



Sir Peter Leitch's  
**MAD BUTCHER CLUB**

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS



# Newsletter

09 OCT 2014  
#45

## HOLDEN CUP SPECIAL!



# Bucking the Broncos!

**Vodafone Junior Warriors get a heart-stopping  
34-32 win over Brisbane in the NYC Final!**

Go to <http://www.warriors.co.nz/> for more news and photos of the game!

# MAGGIC!

The co-captains Mason Lino and Sam Lisone lift the Holden Cup Grand Final trophy. Every player's dream.



The coach, Stacey Jones and co-captain Mason Lino share that very special time.



A very special moment - yes, lads, we have just won the grand final!



After snatching victory at the last moment there's the emotional backlash. Sharing the love after the final whistle.



A relieved, amazed and exhilarated Bradley Abbey.



*“The players have been fantastic.... I’m just thrilled to see them achieve success. They’ve worked so hard for it and it’s a real boost for our club in what we’re trying to achieve...”* **Coach, Stacey Jones**



Ken Maumalo scores a try in the 42nd minute of the game.



Man of the match, Solomone Kata, on a burst heading for another try on the day, scoring 3 tries in all.

**EVEN THE PM  
SENT THE BOYS  
A MESSAGE**



**CONGRATULATIONS,  
GUYS!  
YOU DID US  
PROUD!**

Joy, exhilaration, suspense. The expressions on the faces of the boys on the sideline sum up the final nail-biting moments of a great game.

# A fantastic event to be involved in

**T**here is no question that when you are as passionate about league as I am, being involved in Grand Final week is pretty much Utopia.

On the Monday in Sydney I had the great pleasure of being at the Daly M ceremony, and the next event on the schedule was the Grand Final lunch, followed closely by the **Kangaroos** reunion they have every year.

It was fabulous to catch up with so many friends I have made over my years involved in the game.

But then something that touched me very much happened. **Vodafone Junior Warriors** coach **Stacey Jones** called me up and invited me to travel on the team bus with boys to the stadium, and to be part of their build-up. I have spent a little bit of time with the team lately, just acknowledging how proud of their achievements I have been, but I never expected an invitation like that. They are a great bunch of young adults and it was an event I will never forget.

The closeness of the players, the team spirit they had forged was brought home to me by **Kurt Robinson**.

The young man travelled to Sydney with his teammates despite having lost a close family member just days

before.

Then he was taken from the field early on with a concussion, and seeing his friends rally around him regardless of the joy they were feeling, was incredible.

## Juniors make us proud

And crickey dick watching the **Vodafone Junior Warriors** win the Holden Cup was no good for my blood pressure. But the boys hung on to beat the **Brisbane Broncos** 34-32, and it was big smiles all round.

Ahead by 28 points with as many minutes left, it should have been a cruise but the **Broncos** thought differently and had a conversion attempt at the death that would have tied the scores.

It went wide, and Stacey Jones' boys had made history by becoming the first side from outside the top four to win the big show.

I thought back to the last minute sideline conversion that tied our final season game 18-18 against Penrith, and saw

us sneak into the eight, and could not have been prouder. We won this comp in 2010 and 2011 and we are now the most successful side since the competition was launched.

They really are a fine group of young men, humble and grounded, and a great pleasure to be around.

Their victory is a great reward for a season of incredible hard work and when I caught up with Stacey, he was a relieved man, and told me he could not believe the courage of his young charges. "I know they crossed our line at the end, but at one stage we didn't touch the ball for 15 minutes. To hang on, is just a great achievement."





The manager, Doug, and the coach, Stacey, with, in the background, a very happy chairman, Bill Wavish, after our great win.



The co-captains share the trophy with the coach. Lovely stuff!



Tui Lolohea is very happy chappy with the winners' Trophy!



The Three Musketeers share the trophy!



Brad Abbey and Nathaniel Roache are all smiles holding the trophy.



Toafofoa Shipley is only too happy to hold the Holden Cup trophy,



Michael Ki is so happy. Good on you, mate!



Kurt Robinson and Kouma Samson share a moment. Love those winners' medals, boys!



Mason Lino chills winds down after the game.

Sam Lisone give us the thumbs up!

Man of the match, Solomone Kata, shows of his medals.



Toafofoa interviews Sam for Warriors TV.



Dad and son enjoy the moment. Now *that's* GOLD!



I love you, Mum and Dad.  
What a lovely message to wear on game day.

## Promotion for Stacey

The Little General, and now victorious **Vodafone Junior Warriors** coach, **Stacey Jones**, will be our New South Wales Cup coach next year.

The 38-year-old club legend guided the **Vodafone Junior Warriors** from eighth to the premiership when they beat the Brisbane Broncos 34-32 at the weekend.

Stacey had an amazing 261-game playing career, and also created history when he became the first ex-**Vodafone Warriors** player to coach the club to a premiership.

His New South Wales Cup role will enable him to take a critical step in his career, and he will work closely with our head coach **Andrew McFadden** and the NRL side.

Jones takes over from **Rohan Smith**, who has returned to Australia.

McFadden said he wanted Jones to not only move up to the NSW Cup but to also have more involvement with the NRL players.

"He has been really impressive coaching our young players," he said. "I'm excited about having him involved around our NRL players and bringing the expertise and knowledge he has to help them."

## Stacey praises his boys

He might be moving up, but the successful coach is full of praise for his Premiership winning charges.

"The players have been fantastic and I've thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of coaching week in, week out throughout the season. I'm just thrilled to see them achieve success. They've worked so hard for it and it's a real boost for our club in what we're trying to achieve. I want to enjoy this with the team but stepping up to the NSW Cup is going to be a great challenge."

## He has the pedigree

As a foundation player, Stacey Jones had 12 first-grade seasons with the club from 1995 to 2005 plus a comeback campaign in 2009. He was on the coaching staff in a part-time role in 2008 before devoting himself to business and his junior club Pt Chevalier.

When he took over the **Pirates** they were at the bottom of Auckland's three-tiered club competition but he guided them to grand final victories in both 2010 and 2011, to earn the club promotion to the Fox Memorial. The **Pirates** have since gone on to win the premiership in 2013 and 2014. He worked for the Auckland Rugby League in 2012 before coming home to the **Warriors** as junior recruitment and pathways coach last year. It means Jones has been involved with club for 15 of its 20 seasons in existence.



Our sponsors, Greig Bramwell from ASIC, Russell Stanners from Vodafone, Jason Law from Canterbury and Danielle Lendich from Wendy's, on the field after the Holden Cup Team's victory.



Where would we be without the fans? These are the die-hard fans.



My pass to be with the Holden Cup team on Grand Final day.



One very happy family after our win. Board member, Justin Davis-Rice and kids.



Harry, Jack and Ruby Davis-Rice, all happy about our win.



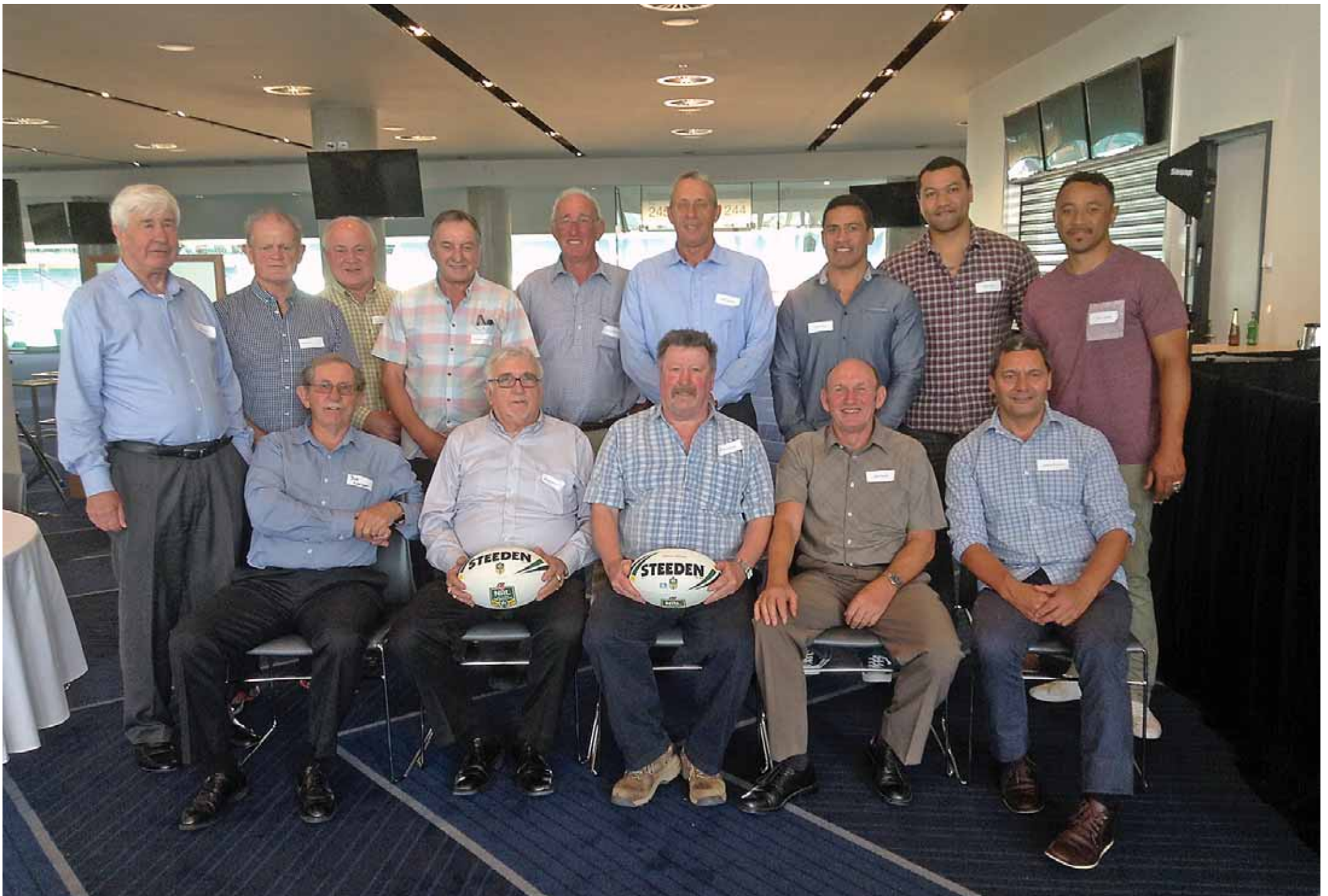
**Glenn Critchley, Commercial Manager of the Vodafone warriors; Sonja Shine; and Don Mann, GM Commercial, Vodafone Warriors.**



**Nice to see Vodafone Warriors head coach, Andrew McFadden, at the grand final supporting Stacey Jones and the boys.**



**Bumped into these three Vodafone Warriors fans – Pete, Liz, and Kevin – all from Howick and all season ticket holders!**



It was great to catch up with these former **Kiwis** players at the **Kangaroos** luncheon in Sydney on the Saturday before the grand-final day it's something I look forward to each year to mix and mingle with former Australian rugby league greats and former Kiwi greats and to top it off, it's a free luncheon and that makes it even better! Thank you, NRL!

**Back Row: Colin O'Neil, Tony Coll, Dane Sorensen, Ray Baxendale, John Greengrass, Mark Graham, Willy Talau, Tame Tupou, Nigel Vagana. Front Row: Bob Lanigan (trainer), Sir Peter (football manager), Warren Colliccoat, Ken Stirling, John Hutchinson (team coordinator).**

**GOOGLE THESE GUYS – THEY ARE SOME OF OUR GREATS. CHECK THEM OUT.**

# PHOTOS FROM THE VODAFONE WARRIORS' SPONSORS' DINNER IN SYDNEY



**Brent & Cilla Carter of TNT, with CEO Wayne Scurrah.**



**Don's wife, Louise Mann (left), and Dean's wife, Jackie Bell (right).**



**Wayne's wife, Laura Scurrah (left), with Daniella Lendich, CEO of Wendy's.**



**Rachel Spring and Jayne Hoffman who put the sponsors weekend together and did a great job.**



**Vodafone Warriors Board Member Mark Flay with his wife, Michelle (left), and Michelle Stanners.**



**Lady Janice and grand daughter, Kristen.**



**Vodafone Warriors chairman, Bill Wavish, and the club's sponsorship manager, Glenn Critchley.**



**Nigel Morrison, CEO of Sky City (left), with Russell Stanners, CEO of Vodafone.**





**Amanda Walker, sister of Michelle Stanners, and husband, Steve. Amanda and Steve flew from Perth to support our boys.**



**Canterbury CEO, Jason Law (left) and Mark Spring, CEO of DTR.**



**The "Don" pretending to be a member of Sydney mafia outside Bill & Toni's Italian Restaurant, an iconic eatery in Darlinghurst, Sydney CBD.**



**The ladies were having a ball! Kristen, Sonja, Olivia and Sarah.**



**Left to right; Olivia Mann, Jayne Hoffman and Sarah Mann.**



**Left to right; Laura Scurrah, Danielle Lendich, Louise Mann and Jackie Bell.**

**NO CLUB CAN SURVIVE WITHOUT ITS SPONSORS AND WE THANK OUR SPONSORS, NOT ONLY FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE TOP SIDE, BUT ALSO FOR THE NYC. THEY PLAY A BIG PART IN THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF THE TEAM AND WE COULDN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT THEM**

# NYC Family Night

*This event was held this Tuesday night. A great night it was, too.*



From Left: Don Mann, Wayne Scurrah and Graham Wright.



The crowd at Family Night.



Co-captains, Mason Lino and Sam Lisone with MC Gordon Gibbons.



Guest Speaker, Joe Naufahu.



Guest Speaker, Rene Naufahu.



Development Player, Javier Pitovao with Duane Mann.



Development Player, Mose Esera with Duane Mann.



Solomone Kata and Ken Maumalo checking out the quality!



Wayne Scurrah.



GM Football, Dean Bell.



**Stacey Jones, Tui Lolohea, Sir Peter, Vodafone's Graham Wright and GM Commercial, Don Mann.**



**Mason Lino and family.**



**Paul Ulberg, Ata Hignano and Mattius Heimuli.**



**Physio John Love and partner.**



**Mason Lino and his partner, all smiles!**



**Ofahiki Ogdon and his family.**



**Metia Lisati and family.**



**NYC Trainer, Troy Herewini and family.**



**Kouma Samson and family.**



**Marata Niukore with his Mum.**



**Paul Ulberg and family.**



**Development Manager, Elizabeth Richards.**



**Toafofoa Siplely and family.**



**Sir Peter, Tuimoala Lolohea Stacey Jones and Vodafone's Graham Wright.**



**GM Commercial, Don Mann, Sir Peter, CEO Wayne Scurrah and Vodafone's Graham Wright.**

***What a great get-together and a great way to end an amazing season! Congratulations to everyone involved, and here's looking forward to some equally great times in 2015!***



HOLDEN CUP GRAND FINAL 2014

# GAMEBREAKER



## SAM LISONE Warriors

**I**NSTRUMENTAL – it’s easily the best way to describe the impact Sam Lisone has on his Warriors team.

When the inspirational Warriors skipper runs on to the field for his 50th – and final – Holden Cup game this afternoon, he does so knowing he is the most influential player in the team that carries the hopes of an entire nation.

In fact, the 20-year-old is so inspiring that in the six games his team played without their skipper, they claimed just one win and that was only against the hapless Titans.

“It takes confidence out of our players when he’s not there,” explains Warriors under-20s coach and Kiwi legend Stacey Jones. “He’s massive for us. Not only in his actions but his words as well. The boys just love playing with him.”

As powerful as he may be with his words, nothing can match his power on the field. The hulking front-rower averages 142 metres per game and is in the top 10 hit-up runners in the league in what has easily been the most consistent season of his playing years.

“I try and lead the way for the forwards, I’m one of the experienced guys in the team,” Lisone tells *Big League*. “I enjoy the captaincy as well. I like the responsibility and I like taking charge and leading from the front. So it’s been a good ride.”

Signed on until the end of 2016 and hailing from the same junior club as Manu Vatuvei, Siliva Havili and David Fa’alogo, the 102kg powerhouse jokes he tried to be a halfback but has been stuck in the forwards from a young age. Being a part of last year’s under-20s runners-up is no joke though – that grand final loss is what he says has motivated him this season.

“It’s definitely driven me. I think losing is way sorer than training, the pain just doesn’t compare.”

Today presents his last chance for revenge.

– SCOTT BAILEY

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ant.Trouville/NRLPhotos.com

**This story is courtesy of BIG LEAGUE magazine, and as an added bonus, we have 10 copies of the bumper grand final issue to give away. Just send an envelope to the address below. No questions or "to dos" this time! First entry out of the hat is the winner!**



**BIG LEAGUE MAGAZINE\_FINALS**  
P.O. Box 54295,  
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Auckland

AND ON THE BACK OF THE ENVELOPE  
write your name and address... AND PHONE!

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**P.O. Box 54295,  
the Marina 2144  
Manukau, Auckland**

**Drawn on Tuesday the  
14<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014.**

In 2008, **John Deaker** wrote *"The Converts: Changing Codes"* with **Bob Howitt**, based around lengthy interviews John conducted with people who'd converted between rugby and league, like **Inga Tuigamala**, **Frano Botica**, **Craig Innes**, **John Timu** and **John Schuster**.

## History shows Sam Burgess is unlikely to upstage SBW in Rugby's World Cup.

**S**am Burgess may have stolen the spotlight away from **Sonny Bill Williams** the last few weeks but he is unlikely to do so when Rugby Union's World Cup kicks off in less than a year in England.

The major obstacle for Burgess is time. History has proven that forwards like **Brad Thorn** find the transition from league to rugby tougher than backs – and that even the best back converts like England's **Jason Robinson** take time to adjust to the 15 man code.

Even Sonny Bill Williams took over two years learning the 15 man game with Toulon in France before he played for Canterbury and eventually the **All Blacks** in late 2010. The same positional speculation that Sonny Bill Williams' move to union provoked surrounds **Sam Burgess**. This debate involves not only what would be his best position in union but also what will be the spot he could adjust to the most quickly to give himself a crack at England's 2015 World Cup squad.

Last week the *Daily Telegraph* reported that "Following a meeting between England coach **Stuart Lancaster** in August, Bath coach **Mike Ford** shelved plans to play Burgess as a backrower and has confirmed the 116kg unit will play centre."

Complicating Burgess' move more has been the fracture to his cheekbone in South's victory as he became the first non-Australian to win the **Clive Churchill medal** for the man of the match in the NRL Grand Final. Bath will now have to put on hold their plans to play him this month which would have given him a few months to put his hand up for selection in England's Six Nations squad early next year.

One man in a good position to weigh up the chances of Burgess in Union has been **Sam Tomkins'** brother **Joel** – who recently went back to league after a 3 year stint with Union. When questioned on the topic recently, Tomkins said:

"Sam has to play No12 in union because putting someone with no experience of union in the forwards won't work. But, if he can get to grips with the role of inside centre and feel comfortable, then the raw ability to carry the ball and hit people in the tackle – there won't be anyone better in the world.

"The World Cup is a definite possibility if Sam does get to grips with the technical side of the sport. While it is a short time-frame and a big ask, if there is anyone you would want to be coming over from league to play No12 for England then it's Sam Burgess."

Burgess will have no shortage of relevant help in changing codes. Bath's coach Mike Ford is a former convert while England have **Andy Farrell** in their coaching ranks – someone very familiar with how tough the transition can be. Despite this type of help at his disposal, history shows Sam Burgess is unlikely to be a dominant force at next year's Rugby World Cup. If he can be though, it would be even more astonishing than the heroic effort he turned in during **Souths'** 30-6 crushing victory over the **Bulldogs** at the weekend.



**Sam Burgess, the Clive Churchill Medallist. NRL Grand Final - Rabbitohs v Bulldogs. ANZ Stadium, Sydney Australia. Sunday 5 October 2014. Photo: Paul Seiser/ www.photosport.co.nz**



**Sonny Bill Williams turns out for his first training session with the Counties Manukau Steelers, Drury Auckland, Monday 6th October 2014.**

**Photo: Shane Wenzlick / www.photosport.co.nz**

**With the NRL season wrapped up for another year, New Zealand's 'Greatest Weekend' – the Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines is the next event big league fans can look forward to!**

Back again and better than ever in 2015, the Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines sees all 16 NRL teams converge on Auckland for one fantastic weekend! Packed

full of stars, the games are shorter, the gaps are wider, the action faster and the atmosphere around the ground is electric! I've you didn't get there this year, you

missed out on a GREAT event.

NRL star **Big Willie Mason** was in town earlier this week to talk about the Nines. Willie has racked up over 270 NRL

games and is one of the game's greatest characters. He told the Butcher he loved playing in this year's inaugural tournament and can't wait to come back next year.

**Tickets are on-sale for the Nines NOW – Thursday 9 October through Ticketek.**

### **TICKET DETAILS:**

**Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines, Sat Jan 31 and Sun 1 Feb, 2015. Eden Park, Auckland**

### **ON-SALE:**

**2 x day tickets from \$99 per adult Thursday 9 October, 9am NZT / 7am AEST from Ticketek**

**Tickets are selling as fast as a Mad Butcher sausage sizzle, so get your mates organised and get in quick! [www.ticketek.co.nz/nrlakl9s](http://www.ticketek.co.nz/nrlakl9s)**

## Lino leads by example

Talk about brave. **Vodafone Junior Warriors** co-captain **Mason Lino**, the 20-year-old halfback, suffered another subluxation of his right shoulder inside the first 10 minutes of the title decider against Brisbane.

Lino was sidelined by a similar injury earlier in the season but wasn't about to let it affect his premiership dream.

Lino covered it up for more than 70 minutes to help the **Vodafone Junior Warriors** to their heart-stopping 34-32 win.

Facing Brisbane in his 62nd and last NYC match, Lino laid on two tries and also kicked five of six attempts at goal to finish his career with 503 points - only the second player in the NYC's history to reach the 500-point mark. He wasn't showing or feeling too much pain afterwards, only elation as he and fellow captain **Sam Lisone** hoisted the trophy.

Lino and team-mate **Kouma Samson** leave for Europe later this month to take up one-year contracts with **AS Carcassonne** in the French championship.

## Finals a great experience

Of course the one everyone was there to watch was the **NRL Grand Final between the Bulldogs and Souths**, and it did not disappoint.

It was an incredible atmosphere, with 83,833 people jammed in to see the Bunnies win 30-6, a scoreline that

made it look easy but which was only inflated with a barrage of late tries.

I'd say about 60 per cent of the crowd was in the green and red of **Souths**, and 40 per cent behind the Doggies, but **Souths'** win ended a 43-year drought, and who does not love a good underdog story?

The performance from captain **Sam Burgess**, playing on despite a broken cheekbone, was remarkable, and all in an atmosphere that can be described as electric.

It is not that long ago that the side was going to be thrown out of the comp all together, something that saw thousands take to the streets in protest. The Bunnies have endured many lean years so even a mad **Vodafone Warriors** fan like me does not begrudge them their day in the sun.

But it has made me all the determined to see the title come to Auckland so we can experience the joy that was written large on the faces of a massive contingent of Bunnies fans.

So the season ends with a game to remember, and I am already looking forward to next year.

## Tomkins gets England call

**Vodafone Warriors** fullback **Sam Tomkins** is one of six NRL-contracted players named in England's squad for the Four Nations in New Zealand and Australia later this month.

The others in the 24-man party are South Sydney's NRL premiership-winning front rowers **George** and **Tom Burgess**, Canterbury-Bankstown's **James Graham** and **St George Illawarra's Mike Cooper** and **Gareth Widdop**.

Also returning to the England team is Tomkins' brother **Joel**, back in league with Wigan after a stint in rugby.

The squad includes 13 survivors from last year's Rugby League World Cup.

## The Wright man for the job

Current NYC assistant **Kelvin Wright** will step up to coach the **Vodafone Warriors Juniors** in 2015.

Wright has also emerged through both the local scene and the club's system to earn promotion.

After a long and successful playing career, including representing **New Zealand Residents**, Auckland, the **Vulcans** and Mt Albert, he began coaching with the **Otara Scorpions** in the Auckland competition in 2011, before guiding the **Bay Roskill Vikings** in the Fox Memorial in 2012.

He was appointed **Vodafone Junior Warriors** assistant coach in 2013, is **Junior Warriors** assistant coach again this year, and is joining the **Kiwis'** coaching staff for this year's Four Nations.



stuff.co.nz



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJS83cB25o8>

stuff.co.nz

## We have lost a good man

Sometimes things happen that put life into perspective.

I was in Australia for the footy when I got news of the death of a man I am incredibly fond of, comedian **Ewen Gilmour**, aged just 51.

Ewen gave of his time generously, and was never reluctant to give a helping hand to support the causes we were trying to raise cash for.

Anyone who thinks comedians make a lot of money is deluded, but Ewen was always the first in line to offer his services, always recognising that he could use his talent to do some good.

I will miss him enormously. He was one of those blokes who was a joy to be around, a funny and engaging mate, but most of all a man with great heart.

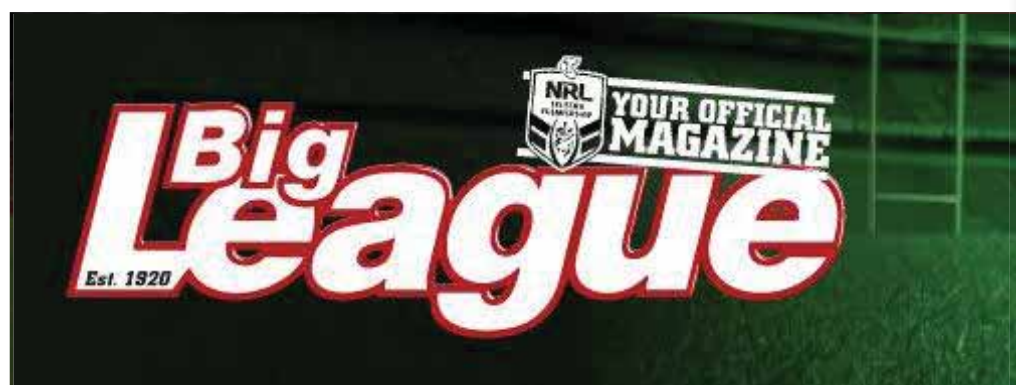
I was lucky enough to have him along to a recent birthday party and he had the place in stitches. None of us there that day could have imagined it would be last time we would see him perform.

So football suddenly did not seem so important. Rest in peace my dear friend, it was a joy to have known you and I will remember you well.

For online memories of Ewen see:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/editors-picks/10576244/Ewen-Gilmour-reader-tributes>

**Last regular season issue of Big League for 2014. Thanks everyone for your patronage throughout this year. It's been a big one and we've capped it off with a massive issue for our Season Review.**



## THIS WEEK, IN THE 2014 SEASON REVIEW ISSUE – ON SALE THURSDAY

THIS WEEK'S BUMPER 80-PAGE SPECIAL SEASON REVIEW ISSUE TAKES AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT SOUTH SYDNEY'S PREMIERSHIP WIN, THE GRAND FINAL AND A FULL REVIEW OF EVERY CLUB FOR SEASON 2014.

### FEATURES

- **South Sydney's** revival can be attributed a great deal to the man who's been leading the way – Michael Maguire.
- Clive Churchill Medallist **Sam Burgess** leaves the game with one of the game's top honours for his heroic performance.
- Mysterious with the press, ask anyone at Belmore about **Des Hasler** and they won't have a bad word to say.
- Both grand final teams' **players ratings**.
- **The Premiers** – how their season unfolded.
- The Grand Final in pictures and a full play-by-play.
- **Season 2014** and the headlines that made the year.
- Big League's **Team of the Year** and **2014 Awards**.
- **Four Nations** preview.
- **One Community Awards**: full wrap and winners.

### PLUS

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DAMIEN LOVELOCK'S Best of the British.

NEWS: Grand final and Four Nations.

**South Sydney TEAM POSTER** – signed by the side.

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### THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

On sale at newsagents, supermarkets and at the ground from

**Thursday, October 9.**

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# League's Everywhere Man

By Barry Ross

**H**e's a familiar face around the NRL stadiums. One of the ground managers who must ensure all is in order on the sidelines and around the dressing rooms, both teams are on the field on time and the post-match media conferences are organised.

However, many who come across **Bob Lanigan** would not be aware of his impressive CV and vast travels within rugby league that has seen him enjoy fitness training positions with Parramatta, Wigan, Leeds, the Warriors and also the New Zealand Test Squad.

And that's not the end of it.

"Lanno" has worked with some of the best athletes in rugby league, rugby union and boxing. And as a classy winger, back in the days when Newtown were in top flight, he also has the honour of being the competition's leading points-scorer.

Fit and active beyond his years, Lanigan remembers fondly growing up just a kilometre from the Sydney Cricket Ground and playing for Chelsea United as a boy. He was called+ into grade with Newtown in 1965 and saw a 23-year old winger the next season finished on top of the individual point-scoring list with 185 from three tries and 88 goals.

There were some pretty handy goal-kickers behind him, including Keith Barnes, Bob Batty, Eric Simms and Graeme Langlands.

In his four seasons at Henson Park, Lanigan played 68 first grade games, scoring 462 points from 11 tries, 211 goals and seven field goals. In 1969 he captain-coached Griffith to the premiership and then played at Dapto, erina, and Macquarie United before retiring at the end of the 1974 season.

Living on the Central Coast where he became a close

friend of John Monie, he followed Monie to Parramatta in 1987 as his conditioning man for three seasons.

When Monie left for the champion Wigan club in 1980, he took Lanigan with him to do strength and conditioning training and they stayed for three English winters, winning three Challenge Cups and three championships.

Monie returned home at the end of the 1992-1993 season, but Lanigan stayed in England, where he joined Leeds for two years, before reuniting with inaugural Auckland Warriors coach, Monie, in 1995 for three seasons.

While living and working in New Zealand, Lanigan worked with Kiwi Test Coach, Frank Endicott, for five years, finishing after the 2000 World Cup.

"I feel very fortunate not only for the places I and [wife] Glenda have been able to live and work, but the people I've met and the great memories on and off the field," Lanigan said.

Lanigan even delved into rugby union, working with former All Black, John Kirwin, in 1999, doing pre-season work with the NEC club in Japanese rugby.

Five years later he went to Wales to supervise the Newport Gwent Dragons pre-season training, when Chris Anderson switched to the dark side for a year.

Legendary boxing trainer, John Lewis and Lanigan have been close friends since their childhood days and Lewis employed his mate as the corner man with world champions, Jeff French, Kostya Tazyu and Virgil Hill.

He's now in his 16th season in the job, outlasting all but



few fellow long serving key men, Peter Denning.

As a ground manager, he has worked at test matches, State Of Origin games, grand finals, City-Country fixtures and hundreds of club rounds.

"When a chance came to apply for a position as NRL ground manager in 1999, I jumped at the opportunity to remain involved in the NRL. I still love rugby league and the people it breeds."

Few have covered the miles and roles of Bob Lanigan and, with a heart full of passion and energy, he's not ready to pack it in yet.

## GRAND FINAL

by Barry Ross at ANZ STADIUM

**T**he ground record crowd at Sydney's ANZ Stadium for Sunday's Grand Final provided an electric atmosphere for those lucky enough to be in attendance. The comments by NRL Chief Executive, Dave Smith, reflected the thoughts of the many respected League identities at the match. "The atmosphere was incredible and matched by a big crowd," said Smith. "It was a wonderful final to a massive season."

Ron Coote, who played 23 Tests for Australia, three as captain, as well as playing in nine Grand Finals, winning six, agreed with Smith. "It was a great occasion and a pleasure to be part of the day," emphasised Ron. "The atmosphere was tremendous and the supporters of both clubs are to be congratulated for their efforts on the day."

On an extremely hot day, the colours of both teams were prominent throughout the huge arena. As well as the jerseys of both sides, the fans painted their faces in their team's colours. Red and green balloons, from the South Sydney

areas were easy to see, as were the blue and white balloons held up by the Bulldogs supporters. But while the fantastic support for both teams was obvious, it was during the game when the atmosphere rose to another level. The song, "Glory, glory to South Sydney" rang out when the Rabbitohs ran on to the ground for the kickoff, while the Canterbury supporters, erupted when their team came down the tunnel to the sounds of, "Who let the dogs out." The game lent itself to more passion from the big crowd because of the relentless defence from both teams and the tightness of the scoreline until the final seven minutes. Souths piled on 16 points to nil in the last seven minutes but although the Rabbitohs were the better side and were deserved Premiership winners, the 30-6 scoreline was not a true indication of the play. The NRL were elated with the success of their big day. The game was the highest rating TV match of all time across five city markets, and almost 16 million nationally tuned into the final series. This was more than 3% up from last year, while the total attendance at all final series games was over 320,000, an increase of 13% from 2013. The Grand Final crowd of 83,833 was the biggest attendance at any sporting event at the Sydney 2000 Olympic stadium, since it was reconfigured after the

Olympics. All three games on the big day, were exciting and high quality affairs. The results of these games was a real plus to the game. In first grade, Souths won their first title since 1971, while in the Interstate Challenge, the Northern Pride defeated the heavily favoured Penrith. The Northern Pride are from Cairns in far North Queensland and five of the team members, including captain, Jason Roos, had never been to Sydney before, let alone play on such a big stage. The Pride's left winger, 21 year old Javid Bowen, who is a cousin of the former North Queensland Cowboy star fullback Matt Bowen, collected three smart tries. Penrith, who had several former NRL players in their side, including captain Kevin Kingston, Tom Humble, and the Naiqama brothers Kevin and Wes, led by 12 points with 20 minutes to play. But the Queenslanders refused to give up and came away with the good victory. The under 20 NYC Holden Cup Grand final between the Warriors and the Broncos was played during the hottest time on what was the hottest Grand Final of all time. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, the temperature early in the second half around 3pm, was about 34 degrees (nearly 100 on the old scale). It was the first day of daylight saving in New South Wales and the brilliant sunshine gave the players no

respite from the oppressive heat. The Warriors dominated the first 50 minutes or so and led 22-6 at halftime and 34-6 with 28 minutes to play. The Broncos came storming home and only a missed conversion from wide out, by Jayden Nikorima, with less than a minute to play, prevented the game going into extra time. The Warriors hung on to win 34-32, which was their third title in this prestigious competition since it was introduced in 2008. 19 year old Warrior centre, Solomone Kata, scored three excellent tries and won the Jack Gibson medal as the game's best player. The Warriors win in such testing conditions is even more meritorious when you consider the low temperatures for the past few weeks, back in their home environment. In other news from Grand Final day, Souths Sam Burgess, despite fracturing his eye socket in the game's first tackle, won the Clive Churchill medal as the best player from the first grade Grand Final. After this game, Souths centre, 22 year old Kirisome Auva'a, announced that he wanted to represent New Zealand, if selected, for the coming For Nations Championship. This is despite the fact that he is eligible to represent both Australia and Samoa. Auva'a crossed for the fourth of Souths five tries, seven minutes from the end of the game.

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