mannering | | |
| Interchange: | | |
| 14 Nathaniel Roache | | |
| 15 Sam Lisone | | |
| 16 Albert Vete | | |





By Barry Ross

Vulnerable

STAVANGER STORM in yellow and blue, take on the **FLEKKEFJORD FIGURES** last Saturday 20 May at Flekkefjord, 420 kilometres south of Oslo.

THE NEXT six weeks could see several upsets as teams are disadvantaged by the loss of several of their top players because of State of Origin commitments. Some clubs are more disadvantaged than others and become vulnerable in this period. This is not a new feature of our game and coaches have been critical of the situation for years. There is also an upside to this period with the byes allowing injured players time on the sidelines to recover. This coming weekend there are only four games in round 12. Two of these are in Sydney, one in Auckland and the other at Canberra. With eight teams having byes, eight coaches will have down time to take stock of their current position on the Premiership ladder and change their tactics, if they deem this necessary. The coaches who have the bye this weekend are Neil Henry (Titans), Trent Barrett (Sea Eagles), Craig Bellamy (Storm), Nathan Brown (Knights), Paul Green (Cowboys), Anthony Griffin (Panthers), Paul McGregor (Dragons) and Ivan Cleary (Wests Tigers). It is only a guessing game in thinking about what these eight men will work on during this week's break, but some of them will have more on their minds than others. The Tigers have lost their past three matches going down to the Sharks, the Rabbitohs and the Broncos with a combined total of 86 points against them in these three losses to 24 scored by them. Cleary has been in charge for six games now and after a dream start when The Tigers defeated the Cowboys 26-16 at Townsville just five days after he was officially appointed, he hasn't had much joy. Anthony Griffin will probably pour through the first half videos of the Panthers last two games where they gave up big starts to the Warriors then the Knights last Sunday. Despite allowing these first half point sprees, they powered home in the second half to post convincing victories. Penrith sit in 11th place on the ladder with eight competition points but they have just a minus 11, for and against record, while the Bulldogs (-28) and the Eels (-38), who sit above them on the ladder, have worse aggregates.

Some people are saying the top four places have already been decided, with the teams in these positions at the moment, remaining at the top of the ladder when the last regular season games are played on 3 September. It is hard to argue against this thinking at the moment, but injuries, refereeing decisions and weather will no doubt have some impact in the weeks ahead. The Storm leads the table after 11 rounds with 18 competition points and the Broncos, Sharks and Roosters are locked together two behind on 16 points. Of these four teams, the Sharks have been far from consistent but they were very impressive in the second half, last Thursday night (May 18) in their 18-14 win over the Cowboys. Andrew Fifita played strongly and his try assist for Chad Townsend in the 62nd minute, was superb. Fifita was on the field for 49 minutes and made 29 tackles, plus 175 metres in his 16 runs. Paul Gallen played for 63 minutes and made 38 tackles as well as 191 metres in his 18 runs. Valentine Holmes played the full 80 minutes and ran for 190 metres.

Over at Toronto Canada, the Wolfpack smashed equal leaders, the Barrow Raiders by 70-2 to take the outright lead in the English Kingstone Press League One competition. They have collected 482 points to just 73 against in their eight competition matches and it appears they should have been placed in a higher competition by the English Rugby League. Centre Quentin Laulu-Togaga'e scored three of the 12 tries against Barrow, while captain Craig Hall landed 11 goals before a home crowd of 7,144. Barrow were without four of their better players, who had visa troubles at the airport and were not allowed to make the flight across the Atlantic.

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By accident I found that there is a well supported Rugby League competition in Norway. There is around 270 players throughout the country and just last Saturday, a new club, the Stavanger Storm played their first competition game at Flekkefjord, against the Flekkefjord Figures. Stavanger players had to make a 130 kilometre journey south to play the match. Both Stavanger and Flekkefjord are more than 400 kilometres south west and south of the capital, Oslo. The Storm were behind 20-16 but came home strongly in the last 15 minutes to win 36-20. Captain/coach of the Storm is Australian Nathan Cummins, who is the brother of Wallaby winger, Nick Cummins (15 Tests for the Wallabies) and is known throughout the rugby world as the Honey Badger. Last year, Nick, now 29, when he was visiting his brother, came on as a substitute for Stavanger in the win over against the Oslo Rugby club in the Final of the Norwegian Rugby Union Championship.

The Norwegian Rugby Federation is the controlling body for Rugby Union, Rugby League, Aussie Rules and Wheelchair Rugby in Norway. Rugby League is run by a sub committee, which includes the managers of all clubs. The President is former English Rugby League player and former Royal Marine, Lee Johnson. Of the 270 players in Norwegian Rugby League, about 80 percent are Norwegian-born, while the other 20 percent includes players from all over the world. One of the Norwegian teams, the Bodo Barbarians, is the only Rugby League team located in the Arctic Circle. Bodo, with a latitude of 67 degrees north, is the most northern club, while the Farsund Bobcats, latitude 58 degrees north, is the most southern. The Distance from Farsund to Bodo is around 1,700 kilometres and is a 21 hour drive. The major sports in Norway are soccer, handball and skiing.

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



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And Now For Some Good News

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)



WE ALL hoped for some good news on Anzac Test weekend, with the Kiwis victorious over the Kangaroos as an encouraging lead-up to the World Cup. But the manner in which the Kiwis capitulated, and the aftermath which left us without two of our most experienced forwards for the World Cup, blew those hopes apart. The subsequent poor form of the Warriors has added to the gloom. But even all that could not cloud the comeback of Russell Packer, who from a New Zealand viewpoint must be the good news story of the season.

Packer, as most of us know, was a million miles away from again playing in the NRL just three years ago. After a promising start to his professional career with the Warriors, and two Tests for the Kiwis in 2011, he dipped in form and was in the process of transferring to Newcastle Knights when he committed a brutal assault in Sydney. He was sentenced to two years in prison and to all intents and purposes his football days were over. Some speculated he might get a run in British Super League but few expected him to return to the NRL.

To his great credit, Packer did not descend into depression and bitterness or blame others. He identified his weaknesses and applied himself totally to rehabilitation. Prison authorities could see his dedication to getting his and his family's life back together and he was paroled after one year. Even then he was a candidate for deportation but was eventually given a second chance to stay in Australia. The NRL refused to register him for St George Illawarra in 2015, requiring him to spend a probation season with the Illawarra Cutters in the NSW Cup.

Dragons coach Paul McGregor is a hard task master, but he could see Packer was playing NRL quality football in reserve grade. The experience gained from 110 matches for the Warriors from 2008 until 2013 had been bolstered by an improved lifestyle and a grim determination to prove himself all over again. Packer was cleared to play NRL last year and was one of the most effective players in a struggling side. The Dragons opened 2017 at odds of 100-1 but had signed Canberra prop Paul Vaughan to share the heavy work with Packer.

Together Vaughan and Packer have become arguably the most effective front-row pair in the competition, with Vaughan transforming from a bench player at the Raiders to challenge for State of Origin selection and Packer regaining his Kiwis jersey. In recent weeks Packer has signed a lucrative four-year deal with Wests Tigers – reuniting him with Ben Matulino, Elijah Taylor and coach Ivan Cleary from the 2011 Warriors Grand Final team – and the Dragons have re-signed Vaughan. The Warriors were the latest side to feel their steam-roller strength.

That 30-14 Dragons victory at Hamilton was also good news for Kalifa Faifai Loa, the scorer of two tries on the left wing in his first game this season, filling a vacancy left by injuries to Josh Dugan, Euan Aitken and Gareth Widdop. Faifai Loa had been a team-mate of Packer in the 2011 Kiwis. After starting his NRL career at the Dragons in 2010, he spent time at North Queensland and Gold Coast before finding his way back to Kogarah. Friday's game was also good news for Auckland-born centre Taane Milne, who crossed for his maiden first grade try.

While Ben Matulino had only a try for consolation when his 200th Warriors appearance did not end with the result he wanted, fellow Kiwis forward Adam Blair had no trouble recording a win in his 250th NRL match the same night. Blair, previously with Melbourne Storm and Wests Tigers, was to the forefront of the Brisbane Broncos' 36-0 hammering of the Tigers. Blair became the eighth New Zealand-born player to reach 250 after Ruben Wiki (312), Willie Mason (292), Simon Mannering (267), Stephen Kearney (264), Stacey Jones (261), Benji Marshall (256) and Sam Perrett (256).

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That decisive Brisbane victory was another good result for Kodi Nikorima, the scrum-half during a five-match winning streak in the absence of injured Ben Hunt. Nikorima had previously been coming off the bench to fill in at hooker or half for the Broncos and Kiwis. He has now proved worthy of a starting position in the No.7 jersey. Most commentators have been concentrating on Origin selections but it is to Nikorima's credit that he invariably earns a favourable mention when they talk about halfback partner Anthony Milford's Queensland credentials.

It is very hard to find good news stories about rugby league in the media. I know from my time at The Press how frustrating it was trying to get a photographer along to a Canterbury Bulls children's hospital visit in comparison to one by the Crusaders. But recently the Sydney Daily Telegraph, often first to break the story of a player's indiscretion or to demand official heads should roll, listed 50 good news paragraphs about NRL players doing their bit in their own time to help those less fortunate than themselves. It was a refreshing change but I suspect normal transmission will soon be resumed.

No Easy World Cup Games

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)



AUSTRALIA, NEW Zealand and England will carry the top three world rankings into the World Cup tournament later this year. The Kangaroos retrieved the No.1 spot from the Kiwis with their convincing victory in the Anzac Test at Canberra after suffering the unusual experience of being second-best on the back of three consecutive losses in 2014-15. England was assured of remaining No.3 regardless of the outcome of its match against Samoa at Campbelltown the same weekend. The World Cup draw was released months ago, along with the opening of ticket sales, and is not designed to bear any relation to the rankings.

But the World Cup qualifying results have in most cases reflected the rankings with the top eleven nations included in the tournament to be played in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. From the top, they are Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Samoa, France, Ireland, Fiji, Wales, United States and Tonga. The other qualifiers in the 14-team tournament, and their rankings, are Italy (14), PNG (15) and Lebanon (21). Although Australia and England are in the same pool, and clash in the opening match at Melbourne on October 27, both have only to beat France and/or Lebanon to advance to the quarter-finals.

The Kiwis, already without experienced forwards Jesse Bromwich and Kevin Proctor for disciplinary reasons, face three testing fixtures in their pool. They launch their campaign against Samoa at Mount Smart on October 28 and meet Scotland at Christchurch on November 4 and Tonga at Hamilton on November 11. After their shock draw with the Scots in England last year and with Samoa and Tonga able to field teams packed with NRL first graders, the Kiwis need to lift their standards from what we saw in Canberra. Three teams advance to the knock-out stage but New Zealand fans expect the Kiwis to top their pool.

Fiji and Tonga have cause to feel aggrieved at their comparatively lowly world rankings. The Fijians (8) reached the semi-finals at the last two World Cups, where they were thrashed by the Kangaroos, while the Tongans (11) might have expected a more dramatic rise up the list after recently beating Fiji. Samoa (5) disappointed in losing to England by 20 points. Sixth-ranked France has been a fragile international side for too long and will be cannon fodder for Australia and England. PNG has a surprisingly modest ranking (15), but is favoured to beat Ireland (7), Wales (9) and United States (10) in their pool games at Port Moresby.

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It might be argued PNG would not have reached the World Cup if the top 14 nations were chosen strictly on rankings, but that was never going to happen. The two nations which are ranked within the top 14 but missed out are Serbia (12) and Canada (13). Serbia lost to Italy and Wales in their European qualifiers, while Canada drew with Jamaica before losing 34-24 to United States in their qualifiers in December 2015. Neither has a long history of rugby league involvement but continue to develop thanks to a dedicated group of stalwarts. They are a world away from the professionalism of Australia and Britain, but then who isn't?

Rugby league was first played in Serbia (then part of Yugoslavia) in 1953, with French assistance. Eight years later the Yugoslav national team played its only international against a French amateur XIII. But in 1964 the communist government authorities demanded rugby league clubs switch to rugby union so the whole of Yugoslavia would be under one form of rugby football. It was galling that one of those banned rugby league clubs, Nada, went on to win the rugby union championship ten times.

Rugby league officially returned to Serbia in 2001 and is believed to have between 1500 and 2000 registered players, many of them juniors. Former Kiwis prop and Kiwis assistant coach Gerard Stokes worked with the Serbian national squad from 2008 until 2010 when he was coaching in England. Among

the prominent NRL players with Serbian heritage are the Trbojevic brothers, Tom and Jake, at Manly and teenaged Canberra wing Nick Cotric.

Between 1987 and 2000, under a former administration, the Canada Cougars were generally subservient to neighbouring United States. In 2010 the Canada Rugby League Association was formed and the national team rebranded as the Wolverines. They twice got within six points of the Americans in 2016, and they also had a 22-12 loss to Fiji in Hawaii. The Toronto Wolfpack club, with former Kiwis prop Fuifui Moimoi as the marquee signing, is performing well in the third tier English competition, though its squad is mostly comprised of imports. Canada will be represented by the Ravens at the women's World Cup later this year.

Russia (16), Jamaica (17), Belgium (18), Malta (19) and Spain (20) separate PNG from Lebanon at 21. Lebanon, which plays against Australia and England in the only World Cup fixtures in Sydney, will clearly be stronger than those countries immediately above them if they enlist some or all of Robbie Farah, Mitchell Moses, Tim Mannah, Josh Mansour and Michael Lichaa from the NRL. Most of their players will come from Australian clubs. The Lebanon domestic competition's representative team plays in the Mediterranean Cup. Rugby league now has 42 ranked nations, with Thailand (35) and Uruguay (41) the latest to be rated.

Indian Motorcycle Fight Night

Thursday, 25 May - 6.30pm at the ABA Stadium, Eden Terrace. Live and free on Sky TV!

'Shane Cameron trades in his gloves for a suit and tie - continuing his hard work in the boxing industry from a well-known Heavyweight boxer to a promising Promoter.

With seven fight nights up his sleeve, his eighth show is only going to be his biggest and best yet! With a stellar line up of three corporate fights and SEVEN PROFESSIONAL FIGHTS - you won't want to miss INDIAN MOTORCYCLE FIGHT NIGHT!

Junior Fa, also known as World Title Holder - Joseph Parker's amateur rivalry, will be headlining the show against Australian Heavyweight boxer - Hunter Sam; and talented Ricky "The Ghost" Murphy (9-0) making a come back as semi-main event and the current NZPBA Super Welterweight Champion, Shaye Brock (11-0), stepping back into the ring after his big title win on High Stakes Fight Night.

Junior Fa has been a fast moving boxer who turned profes-

sional last year and already has a record of 11-0 with seven big wins coming by way of knockout. He has proven to be a tough fighter with skill and speed.

Ricky will be making his come back after being out of the ring for nearly a year due to breaking his right hand twice. Ricky is hoping to keep his winning streak going and keeping his record clean.

The breathtaking professional line-up also includes Joshua Hatherley and Jordan Tuigamala who both recently fought on the Parker v Cojanu undercard and Panuve Helu, Vaimoli Loleu, Monica Tai, Zane Hopman, Salo Ben, Jordan Moroa, Alistair Boyd and Ruben Webster. Plus three explosive corporate fights to warm you up for the big night!

GA tickets available from Shane Cameron Fitness or ticketbooth.co.nz



By Miles Davis

Ces Mountford

Ces Mountford with Challenge Cup 1951

NEW ZEALAND'S West Coast was a hot-bed of rugby league for decades and produced plenty of players to fill the Kiwis roster. The rugged nature of the land created rugged individuals perfectly suited to the game of rugby league and Cecil 'Ces' Ralph Mountford was one of them.

One of ten siblings, Ces played soccer as a youngster being considered by many to be too small to play league. At 16 he joined the Blackball league club and was soon impressing with his skills and pace. Such was his turn of speed that he was nicknamed the Blackball Bullet.

Although being selected for the West Coast his Kiwi chances were curtailed by World War II and he was never to don the Kiwi jersey. Arguably the finest player never to have played for his national side.

At the end of the War he accepted an offer to play in England with Wigan. He was soon to make his mark at the Lancashire club and forged a reputation as one of the finest stand-off ever to play the game.

In 1947 the Kiwis were touring Great Britain and Mountford was given permission by Wigan to join the side which included his brother Ken (who was tragically to become one of the victims of the 1967 Strongman mine disaster.). Management however decided that his services were surplus to requirements. Consequently he ended up as an opponent when the Kiwis played Wigan with the visitors gaining a narrow 10-8 victory.

In 1948 he was part of the Wigan side that created history in the Challenge Cup final at Wembley. It was the first rugby league game ever to be televised and the first and the first to be attended by a reigning monarch, George V, who presented the trophy. Wigan prevailed 8-3 in a tense final.

In 1950 he was given the captancy in the absence of regular skipper Joe Egan and led his side to a 20-2 Championship Final win over Huddersfield at Maine Road (home to Manchester City Football Club).

In 1951 he led Wigan to another Challenge Cup final at Wembley where they were once again victors beating Barrow 10-0. To make the day even better Mountford was awarded the Lance Todd Trophy becoming the first overseas player to earn that honour.

By the end of the 1951 season he had qualified as a coach and was offered a 10 year contract by Warrington. Wigan initially refused to release Mountford but eventually he was allowed to leave. It was to be a successful partnership as Warrington picked up 7 trophies over the next 10 years with Ces at the helm. In 1954 they reached the Challenge Cup Final at Wembley but were held to a 4-4 draw. The replay was held at the Odsal Stadium in front of a record crowd of 102,559 although many spectators got in for free and the actual attendance was estimated at 120,000. Warrington came away with an 8-4 victory. 3 days later the same sides met in the Championship final with Warrington clinging on for an 8-7 win and a memorable double.

Continued on next page...

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Several trophies came to Mountford and his team over the next few years and his final game in charge was the Premiership Grand Final held at Odsal in 1961. Sadly it was not to be a victorious last hurrah as Warrington were beaten 25-10 by Leeds.

Ces then moved on to coach Blackpool Borough for 2 years before returning to his native New Zealand. Always heavily involved in league he set up a national coaching school, was manager of the 1967 and 1970 Kiwis and held various administration roles both locally and nationally.

In 1979 he was appointed as coach of the Kiwis and led them on the tour of Great Britain in 1980. Despite being huge underdogs the Kiwis managed to draw the test series 1-1 with one test being drawn. In 1982 he took the side to Australia and Papua New Guinea. The Kiwis led for most of the first test against the Kangaroos only to be denied victory by a late John Muggleton try. They lost the 2nd test but went on to record a 56-5 win in PNG.

In 1983 the NZRL decided to replace Mountford as coach and appointed Graham Lowe. He was told to tell everyone that he had retired but as a true West Coaster he told the press the truth – “I was sacked”.

When he finally retired he moved to Robina with his wife Edna (who unbeknownst to Ces had been a member of the Bletchley Park code-breakers during World War II. She had been sworn to secrecy and managed to keep it to herself throughout their 61 year marriage.).

In 1987 he was awarded the MBE in the Queens Birthday Honours List and in 1990 was inducted into the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame.

It was a tragedy that he was never to represent his country on the international stage but he is revered in England as one of the finest players to grace the game. As renowned league writer Geoffrey Moorhouse once said “Ces Mountford was, quite simply, the greatest stand-off”.

Historic Challenge Cup Final 1948 (No audio) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k179AOi_fw0

1951 Challenge Cup Final Wigan v Barrow <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aG6RA-RJtmk>

1954 Challenge Cup Final <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFEtG9sE-Co>

1954 Challenge Cup Final Replay https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB_IG2XLSaY

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A Hard Night in Hamilton...

By John Holloway



I WAS VERY tempted to join the Butcher on his bus to Hamilton for the Warriors v Dragons hit out. Two things stopped me ... firstly and most importantly I had family matters to attend to and secondly I could see our boys were not in a good place. My NRL picks were 8 out of 8 this week which means I went with my head not my heart in the Waikato clash. To be honest without Mannering I could not see our front 6 matching their lot. Looking at their stats, arguably the best pack in the comp. It stood to reason if that we couldn't do the job up front our back end boys would be busted. Watching Foran run himself hopelessly ragged underlined this. The Red V were able to front without their top back attack trio of Widdup, Dugan and Aitken and still do the business. Our team 14 zip up and then 30/14 down, a pattern emerging. 14th spot on the ladder now a tad ahead of the luckless Knights and the toothless Tigers. Getting close to the halfway mark and looking at the teams immediately above us It's a brave man that see us a certainty for the 8. Hope springs eternal but the glass looking half empty, mind you I am more than happy to eat my words if we get back on the horse.

Cronulla and the Cowboys fought out a torrid battle with the Sharks getting their nose in front at the bell 18/14. Maloney influential and looking for an origin start. The far north crew praying for JTs return. It was one way traffic in the Broncos and Tiger get together. 36 zip with the rapid Roberts also looking for a rep jumper. Our old mate Ivan not having an auspicious return to coaching. The Sea Eagles outlasted a dogged Titans effort to take the bikkies 30/10 but lost terrific Tom Trbojevic in the process a heavy hit to their attack going forward. Burly and tireless brother Jake however continues the good work from the front end and the wily DCE and try hungry Dylan Walker got the seaiders home. The Titans left stuck on 4 wins alongside The improving prowling Panthers and guess who. The Raiders got in the winners circle slipping past the Eels 22/16. Rapana still fizzing but big centre partner Leilua gone a bit quiet. The Parratroopers seem to be a little unsettled, certainly not playing to their potential, mind you they are not alone there. As mentioned the Panthers are stirring, another come from behind to bank the 2 points. Down 14 zip but up at the buzzer 30/20 shades of a recent encounter. The Roosters are crowing and moved up the pecking order with a hard out tussle against the belligerent Bulldogs 24/18 with Mitchell Pierce in everything and staking another claim to his old Blues jumper. Closing out the weekend the ever reliable cam Smiths Storm didn't falter against big Sam Burgess and the try-hard Rabbitohs 14 to 6. A close battle in the rain with yet another Vunivala stunner sealing the deal late. Ok looking ahead the last week before Origin and an supposedly easier path for some. That includes our boys up against a heavily depleted Broncos lineup at Mt Smart on Saturday night. Should normally be a Homies cakewalk to start our well known Origin period revival but doubts are surfacing. Mannering back on deck will be a help. Only 3 other games being the Bunnies v the Eels which looks evenly poised, The Sharks might still be too much for the Doggies with both teams probably losing manpower to the Mate against Mate. Similarly the Raiders and Roosters will be affected by selection. The Bondi boys stand to lose Mitchell, Cordner, Napa and Ferguson at least leaving Rickys Raiders less derailed and in front with the bookies.

And there you have it folks, my apologies for the less than upbeat tone but Friday nite spoiled my mood. I must admit The mighty Richmond Bulldogs did their best to lift my spirits on Saturday arvo with a great effort against top ranking Mt Albert Premis who only just got past our brave boys at the death. Malo Brothers.

To finish a shout out to respected League Lyel Barnes who lost his dad during the week. Sincere condolences old friend. Kia Kaha.

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BAY CONTINGENT The five Hawke's Bay players who played for the Central Vipers on Sunday. From left are Awhina Wainohu, Abby Collier, Sylvia Bockman, Jess Bennett and Laurae Blake



By Shane Hurdell
Hawke's Bay Today
Sports Reporter

Vipers Roll Wellington In Nationals Rehearsal

EXPECT THE Central Vipers to be more than competitive at the national women's rugby league tournament in Auckland at Queen's Birthday Weekend.

That was the promise from Rugby League Hawke's Bay chairman and former Central Vipers men's coach Dion Te Ahu after the Vipers women beat Wellington 34-14 in Palmerston North on Sunday. This was the first of the Vipers build-up games for the nationals and five Bay players, prop Awhina Wainohu, second-rower Jess Bennett, inside back Sylvia Bockman and utilities Abby Collier and Laurae Blake played for the Vipers.

"From the reports I got all of our girls went well and the Vipers are coming together well," Te Ahu said.

Two of the Bay's best players, former Kiwi Fern Chanel Huddleston and dynamic backrower Te Aroha Hunt, didn't play on Sunday but are expected to play key roles for the Vipers at nationals. While the Bay women play their rep league with the Vipers the Hawke's Bay Unicorns men will begin their season in July with a fixture against Wellington in Hastings.

Te Ahu will announce the successful applicant for the Unicorns coaching job later this week.

The Bridge Pa men defaulted their Coast to Coast competition plate final at the weekend. They were scheduled to play Taranaki who won hosting rights on a coin toss.

Te Ahu said the Bridge Pa lads were unable to make the trip to the Naki and requested the two teams meet halfway but that request was declined.

Hawke's Bay's most famous league export of the modern era, Kiwis and Melbourne Storm utility Tohu Harris, was pipped for the People's Choice

award by Black Sticks hockey player Shea McAleese at the Hawke's Bay Sports Awards function which was attended by 490 people in Taradale's Petti-grew-Green Arena on Saturday night. Earlier this month McAleese won New Zealand hockey's male player of the year award.

As predicted by your's truly last week world champion shearer John Kirkpatrick won the supreme award. He is the second shearer to win it since the awards ceremony began in 1966.

Kirkpatrick, 46, beat masters category winner, world champion waka ama paddler Roni Nuku, another world champion waka ama paddler and disabled category winner Amy Jane MacDonald, junior team category winners, the Hastings Boys' High School 1st XV rugby team, senior team winners, the Hawke's Bay Hawkeyes Superstock team, and Olympic Games cyclist and junior category winner Regan Gough for the supreme award.

Kohupatiki Marae, one of 64 throughout Hawke's Bay and one of the smallest, won the MaraeFit award. This award is aimed at encouraging Maori participation in events, physical activities and workshops, connecting whanau to marae through sport and recreation and encouraging organisations to value cultural uniqueness in their events.

Among the Kohupatiki contingent at the awards was Rose White. She was the key architect behind the Unicorns Supporters Club during the mid 1990s and was responsible for those famous roast meals dished up at after-match functions for the Unicorns during the 1994, '95 and '96 seasons at the old Nelson Park in Hastings.

Two of Rose's sons, Abe and Norm White, turned out for the Unicorns during those seasons.

Time for the Fair-Weather Fan to Bugger Off

By Miles Davis



I LOVE AND support the Vodafone Warriors every week except for when they play my first love the Dragons. As you can imagine I was rather pleased on Friday night as the final whistle blew. My joy however was short-lived as the abuse that now predictably follows every Vodafone Warriors loss pervaded social media. The usual cry of 'I have given up on them' was prominent.

I have often commented on how a supporter has every right to criticise his team if they perform poorly but a true supporter never gives up on the team. That is true of genuine Vodafone Warriors fans as much as any other club in any other sport so where is the negative bitching coming from? It comes from those with a passing interest in the team but no real commitment. They are happy to claim themselves as a supporter when times are good, when play-offs or finals are made but are quick to denigrate when times are tough.

Unfortunately there are more of these fair-weather fans than genuine ones so they are the voices that are more prominent after a defeat. It is a perverse reality of the world of the Vodafone Warriors that those with the least right to criticise make the most noise. I have a message for them – take your lightweight support elsewhere and leave the Vodafone Warriors to the real fans. You will not be missed.

There will still be criticism after every loss but we will no longer hear 'I have given up on them'. Real fans never give up.

It's Island Time

WHAT A spectacle in Suva at the weekend. Not only did the Chiefs and Crusaders put on a high class display of rugby union but the fans created an atmosphere to match. Surely it is time that the big boys of world rugby gave something more than the odd game to the Pacific Islands?

For years those with commercial clout have plundered them for players (not just NZ but Australia, England, Wales and Japan to name a few) but give them nothing in return other than the odd game. There is no doubt that the Islands should have been at the front of the queue when Super Rugby and the Rugby Championship were expanded but commercial opportunities took precedence so Japan and Argentina were the beneficiaries.

Surely it is possible to start giving something back to the Islands? More Super rugby fixtures could be played there for starters. Then there could be the odd visit by International sides as when the All Blacks went to Samoa. Imagine if the British Lions had played there on the way to NZ.

Eventually the Islands should be brought into the Super Rugby fold at the very least. It may not be as commercially attractive as Japan or Argentina but the entertaining rugby and atmosphere would go a long way to making up for that.

Sadly none of this is likely to happen and the big boys will continue to pick the best of the Islands whilst keeping them firmly in the lower echelons of the world game.

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



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Twitter



Glenora Earn the Roope Rooster

By Talei Anderson

Glenora earn the Roope Rooster following three wins in a row

THE KONICA Minolta Roope Rooster Challenge Trophy has a new home out west after the Glenora Bears worked their way to a 28-20 win over an unbeaten Pt Chevalier side in Round 7 of the SAS Fox Memorial Premiership on Saturday.

Glenora come off the back off three wins in a row (Mangere 42-12, Mt Albert 20-16, Pt Chevalier 28-20), and while they remain fourth on the competition ladder, they sit tied equal on 10 points with Mt Albert who are only slightly ahead on differential.

"It was a great effort all round," said Glenora head coach, Bernie Perenara.

"The boys gave an 80 minute performance and they've been rewarded with the Roope Rooster for it."

"But it's still early days," he admits.

"We're happy with our results these past couple of weeks, but there's always room for improvement... it's been good to see where they are at, especially against favourites like Mt Albert and Pt Chevalier."

Glenora will have their first defence of the Roope Rooster this weekend with some extra feelings on the field when they host Richmond -Perenara's former club- at Harold Moody Reserve (2.30pm kick-off).

"It will be interesting," he said.

"Richmond had a good game against Mt Albert last weekend so we can't let our guard down."

In other games, Howick continue to prove they are having one of the best starts to the season moving to the top of the table following their sixth victory over Marist 24-14, while the Lions bounced back from their back-to-back losses with a 14-8 win over Richmond.

It was a successful weekend for Te Atatu and Northcote, securing their first wins of the season.

In the ARL Game of the Round Te Atatu were in front of Mangere East 18-6 at one stage, but the Hawks came out firing in the second half to even the score at 18 all. Both sides scored again, but a late try out wide to John Nicodemus secured the 28-22 win.

Meanwhile at Birkenhead War Memorial, the Northcote Tigers impressed their home crowd with a 20-18 victory over current Fox Memorial champions, the Papakura Sea Eagles.

Continued on next page...

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ARL Results For Saturday May 20

SAS Fox Memorial: Round 7
Northcote 20 Papakura 18
Richmond 8 Mt Albert 14
Marist 14 Howick 24
Pt Chevalier 20 Glenora 28
Mangere East 22 Te Atatu 28

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Premiership: Round 2

Otahuhu 20 Otara 12
Bay Roskill 34 New Lynn 24
Ellerslie 20 Papatoetoe 22
Ponsonby 16 Manurewa 28

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup Plate: Round 2

East Coast Bays 42 Manukau 4
Pakuranga 22 Hibiscus Coast 10
Waitemata bye

SAS Fox Memorial Fixtures For Saturday May 27: Round 8

Northcote v Mangere East @ Birkenhead War Memorial 2.30pm
Glenora v Richmond @ Harold Moody Reserve 2.30pm
Te Atatu v Mt Albert @ Jack Colvin Park 2.30pm
Papakura v Marist @ Prince Edward Park 2.30pm
Pt Chevalier v Howick @ Unitec Sports Field 2.30pm

Crown Lift Trucks Sharman Cup fixtures for Saturday May 27: Round 3

Sharman Cup Premiership: Round 3
Papatoetoe v New Lynn @ Kohuora Park 2.30pm
Manurewa v Otahuhu @ Mountfort Park 2.30pm
Otara v Ellerslie @ Ngati Otara Park 2.30pm
Ponsonby v Bay Roskill @ Victoria Park 2.30PM

Sharman Cup Plate: Round 3
Hibiscus Coast v Waitemata @ Stanmore Bay Reserve 2.30pm
Pakuranga v Manukau @ Ti Rakau Park 2.30pm
East Coast Bays bye



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An ecstatic Sosi celebrates his win

RLWC COUNTDOWN: 22 Weeks to GO!

By Daniel Fraser
New Zealand Media & PR
Manager RLWC 2017

Tawera The Great Lends A Helping Hand To Rugby League World Cup

IT WAS an honour to have the great Tawera Nikau on hand as the Rugby League World Cup team took to the hallowed turf at Waikato Stadium last Friday night.

We were on the field at halftime of the Warriors' clash with the Dragons to give away a family pass to the Samoa-Tonga match on November 4.

As a Waikato local, Nikau was swamped all night by people who wanted to say hello and get a photo with one of Huntly's finest sons.

Thankfully for us, he managed to wade his through the crowds and get on the field to help spin our catchers.

Making catching the bombs that were put up by Waikato rugby league captain Nick Read even more difficult.

Sosi from Cambridge shook off the dizziness better than the rest and will now get the chance to take his family to the must-see clash between Tonga and Samoa in Hamilton later this year.

The weekend to come will be just as busy too, the team will be activating at Mt Smart on Saturday night as the Warriors take on the Broncos.

Make sure you come by and let kids of all shapes and sizes have a go at winning prizes.

New Zealand is hosting seven RLWC2017 matches, tickets are available now from www.rlwc2017.com, starting at \$10 for kids, \$20 for adults and \$45 for a family of four.

Our three contestants with Tawera Nikau and Waikato Rugby League Captain Nick Read (far right)





Hukanui Rugby League Sports Club U9s

*By Ray Edwards
aka Ghost*

IT WAS a greatly anticipated game for Hamilton and the mighty WAIKATO RUGBY LEAGUE whanau to be able to show their support for the Mighty Vodafone Warriors and of course the dragons in the heart of the Tron.

But for a lot of the whanau there is was a great chance to be able to see their son's, daughters, brothers, sisters and moko's running around in front of the 11,000 strong crowd that come out to represent Hamilton in support of our great game RUGBY LEAGUE and the WARRIORS.

It was a very proud feeling to see my beloved club HUKANUI RUGBY LEAGUE SPORTS CLUB 9 year olds having the chance to be able to represent and play at home in front of a lot of their whanau and friends. It was a great evening and all of the kids come from the field with smiles from ear to ear after enjoying a good game against Turangawaewae. It looked like all the kids gained great memories from the occasion.

It was also great to see other local clubs Turangawaewae, Taniwharau, Hamilton City Tigers, Iti Rearea and from the Bay of Plenty – Otumoetai.

With all the teams receiving a gift pack from the WARRIORS just really topped the night of as one to remember for the kids and parents. The HUKANUI kids really enjoyed their hot dog, chips and drink after their game also.

HUKANUI has been to Mt Smart for the past 5 years and the club really enjoys the chance of our juniors playing there and whanau's making the most of the occasions as a yearly trip for our U6s and U8s. With the first year of going TO Mt Smart, brothers Sam and Steve Rapira past players for HUKANUI came and seen the kids after their game and presented each team with a signed player of the game ball.

I would also like to thank you Sir Peter for the things you do, have done and keep doing for our great game so many KIWI'S love.

I tried to convert Sam Cane also but your mannequin just wasn't quite enough LOL



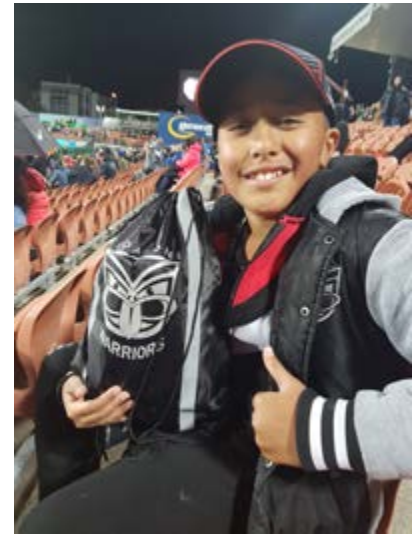
Reader Mail

Ki Ora Sir Peter Leitch,

We had such a great time on your bus to Hamilton to support the one and only Vodafone Warriors, regardless of the lost they are still our champion's and my children and I, are very grateful that you allowed us to be apart of this week's game and journey.

Kind Regards your friends

Sonya, Nytram and Central



Thanks to all the fans who travelled down to Hamilton on our free bus and a big thanks to Ritchies for giving the Butcher a great deal on the bus!



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THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S HUGE ROUND 12 ISSUE...

NRL, HOLDEN CUP, INTRUST SUPER PREMIERSHIP, INTRUST SUPER CUP AND RON MASSEY CUP TEAM LISTS, PREVIEWS AND STATS + SCORES AND RESULTS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY!

INSIDE

- Blues great **Steve Mortimer** has been one of **Mitchell Pearce's** biggest critics – but he believes NSW made the right call by selecting him in their team for Game One of the Origin series. “I’ve never been a fan of Mitchell Pearce and I’ve been critical of him in the past, but he’s started to show that he’s a lot more mature and I think he’s the right man for the job.”
- **Shaun Johnson** has been burdened by his brilliance for a long time – but the 26-year-old has finally developed a thicker skin when the inevitable criticism comes. “I’ve learnt to brush it off – I don’t want to put my energy into things I can’t control.”
- They don’t have a catchy name like ‘Leipana’ but the friendship between Raiders stars **Josh Hodgson** and **Jack Wighton** is one of the strongest going around. Hodgson says he would have been back in England six months into his NRL stint if it wasn’t for his mate.
- Whether or not he plays is still up in the air but Broncos team-mate **Ben Hunt** has backed **Anthony Milford** to excel in the Origin arena, saying he has seen his game go to new heights in the past couple of seasons.

PLUS... We reflect on the **Top 8 weird coincidences**, **The Analyst** figures out which halves are the best (and worst) tacklers, and a **Jared Waerea-Hargreaves** poster.



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