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# Newsletter

20 NOV 2014  
#51

# 22 : 18

## NEW ZEALAND

## AUSTRALIA

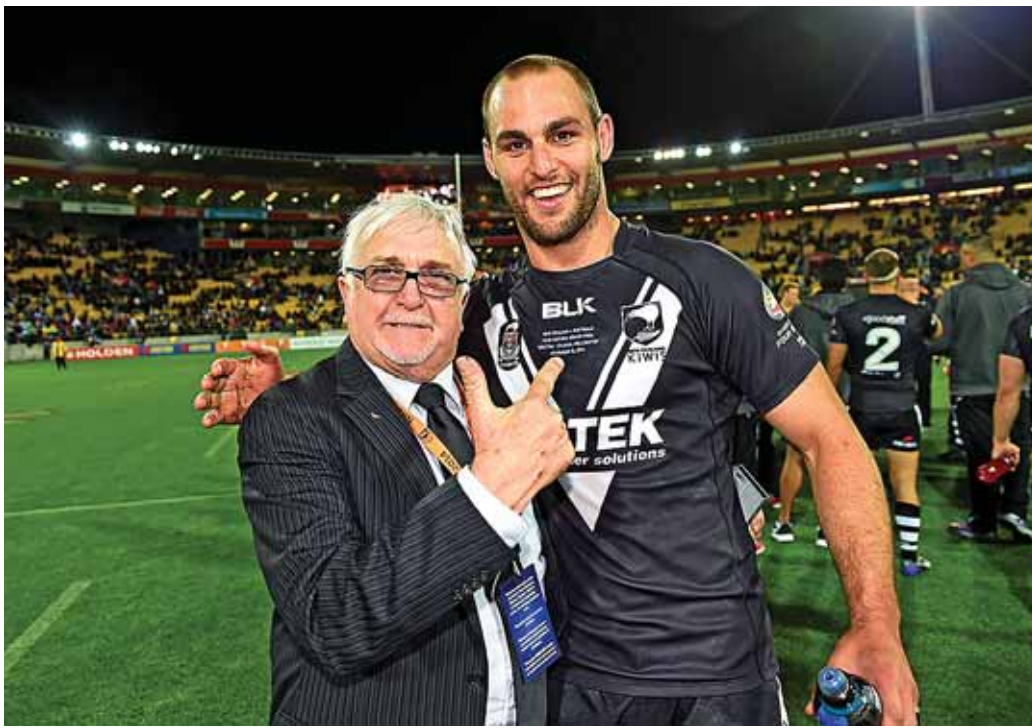


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Kiwis players gather in a team photo as they celebrate defeating Australia in the Four Nations Rugby League Final in Wellington on Saturday 15 November 2014.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)

“ Each and every one of the players helped us to achieve the grand final win. It's not every day you have consecutive wins over Australia... [and] ...we have just won four tests in a row - Australia, Samoa, England and Australia, surely some sort of a record. ”



Sir Peter Leitch and Simon Mannering. " I just had to have a photo with our marvelous captain on the field"

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz



Kiwis coach Stephen Kerney, poses for a photo with Sir Peter Leitch and Lewis Brown as they celebrate the victory.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz



Sir Peter Leitch and Lewis Brown in the dressing room after the match. Meanwhile, Jason Taumalolo drinks from the Four Nations Cup (only water... yeah, right!).

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz



Kieran Foran and Sir Peter Leitch in the dressing room after the win.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz

What a four weeks I have had, living the dream following the successful *Kiwis* rugby league team around.

I was very blessed that *Kiwis* coach, **Stephen Kearney** and the NZRL allowed me to hang out with the team and stay at their hotels. When you love league like I do, that's like winning Lotto two weeks in a row.

I must also thank my wife, **Janice**, for allowing me to be away from home for so long. And the fact the team went unbeaten in their four games, including beating the Aussies 30-12 in the first game and then winning the final in Wellington – 22-18 – capped it all off. On Friday night before the test, **Stephen Kearney** invited **Graham Lowe** to present the players with their test jerseys and say a few words. Anyone that knows Graham will tell you he does not know what a few words means, but he made a fantastic speech that had the hairs on my arms standing up, and I could see that the team was taking in every word he said. I believe what he had to say would have contributed in some small way to

our victory. Other people to give out the jerseys on this tour were *Kiwis* legends **Mark Graham**, **Ruben Wiki** and **Mark Broadhurst**, who all played a part in steering the *Kiwis* to victory. Even the Minister of Sport, **Jonathan Coleman**, sent the boys a letter of support, and of course, our Prime Minister **John Key**, did a video for the team. All these things help, so a big thank you to all of them. I have to say the Australian league team was very gracious in defeat, with several going into the crowd and giving away there playing gear to members of the public. Their coach, and captain **Cameron Smith**, who is a special person and a guy I have plenty of respect for, were

both very humble and gracious at the press conference after the game. Our own captain, **Simon Mannering**, who led our team so well through the campaign, is also a very special bloke, and we are lucky to have him. Not only is he a great leader, but he is a bloody great bloke who the Butcher is proud to call a mate. To be on the field and share the victory was a very special moment for me. To see the team sharing the love was FANTASTIC, and then partying back at the hotel and sharing a drink with the guys on Sunday was special. Each and every one of the players helped us to achieve the grand final win. **REMEMBER, ONE MAN ON THE FIELD DOES NOT WIN A GAME - IT TAKES 13 GUYS TO**

**WIN. SOME MAY STAND OUT, BUT IT'S A TEAM EFFORT.** It's not every day you have consecutive wins over Australia. The last time it happened was in 1997-1998 and before that way back in 1952-1953, and don't forget, we have just won four tests in a row - Australia, Samoa, England and Australia, surely some sort of a record. And a few other things that happened in league recently: The *Kiwi Ferns* beat the *Aussie Jillaroos*, the *Junior Kiwis* beat the *Junior Kangaroos*, the *Vodafone Warriors* won the Holden Cup grand final, and the club has a new CEO in **Jim Doyle**. **League is looking OKAY right now!**

# JOHNSON AND VATUVEI INSPIRE KIWIS

By **John Coffey**

**Shaun Johnson and ManuVatuvei** were the stand-out performers behind a dominant forward pack as the **Kiwis** beat the **Kangaroos** 22-18 in the Four Nations final at Wellington's Westpac Stadium on Saturday night.

The score greatly flattered the Australians, who were outplayed on every single match statistic -- completion rates, tries, line breaks, errors, missed tackles, offloads and running metres. It was a worthy climax to a memorable tournament.

Depending on how you phrase it, this was the first time the **Kiwis** had beaten the **Kangaroos** in consecutive matches since 1997 and 1998 (both at North Harbour), twice within the same series since the 2005 Tri Nations (at Sydney and Leeds) and twice in consecutive matches within the same series since 1953 (at Christchurch and Wellington).

Johnson, so elusive and blessed with amazing speed, scored a scintillating solo try when he broke the line 37 metres out and evaded **Greg Inglis** to touch down. He also dazzled the defence before delivering a 30m pass for Vatuvei's first try, and kicked intelligently under great pressure.

To score that first try, Vatuvei gathered a bouncing ball at full pace and bulldozed over rival wing **Sione Mata'utia**. For his second -- which broke **Nigel Vagana**'s New Zealand Test record -- Vatuvei repeated the punishment on poor Mata'utia. Big Manu also registered a game-high ball-carrying 192m with his bullocking runs.

Johnson had to be brilliant to claim the Man of the Match award ahead of Vatuvei. Now a far more confident kicker, Johnson added three goals -- and hit the uprights with his other two attempts -- to take his Test tally to 116 points.

International rivalry was forgotten when an obviously delighted **Andrew Johns**, arguably the finest of all Australian scrum-halves, gave Johnson a congratulatory hug after fulltime. Johns has long predicted a great future for Johnson.

The Vatuvei double boosted his career total to 20 tries, one more than Vagana. **Sean Hoppe** is still third on 17, but **Jason Nightingale**'s fifth try of the Four Nations tournament lifted him to 16 and fourth equal with **Stacey Jones, Hugh McGahan** and **Kevin Iro**.

## Previous winners

This was New Zealand's fourth win in a tournament final since 2005, all of them at the expense of Australia.

Vatuvei is the sole survivor of the side which beat the **Kangaroos** 24-0 in the 2005 Tri Nations decider at Elland Road, Leeds. Fittingly, Manu also crossed for two tries on that occasion. One of his team-mates in the final was current assistant coach **David Kidwell**.

**Stephen Kearney** coached the 2008 **Kiwis** to win the World Cup final 34-20 at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane. **Simon Mannering** played in the centres that memorable night, alongside Vatuvei, **Adam Blair, Issac Luke** and **Greg Eastwood**.

Luke and Eastwood again came off the bench when the **Kiwis** were 16-12 winners of the 2010 Four Nations final, also at Suncorp. Mannering, Blair, Jason Nightingale and **Shaun Kenny-Dowall** were all in the starting line-up under Kearney's coaching. Vatuvei had broken an arm against England at Wellington in the opening game, causing Mannering to again switch to the centres.

## Inspiring leader

Simon Mannering has thoroughly deserved the credit he has been receiving for his captaincy and tireless all-round

performances for both the **Vodafone Warriors** and **Kiwis** in recent seasons, never more so than in the last few weeks.

Some were critical of Mannering when, as a young man and new captain, he was not seen to be waving his arms and yelling at his team-mate when behind their goal-line. That has never been his style. Instead, he leads by example, and players listen to his quiet, firm comments in times of crisis.

Such a crisis occurred soon after halftime on Saturday. Australia had just scored to get within two points and rampaging **Martin Taupau** was about to be stretchered off with a potentially serious injury. But Mannering's composure and determination was just the example needed by his less experienced team-mates. It was his 40th Test, and one of his finest hours.

## Hiku a hero

Fullback **Peta Hiku** and left centre Shaun Kenny-Dowall had their best games of the Four Nations. Only Vatuvei carried the ball for more metres than Kenny-Dowall (175) while Hiku registered 141 metres.

Hiku was generally safe under the high ball, chimed into the backline with fine timing, and gave the last pass for Vatuvei's second try. It's a shame **Brett Stewart** did not follow his brother, **Glenn**, from Manly, a move which would have given Hiku a regular fullback role at club level. Kenny-Dowall needed time to make the transition from Roosters right-side to Kiwis left-side centre and was back to the form which made him such a factor in his club's 2013 NRL Grand Final triumph. He was the best centre on the field, complementing the consistent **Dean Whare** on the other side.

Meanwhile, Jason Nightingale demonstrated he is more than just a finisher, with his try-saving ankle tap on **Josh Mansour** and brilliant late kick which earned a repeat set. He might just be the best all-round wingman in the game.

## Pivots and partners

Shaun Johnson and **Kieran Foran** are both young men with long club and international careers ahead of them. But already they have become New Zealand's most established halfback duo of the last 30 years.

Since 1983, **Kiwis** teams have used 38 different halfback pairings, 20 of them for only one Test. The Four Nations final was the 11th time that Johnson and Foran have played together in the last two years, equalling the number of **Benji Marshall** and **Nathan Fien** between 2008 and 2010.

In boxing parlance, Foran is pound for pound one of the toughest characters in rugby league. He is fearless and tackles with the force of a forward, yet his attacking and kicking skills are of the highest order, an ideal foil to the brilliant and still emerging Johnson.

## Ka-pow, it's Taupau

**Martin Taupau** was in action little more than one quarter of the final, but underlined the meaning of "impact forward" when he came off the bench to shock the Australians. Many of his 90 ball-carrying metres were achieved with multiple defenders desperately trying to halt his momentum. Happily, mighty Martin's injury was not serious.

The **Kiwis** interchange, led by Taupau, Greg Eastwood and **Tohu Harris**, sparked a revival midway through the first spell, transforming a 0-6 deficit into a 14-6 lead at halftime. They lifted the bar after **Jesse Bromwich** (the top forward metre-eater at 161m), Adam Blair and **Jason Taumalolo** assisted Simon Mannering with the early spadework.

Unlucky **Thomas Leuluai** missed the final because of a shoulder injury, but Issac Luke stepped up his pace as the starting hooker. This was Luke's belated Grand Final after suspension cost him an NRL title with South Sydney and the first-round win over Australia.

When Luke needed a rest, **Lewis Brown** kept the **Kangaroos** hopping with his darts out of acting half. The **Kiwis** no longer need to look to the likes of **Elijah Taylor** and **Ben Henry** to fill the vital No.9 role.

## Careful what you wish for

I was as insistent as anyone that Four Nations matches should have been refereed by neutral officials. But then I was as shocked as anyone else by Englishman **Phil Bentham**'s erratic display in the final.

Apparently the **Kangaroos** played a perfect second half, receiving all four penalties for an overall 6-3 advantage. Bentham and his Australian touch judges were blind to the number of times that Shaun Johnson was hit late after kicking, often by not one, but two, opponents rushing up from off-side positions.

And we didn't really have neutral officials did we? The video referee was **Bernard Sutton**, another Australian, who was preferred ahead of Englishman **Ian Smith**. The thinking behind all that is mind-boggling.

## Classy Kangaroos

Captain **Cameron Smith** and coach **Tim Sheens** were all class with their post-match comments. They quite rightly praised the **Kiwis** for their achievement and also their own younger players for their considerable improvement during the month-long tournament.

Smith was Australia's best player, topping the tackle count, jumping out of dummy half to keep the **Kiwis** guessing, and kicking two of his three goals from the sidelines.

An old school leaguie, Sheens has lost only three times as Test coach, two in the last month. But there was no hint of dummy spitting from the man who took over from **Ricky Stuart** after the 2008 World Cup and is keen to continue through to the 2017 World Cup.

Best of the **Kangaroos** rookies was young **Bulldogs** prop **David Klemmer**, who missed the first match but ensured himself of a long international career with his commitment off the bench in all of Australia's other matches.

## Dean's double delight

**Dean Whare** had much more to celebrate than the Four Nations triumph last week. Nursing a niggling foot tendon injury, Whare was given leave by coach Stephen Kearney to return to Sydney for two days so he could be with partner **Natasha** for the birth of his second daughter. What better way to celebrate that, than with a sip from the Four Nations Cup?

## Kearney's triple treat

Stephen Kearney deserves a place among New Zealand's most successful rugby league coaches for inspiring his men to a third major victory, after his startling debut at the 2008 World Cup and 2010 Four Nations. This time it was all the sweeter, achieved not just on New Zealand soil but in Kearney's home town of Wellington. He had good men around him, too, in assistant coach David Kidwell and manager Tony Iro.

## Record crowds

There have been bigger crowds at **Warriors** games in Wellington, but Saturday's 25,183 was satisfactory when one considers the poor Westpac Stadium turn-outs for rugby union and soccer over the last few years.

Boosted by the bumper crowd in Brisbane for the opening double-header, this tournament drew an aggregate attendance of 144,786 -- a Four Nations record. Simon Mannering mentioned the pride he and his players had in performing before their own people on their own soil, which bodes well for the 2017 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

## What of the future?

The next Four Nations is not scheduled until 2016, when Scotland will be the fourth nation after winning a northern hemisphere qualifying series. Scotland unfortunately will not have **Toa Samoa**'s strong representation from the NRL and might struggle to be competitive.

In the meantime, the **Kiwis** are to play three Tests against England in Britain in 2015, with the strong chance of a pre-tour home Test against Samoa. It is also hoped the Anzac Test will be at Eden Park, 100 years on from the

Gallipoli campaign which so defined New Zealand's involvement in World War I.

On the same weekend as the Anzac Test there will be at least one, probably two, Pacific Tests involving Samoa, Fiji, Tonga and Papua New Guinea in Australia. But any chance of reducing the length of future NRL competitions to cater for more international football will not occur until the current television deal ends after the 2017 season.

*\*John Coffey was West Coast raised and Christchurch-based, he has been writing about league for more than 50 years and has covered more than 100 tests for New Zealand newspapers and overseas magazines, and written nine books. He was awarded a QSM in the 2014 Queen's Birthday honours for services to sports reporting and history.*

## TOURNAMENT TEAM

John Coffey's all-star team chosen from the Four Nations tournament:

**Fullback:**

**Greg Inglis** (Australia)

**Wings:**

**Jason Nightingale** (New Zealand),

**Ryan Hall** (England)

**Centres:**

**Joey Leilua** (Samoa),

**Michael Jennings** (Australia)

**Halves:**

**Kieran Foran** (New Zealand),

**Shaun Johnson** (New Zealand)

**Props:**

**Jesse Bromwich** (New Zealand),

**George Burgess** (England)

**Hooker:**

**Cameron Smith** (Australia)

**Second-row:**

**Simon Mannering** (New Zealand),

**Frank Pritchard** (Samoa)

**Loose forward:**

**Jason Taumalolo** (New Zealand)

**Interchange:**

**Thomas Leuluai** (New Zealand),

**James Graham** (England),

**Martin Taupau** (New Zealand),

**David Klemmer** (Australia)

# THE BIG FINAL 2014

## A SELECTION OF GREAT PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE KIWIS ON AND OFF THE FIELD LAST SATURDAY IN WELLINGTON

The photos you see here are all courtesy of PHOTOSPORT. They're just a selection of over two hundred images that follow the excitement of the game. If you want to view more just click on any of the links under the pix.

You can order images from Photosport; just follow the instructions on their website.

A big thanks to PHOTOSPORT for allowing us to use these images in the Newsletter and a tip of the hat to Andrew Cornaga, Marty Melville and Grant Down who were in the right places at the right time!



Manu Vatuvei dives in to score!

Photo: Grant Down / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



Martin Taupau is overjoyed at Jason Nightingale's try!

Photo:

Andrew Cornaga / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



Shaun Johnson scores a try.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



The Kiwis perform the Haka in front of the Kangaroos at the commencement of the Four Nations Final.

*Photo: Marty Melville / www.photosport.co.nz*



Martin Taupau fends off Boyd Cordner and Greg Bird of the Kangaroos during the game.

*Photo: Marty Melville / www.photosport.co.nz*



Jason Nightingale scores a flying try!

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



Kiwis Martin Taupau is downed in a tackle by Kangaroos Cooper Cronk.

*Photo: Grant Down / www.photosport.co.nz*



Shaun Johnson's kicking was spot on during the game.

*Photo by Marty Melville / www.photosport.co.nz*



Kangaroo Josh Papalii, is tackled by Greg Eastwood (L) and Lewis Brown (R) of the Kiwis during the Four Nations Final.

*Photo by Marty Melville / www.photosport.co.nz*



A general view Westpac Stadium at twilight, with Kiwis supporters' flags waving in the foreground. Great atmosphere!

*Photo by Marty Melville / www.photosport.co.nz*



Kiwis players react to their win while dazed Kangaroos look on as the whistle blows!

Photo: Grant Down / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



The joy of the Big Win!

Photo: Grant Down / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



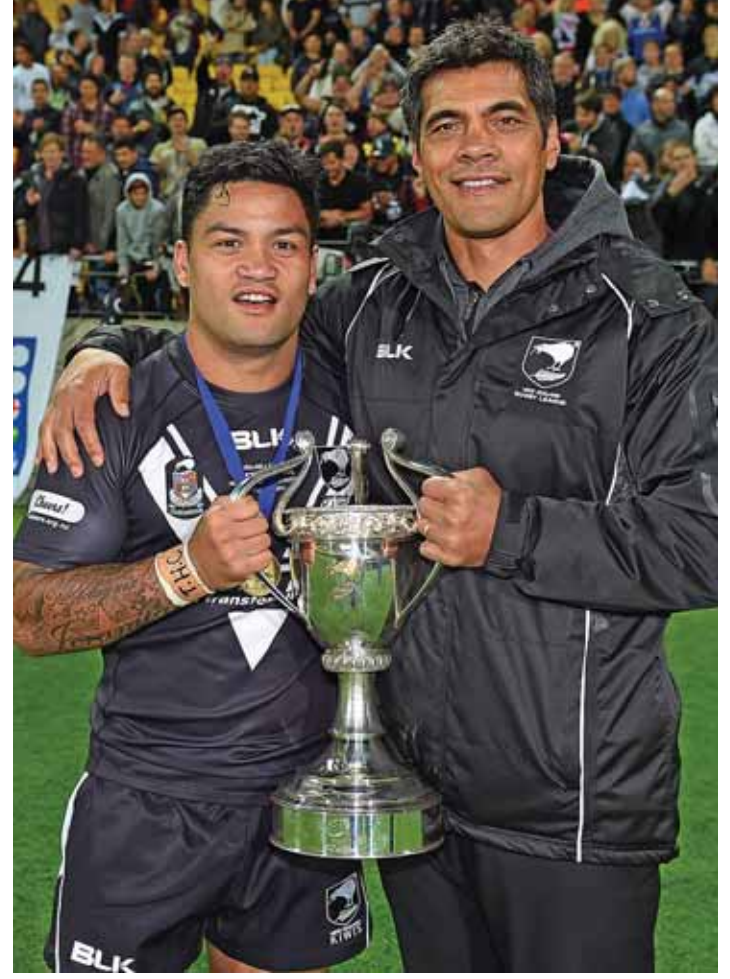
**Simon Mannering, all smiles, poses for a pic with the trophy after the game.**

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.Photosport.co.nz*



**Issac Luke and Simon Mannering pose for a pic with the fans and the trophy after the game.**

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.Photosport.co.nz*



**Big smiles from Issac Luke and Kiwis Coach Stephen Kearney on the field after defeating Australia.**

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



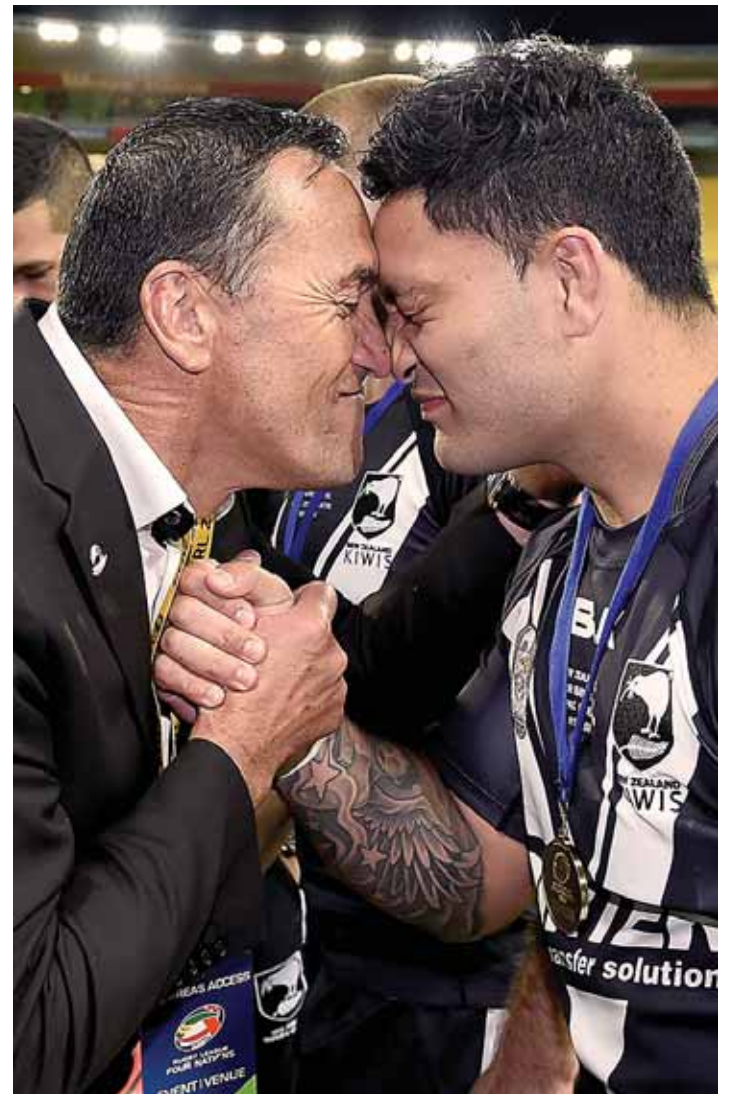
**Manu Vatuvei kisses the prize - most kissed cup ever!**

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



**Issac Luke gives the trophy a winner's kiss!**

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



**Howie Tamati and Issac Luke celebrate and hongi on the field after the match.**

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



**Two happy Kiwis players, Manu Vatuvei and Greg Eastwood, pose for a photo with the Cup.**

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.Photosport.co.nz*



**Manu Vatuvei and Shaun Johnson pose for a photo. Job well done, guys!**

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



The Kiwis do a celebration haka to the fans after defeating Australia.

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



Lewis Brown and Tohu Harris get their moment with the trophy after defeating Australia in the Four Nations Final.

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



Savili Havili, Shaun Johnson and Suaia Matagi celebrate after their big win on Saturday.

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



Shaun Johnson gives a big thumbs up at game's end.

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*



NZRL CEO Phil Holden congratulates Adam Blair after the Kiwis' win against Australia.

*Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz*





Simon Mannering celebrates in the dressing room after the Australian defeat.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / [www.Photosport.co.nz](http://www.Photosport.co.nz)



Jason Taumalolo celebrates in the dressing room after the game.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



Issac Luke celebrates after defeating Australia in the Four Nations on Saturday.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



Shaun Kenny-Dowall drinks from the Four Nations trophy in the dressing room as he celebrates after defeating Australia in the Four Nations Final.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)

ALL KIWIS Photos are courtesy of

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A Big Thank You to the Sponsors of the 2014 Kiwis team.

# SUPPORTERS



Rene and Luca from Christchurch met the Kiwis in Wellington - here with Simon Mannering and Tohu Harris.



Look who I found at Wellington airport – a big Warriors and Kiwis supporter – Peter Biggs from West Auckland.



Mark and Lucy, who came down from Cambridge, were looking good in their jerseys.



I met Tuwharetoa at Wellington Airport. He loves his Vodafone Warriors and Kiwis.



Fans with Kiwis flags.

Photo: Andrew Cornaga [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



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I snap that winning photo of coach Stephen Kearney and Lewis Brown after the game!

Photo: Andrew Cornaga [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)

**WHAT A GREAT WAY TO END THE SEASON! BRING ON 2015!**



**The winners' medal.**



**The Captain's locker. The number on the photo is Simon's Kiwis number.**



**The Kiwis' changing room.**

**Check out this Interview by clicking the link below**



<http://www.3news.co.nz/sport/manu-vatuvei-phil-holden-full-interview-2014111709#ixzz3JGaRcmoP>

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ENVELOPE  
write your name,  
address, phone...  
AND SHIRT SIZE!**

**DRAWN ON TUESDAY 25 NOV**

# MAD BUTCHER opens its 40th store!

Members of the Makos rugby team were rapt to get a photo with a Knight of the Realm!



What a crowd! The store was packed like this for the whole day.

The **MAD BUTCHER** chain opened its 40th store in Nelson last Friday and it went off with a bang! It's owned by former professional rugby player **Dan Perrin**, who had worked for the **Mad Butcher** before his rugby career took off. He played 14 games for the **Crusaders**, six for the **Chiefs**, as well of 74 provincial games for the **Tasman Makos** and the **Bay of Plenty Steamers**. It is fair to say he will become a keen **Vodafone Warriors** supporter very soon – at the opening BBQ at the shop, it was manned by local rugby and league players.

## SELFIES ARE THE NEW AUTOGRAPH

By John Deaker

**E**arlier this year **Shane Warne** sent out a tweet saying: "After doing 5 selfies with people this morning before 8am on my morning run / walk I've come to the conclusion that the autograph is dead!"

Warne is no rocket-scientist – but he is one of Australasia's sportspeople with the biggest following on the internet ( he has 1.7 million followers on Twitter ) and his summation of the changing of the times may not be far off the mark.

The scenes post-match after the **Kiwis** victory at the weekend were special – and it was brilliant to see many of the **Kiwis** players getting up close and personal with their fans. Many **Kiwis** fans were able to get "the new autograph" from their heroes. The 25,000 crowd had already got more than its money's worth during the match – but for those fans that were patient enough to stick wait around they were able to take home a special memory from the match that will still be in prime condition for many years to come when the traditional old autograph might have faded away.

The Autograph was actually in the process of dying long before selfies came along. If selfies really are the new autograph it will be interesting to see how long the craze survives. One thing for sure is many **Kiwis** fans got Selfies on Saturday night that ensured they have a unique piece of memorabilia to remember a brilliant night for New Zealand rugby league.



Selfie Time! Jason Taumalolo and Shaun Kenny-Dowall celebrate with fans. Shaun gets a free scalp massage!

Photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.co.nz

photosport

# Squad makes massive contribution

By David Kemeys\*

I want to take you back, not far, just October 7, when four rookies were included in the **Kiwis** squad to contest the Four Nations.

It was not difficult to find someone in the media who thought the **Kiwis** were going to get stuffed.

Penrith's **Dallin Watene-Zelezniak**, Cronulla's **Sosaia Feki**, North Queensland's **Jason Taumalolo** and **Vodafone Warriors** prop **Suaia Matagi** were the new names – and of them only Taumalolo would play a major part in the final.

The 24-man squad also saw former Warrior and now Penrith utility **Lewis Brown** back in black.

Quite rightly, the 17-named in the finals run-on team will go down in history, but when Sir Peter asked that I write something, I was stumped, having seen John Coffey's thorough breakdown of the tournament.

So spare a thought for **Gerard Beale**, Feki, **Siliva Havili**, the excellent **Thomas Leuluai**, Matagi, **Bodene Thompson** and **Watene-Zelezniak**.

Taumalolo's first **Kiwis** experience was as a non-playing member of the 2012 Anzac test to Australia. Watene-Zelezniak had an outstanding year with the **Panthers**, while Feki, Matagi and Thompson got their chances with the late withdrawals of **Roger Tuivasa-Sheck**, **Sam Moea** and **Jared Waerea-Hargreaves**.

Back before a ball had even been kicked coach **Stephen Kearney** talked of his excitement about his young side. Again, there were those in the media who were not buying it.

Kearney had this to say: "We're very focused on building a team and culture that will see us challenge for the next Rugby League World Cup in 2017, so these new players now have a chance to become part of that long-term process."

So I wanted to salute those players who did so much to help Kearney in terms of building that spirit, that culture, and that camaraderie that the **Kiwis** can take forward.

The unity in the squad was evident from the start, and the contribution of those whose names were not being saluted the length and breadth of the country on Saturday night, shouldn't be forgotten.

It's funny how it's hard to find anyone in the media now who didn't believe.

## Delighted for the **Kiwis** No 1 fan

And Pete, you will just have to live with the fact that you deserve a pat on the back too. I know you won't like it, but your loyalty and commitment to the **Kiwis** cause makes me delighted you were able to be there, take some small role, and to see the **Kiwis** finally have their day.

It's easy in this rugby-mad country to be a cheerleader for the **All Blacks**, a side that hardly ever loses. But you have stuck with the boys through thick and thin, and let's face it, it's been more thin than thick!

So enjoy it. I have had the pleasure of speaking to many former **Kiwis**, greats like **Ruben Wiki**, **Awen Guttenbeil**, **Stacey Jones**, and to some of the boys who got the job down in the Four Nations, who go all the way back to your days as manager of the side.

You've earned the No 1 fan tag, so enjoy it. You do so much for our great game. You're a legend, and I for one salute you.

\*David Kemeys, a diehard **Kiwis** and **Vodafone Warriors** fan, is the editor at large of the newsletter. He's worked for **Sunday News** (when they sponsored the **Kiwis**), is a former editor of the **Sunday Star-Times**, and editor in chief of **Suburban Newspapers Auckland**. He also helped write the league books *The Year the **Kiwis** Flew*, and *The Year That Was*.

## THE **KIWIS** WINNING CULTURE CAN HELP THE **WARRIORS**

By John Deaker

One man who will have taken as much pleasure as most people in Saturday night's performance is the **Warriors**' head coach, **Andrew McFadden**. The lack of **Warriors** players in the **Kiwis**' team was notable compared to many **Kiwis** team's over the years. However, the ones that did play on Saturday night and throughout the tournament played key roles in the team's success.

**Simon Mannering**, **Manu Vatuvei** and **Shaun Johnson** all played crucial roles in the final while **Thomas Leuluai** was in great form before injury ruled him out of the final. After a very disappointing year it was obvious for all to see how motivated all four of these guys were throughout the tournament. Having had a taste of success will surely make these influential **Warriors** players even more determined to now bring the feeling of that winning culture to the **Warriors** team in 2015.

## SUCCESS – AND BIG SALARIES – RUN IN THE FORAN FAMILY

By John Deaker

There's not many New Zealand sportspeople that earn over a million dollars a year. Out of those that are on a 7-figure salary, there's probably none that are earning less than their fathers. That's likely to change soon when **Kieran Foran** enters the Million-dollar-a-year salary bracket.

Earlier this year, Foran's father, **Greg**, secured the role of CEO of **Walmart's** US division. In his new Walmart role, it's understood his annual salary would be US\$950,000 (NZ\$1,111,570) plus he'd be in line for company stock options based on performance. With the Four Nations over now, Kieran Foran's attention will be able to return to his NRL contract negotiations. He comes off contract with Manly at the end of 2015. Reports from player managers in Australia suggest Foran will earn over \$1,000,000 AUD – not forgetting that the Salary Cap of \$6.3 million AUD this year will have blown out to \$6.8 million AUD by 2016.

Providing Greg does a reasonable job with Walmart and gets some stock options, that will effectively leave Kieran in this unique position of being a "million-dollar-man" yet earning less than his father.

When Kieran filled in as captain for the **Kiwis** during last year's ANZAC test, he showed what great Leadership qualities he possessed despite only being 22 years old at the time. It was obvious that Kieran could potentially become just as successful as a sporting leader as his father has become in the business world. Who knows, Kieran might even decide to give his father a "run for his money" in the business world when he retires from playing rugby league.

## TIME FOR RUGBY LEAGUE TO ADDRESS THE FORWARD PASS ISSUE

By John Deaker

After setting the benchmark for rugby union with many of the systems they've set up over the years, rugby league continues to lag behind union with its non-use of the video referee to rule on forward-passes. Rugby Union has had a lot of success in the last few years since it allowed the TMO to rule on forward passes that take place within 2 phases leading up to a try. On Saturday night there were question-marks over many forward passes that affected both teams.

The Four Nations final again proved what a consistently exciting product rugby league dishes up compared to rugby union. The ball movement and lack of stoppages were something that rugby union can only dream of.

If rugby league fixed the forward pass problem it would take away one of the few areas where rugby fans can still clearly show that their game is in better shape than the 13 man game.



AIR NEW ZEALAND 



# Manu the man for the big occasion

By John Deaker

**M**anu Vatuvei established a special place for himself in the *Kiwis*' history books on Saturday night. "The Beast" was the only New Zealand player on the field at the weekend that had also played in the 24-0 win over Australia back in 2005 during "the Year the *Kiwis* flew".

Back then as a fresh-faced 19 year old Manu touched down 2 times in the final of the Tri-Nations at Elland road - a feat he repeated on Saturday night at Westpac Stadium. Statistics partly illustrate the impact of Manu's magnificent performance on Saturday night: The 199 metres he ran during the match was the most by any player on the field.

However, statistics don't adequately tell the story of the pride Manu installs in the *Kiwis* jersey and how he lifts the players around him. They also don't tell the story of the respect - and at times fear - that he commands from the *Kangaroos* team. This was something that came in handy many times at the weekend as frustration built up amongst the Australian players.

Things could easily have been so different in this series for "The Beast". He's been on the selection outer in recent years and going in to the Four Nations series **Dallin Watene-Zelezniak** was named to start on the

left wing for the first test against Australia. The Penrith flyer then broke his foot on a Gold Coast beach leading up to the first test - which then opened the door for Manu to compete with **Gerard Beale** for the left wing spot throughout the tournament.

Manu's first four pointer on Saturday night might go down as one of the greatest *Kiwis* tries of all time - especially when you take in to account **Shaun Johnson's** brilliance, the stage of the game (5 minutes before halftime) and the tight 8-6 lead that the *Kiwis* held at that stage.

Manu's sensational hands to pick the ball up on the half-volley from Johnson's 20 metre pass is unlikely to silence all of Manu's critics. His larger-than-life figure seems to have created an unusual imbalance where his mistakes attract a lot more criticism from people than mistakes by his team-mates do - and his great work round the field often gets less praise than others.

Many lesser individuals would have thrown their toys after the selection knock-backs he's had in recent times. But Manu has shown huge development as a person off the



photosport

field too - something that was again witnessed after the game as he took time to joke with the fans and share in "Selfies" with some of the die-hard fans who were still at the ground long after the final whistle.

The combination of Manu's class on and off the field should add up to result in him now being viewed by the people of New Zealand as one of the greatest *Kiwis* we have produced.

## LEAGUE NEWS By David kemey's

### Neilsen let go

Centre **Dane Nielsen** has been released from the last year of his **Vodafone Warriors** contract.

The 29-year-old has already returned to Australia, as have **Feleti Mateo** and **Jayson Bukuya**.

While they've gone, **Ryan Hoffman** (Melbourne) and **Bodene Thompson** (Tigers) have both been signed on three-year contracts, as has **Matt Allwood** (Raiders).

**Vodafone Warriors** football general manager, football, **Dean Bell**, said Nielsen's release had been held up by paperwork but as with Mateo and Kakuya, the club had reached a decision to allow the player to continue his career in Australia.

"This is all part of the process we're working through as coach **Andrew McFadden** seeks to reshape the squad."

And apparently further signings are still possible. "We're always on the lookout for players to bring into our squad," McFadden said. "But if we sign a player it has to be someone who can add something to our squad."

### Contracts upgraded

Premiership-winning **Vodafone Junior Warriors Sam Lisone, Solomone Kata, Ken Maumalo** and **Brad Abbey** have all been upgraded to NRL contracts. They join **Tuimoala Lolohea** and **David Fusitu'a**, both full-time NRL players this year, who made their first-grade debuts in 2014 while still being eligible for the NYC.

### NRL'S new COO takes over

Women have broken another barrier, with **Suzanne Young** appointed as the NRL's new Chief Operating Officer.

And boy, does she have the credentials. She has more than 20 years' experience managing major companies across construction, aviation, financial services and IT.

She also plays and coaches sport, as well as serving as an administrator.

Suzanne was Australian Surf Life Saver of the Year in 1996 and was one of Surf Life

Saving Australia's first independent directors in 2010.

She's the mother of three teenage boys and three teenage step-children.

NRL chief executive **Dave Smith** said her appointment was part of the ongoing transformation of league into an even more professional sport.

"She has exceptional management and leadership skills, and joins at a fantastic time when we've had a big year on the field, the top rating sports TV programmes, and big crowds at our events."

Suzanne said she was looking forward to the role. "I have been successful in business because of the skills that I have learned in sport, such as discipline, courage, teamwork, inspiring leadership and good communication."

Good on her. As you know, I am a big supporter of women in our game. They play a huge role at grassroots level, and now they have reached the top!



Shaun, Butch and Kieran enjoy the victory on Sunday morning.



Butch, Dean and Lewis on Sunday morning - enjoying the moment.



Winners are Grinners! Kevin, Jesse, Butch and Siliva enjoy a soft drink together on Sunday morning.



Graham Lowe presents Simon Mannering with his 40th Test Jersey at the Friday night test dinner.



Graham's son, Sam, shares a moment with Issac Luck at the dinner.

The official  
**backstage**  
app of the

**VODAFONE**  
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is here!



Thursday 20th November from 7pm jump on the **'OFFICIAL VNZMA BACKSTAGE APP'** where you'll be able to check out red carpet photos, swipe right or left to vote!, see backstage photos and more. But Most of all there is an awesome competition people can enter into under the **WIN** tab. Everyone who enters from now till 11pm on Thursday 20th November goes into **win a double pass to the FIRST CLASS EXPERIENCE to Future Music festival in Sydney in February.**

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## My thoughts on the winning Kiwis

by **Ken Stirling**, former Kiwi: played 45 games for the Kiwis, 22 tests, 15 as captain for the Kiwis from 1971 to 1978

Hi Pete,

Just a quick note with a few thoughts.

Sue and I just arrived home from Wellington and have been reflecting on the last 4 weeks. As you know, we have been lucky enough to attend all the Kiwis 4 Nations games and right from the 1st day when I was able to attend the Captains run in Brisbane I had a good feeling about the team and their chances in the matches to come. It was obvious from the start that they were up for it and nothing less than winning the tournament would be acceptable for them. They appeared to be a great bunch of guys who were totally focused on the job ahead. This really showed out in the matches to come as while they may have

beaten Australia by 18 points it was still a hard fought game and the next three games, which included the final, were extremely tight. To tough these out and win them was a testament to the effort they put in through the whole tournament. In times to come they will be able to look back with immense pride at what they have achieved in the last four weeks. It also made me proud as a former Kiwi, to watch their performances in these matches and to see the manner in which they acknowledged the fans after the trophy presentation. Doing the Haka and throwing their boots and shorts etc. to the kids around the tunnel was just great.

Cheers, Ken

# Just ONE More!



When we were down in Wellington, I got the Kiwis boys some LEWIS ROAD CREAMERY CHOCOLATE MILK. Lovely!



Click on the link to find out more about LEWIS ROAD CREAMERY CHOCOLATE MILK.

Hope you are enjoying the newsletter. If you would like to receive the newsletter directly please email Amelia Wheeler at [meelz\\_79@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:meelz_79@hotmail.co.nz) Or if you would like to unsubscribe please email Amelia and she will delete you from the list.

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### The Newsletter Team

Here are the team that help me make the newsletter each week, Between us we make the newsletter happen - and like everything it is a team effort.



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