

Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter

12 February 2015

#59



Roger our host with Sir Graham Henry.



The J.A,RUSSELL Team at the Wellington 7s



The All Black 7s team.



Not every day you get 3 Knights on stage together Sir Peter, Sir Gordon Tietjens coach of the NZ 7s and Sir Graham Henry.



Broadcaster Tony Veitch is all smiles hanging out with Sir Graham in the J.A. RUSSELL LOUNGE at the 7s.



Me and Captain DJ Forbes last Saturday morning in Wellington.

y fist duty this week was doing a bit of filming with New Zealand comedian Te Radar for one of his upcoming shows, and there is more to this television lark than meets the eye I can tell you. Then the next day I was filming with Jono & Ben for their upcoming show (now on at 7.30).

But I did have a very pleasant weekend indeed, with my great friend and kayaking buddy Sir Graham Henry at the Wellington Sevens, thanks to J.A Russell, who looked after us incredibly well.

You will all have seen the empty seats and heard all about how the Sevens was struggling to sell tickets, and I have to say I was also very disappointed with the crowd.

There is room for the Nines and the Sevens, but it is clear the Sevens needs to look at its marketing. Duco does the Nines, and they are the best headline grabbers I have ever come across.

I was lucky enough to catch up with the team, and meet captain D J Forbes, who is a top bloke. I got to spend time with Sir Graham and Sevens coach Sir Gordon Tietjens too, three knights together. It was a blast but Wellington, I'm sorry to say this, you have to get out support this event.

Kiwis at the Halbergs

This week the Kiwis were among those hoping to be recognised at the Halberg Awards, the country's premier sporting achievement awards, and I was there with my fingers crossed too. And as my guests I had a few former kiwi captains Bruce Castle, Ken Stirling, Dennis Williams, Graeme West, Ron O'Regan and Dane OHara. I confess I am a little disappointed that they didn't win, but there are so many fabulous achievements to celebrate, you couldn't be bitter about it.

Macular Degeneration Could use Our Help - This Saturday

And on Saturday there is racing at Ellerslie, and one of the groups I am heavily involved with, Macular Degeneration, is having a fundraiser.

Now MD is a bit of mouthful I know, but it basically means your eyesight is shot, and one in 50 people will contract it. You can all imagine what it must be to lose your sight, so any help you can give the people from this wonderful organisation would be greatly appreciated.

It will be a terrific day out and all you need do is contact Phillippa on 027 474 9452 to organise tickets or the 0800622852 FREE CALLING

We've Assembled a Great Team for the Newsletter this Year.

I thought I might explain to you a little about the team that makes this newsletter happen. At the top, because let's face it, someone has to be in charge, our editor at large is David Kemeys. A lot of you will

know him because he has been around a long time helping me out. He was once in charge of all the free newspapers across Auckland, your Manukau Couriers and the like, and was also the editor of the Sunday Star-Times.

But he is not the only heavyweight media man on the books. We have the services of John Coffey, who has written nine books in a rugby league writing career spanning more than 50 years. In 2014 he was awarded a QSM for services to sports writing and history.

And we've gone international too. Barry Ross is a huge name in league in Australia. He's been a league commentator and even covered the first five State of Origin games for Channel 7, 20 tests or so, and more than 100 Sunday Footy games.

John Deaker our columnist has done a lot of Sports Writing over the years including writing the 2008 book "The Converts - Changing Codes". For more than a decade he researched for his father (& and sports broadcasting legend) Murray's deaker's radio shows and Produced the Deaker on Sport show for Sky TV. His key sports he played Under-age rep and Senior level at were Cricket, Football and Rugby.

Up north we have young Ben a up and coming columnist and of course young Hayden Woodhead puts it all together for me. And my role is editor This newsletter is probably the most widely read league publication in the country, so I owe a big vote of thanks to all those who give up their time and contribute. Isn't it amazing what you can achieve with a good group of people around you.

Big Ben Signs to Stay

Front rower Ben Matulino has committed to the Vodafone Warriors on a new two-year contract that will keep him at Mt Smart until the end of the 2017 season.

The deal means the 26-year-old will join the group of players who have represented the Vodafone Warriors across 10 seasons.

Now entering his eighth campaign, Matulino last year became only the 10th player to have appeared in 150 NRL games for the club.

Named the club's Player of the Year in 2012, Matulino said he was delighted he'd be staying. "I'm really pleased to have my future sorted out," he said. "There was interest from other clubs but this is where I want to be. The Vodafone Warriors have done so much for me and I owe them for that."

McFadden said extending Matulino's time with the club was critical to building the squad.

"Ben has great standing as one of the best front rowers in the game," he said. "He's also a fantastic advertisement for our development system, and for the NYC, the way he has come through to achieve so much at both NRL and international level."

Matulino was a foundation player in the NYC's inaugural season in 2008 and was quickly promoted to the NRL. He made his debut as a 19-year-old and has gone on to create history as the first NYC graduate to play his 100th NRL game (2012), and he's also the first to reach 150 appearances (2014). Matulino has also gone on to play 19 tests for the Kiwis.

Nathan Friend called into NRL All Stars

Vodafone Warriors hooker Nathan Friend has been called into the NRL All Stars squad ahead of the Harvey Norman Rugby League All Stars at Cbus Super Stadium on February 13. Friend replaces Michael Ennis, forced out of Wayne Bennett's squad by injury. The All SAtars line-up is: Matt Moylan (Penrith), Manu Vatuvei (Warriors), Jarrod Croker (Raiders), Dyaln Walker (Souths) Antonio Winterstein (Cowboys), Kieran Foran (Manly), Michell Pearce (Roosters), James Graham (Bulldogs), Jared Waerea-Hargreaves (Roosters), Beau Scott (Knights), Jason Taumalolo (Cowboys), Paul Gallen (Sharks), Jesse Bromwich (Storm), Luke Brooks (Tigers), Joseph Paulo (Eels), Trent Merrin (Dragons), Corey parker (Broncos), Jeremey Smith (Knights) and Dave Taylor (Titans).

Good Signs in Trial Game

Although we lost 22-12, an inexperienced Vodafone Warriors side emerged with plenty of credit from the trial against Gold Coast on Saturday.

We fielded only six players with NRL experience, and then with just 56 games between them.

In contrast, the Titans had Brad Tighe with 166 games and Matt White with 138, and they boasted a combined total of more than 600 NRL games across the squad.

Despite the odds the Vodafone Warriors, with Stacey Jones in charge, pushed the home side all the way, even leading twice, and at 12-12 nearing the end of the third quarter.

It was only then that Gold Coast snatched the lead through wing Shaun Hudson and then added a fourth try inside the final 10 minutes to secure a 10-point win.

Earlier centre Dominique Peyroux opened the scoring against his former club, halfback Api Pewhairangi converting his try for a 6-0 lead.

The Titans countered through wing Leva Li, who scored in the right-hand corner. Kane Elgey was on target from the touchline to leave the sides locked at 6-6. The Vodafone Warriors engineered a try for prop Nathaniel Peteru and Pewhairangi again converted,

Once more the Titans levelled, though, this time through Tighe, with Elgey providing the extras to make it 12-12.

With plenty of personnel changes, the score remained unchanged until close to the end of the third quarter when wing Shaun Hudson went across in the left-hand corner. Jamal Fogarty converted, and then they extended to 22-12 lead when hooker Christian Hazard scored.

Bring on Penrith

With the Nines behind us, it's all eyes on our trial form. Next up is Rotorua on Saturday v the Panthers at 3pm.

That will be followed by visits to Auckland suburban grounds in Glen Eden and Papakura, while Manu Vatuvei and Nathan Friend will also be on NRL All Stars duty on the Gold Coast.

Andrew McFadden is now into NRL mode, so the trial against Penrith will feature the top side.

"The match in Rotorua will be our most important trial," he said. "We'll be fielding our best side as we look towards the opening round against Newcastle on March 7. It's the only major NRL trial we have this season and also the only one in New Zealand. It's going to be a great opportunity for people from the Bay of Plenty and Waikato— and also for those travelling from Auckland— to see top NRL players, including internationals."

The night before the Rotorua trial, Vatuvei will make his third appearance for the All Stars in Robina, while a football-packed weekend will be rounded out on Sunday, February 15 with a special day in Glen Eden in honour of young Glenora player Luke Tipene.

Tipene, who had been contracted to the Vodafone Warriors' 2015 NYC squad, died after being attacked early on November 1 last year.

The Vodafone Warriors will round out their preseason preparations with two inter-squad trials and a community day at Bruce Pulman Park in Papakura on Saturday, February 21.

Don't Forget These Events

February:

Saturday 14th: Mascular Degeneration Fundraiser

Sunday 15th: Luke Tipene Celebration Day

Thursday 26th: Charity Golf Day

March:

Sunday 8th: Round the Bays

April:

3rd, 4th & 5th: Hornby Panthers Celebration

Boys Will Be Busy in Rotorua

Jerome Ropati and Ruben Wiki will spearhead our Vodafone Warriors delegation on a two-day blitz meeting close to 5000 pupils at 12 schools in Rotorua on Thursday and Friday.

Jerome, just appointed as an NRL Community Ambassador, and Ruben, the NRL team's rehab coach, will be in Rotorua from Wednesday night for a community and promotional visit ahead of the Penrith game.

The boys and Vodafone Warriors community relations manager Petrece Kesha will be joined by three players from the club's NRL squad for a series of community activities.

Split into two teams of three, they will visit six schools on Thursday and another six on Friday before the players and coaching staff arrive on Friday to prepare for the trial.

"Jerome and Ruben plus the three current players will be heading into the schools to give the kids a chance of getting up close and personal with the Vodafone Warriors," Petrece said. "They'll also spread the NRL's community message, which is all about wellbeing, focusing on everything from nutri-

tion and healthy eating to the importance of regular exercise and its effect on mental health."

As well as visiting schools, we'll be involved in other activities including an appearance at the Rotorua Night Market on Thursday, attending the Wai-Coa-Bay Nines on Friday night (which also run on Saturday) and supporting club sponsor Wendy's by making an in-store appearance.

The visits are among the first events in the NRL's 2015 Community Carnival, launched in Australia last week by Olympic great Cathy Freeman and another new NRL Community Ambassador, Anthony Minichiello.

"This is a special Community Carnival as we celebrate 15 years of the programme," NRL Community head Adam Check said. "The carnival has demonstrated the game, our ambassadors and players can impart positive messages that students and young people will observe."

Blues v Chiefs this Saturday, 14 February

QBE Stadium, Albany 4.45pm - Gates open

5.05pm - Curtain raiser (Blues v Chiefs development teams)

7.35pm - Main kick off

Kids tickets from just \$7, adults from just \$23 in the family area. Lounge tickets also available.

Tickets from Ticketmaster



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Win Kiwis Jersy P.O Box 54295 The Marina 2144, Manukau, Auckland

*One jersey is signed on the front and the other is signed on the back.

Drawn on Wednesday 4th March

Manukau Live Steamers Waitangi Day 2015

I was on my way to the airport to Wellington for the 7's and stopped off at the Manukau Live Steamers track at Centre Park Robertson Road Mangere. What a fun place to visit. The guys there design and built their own locomotives and run them every fine Sunday for the public. The club is run by volunteers and what a well run club it is. I am proud to be Patron of this great little club.

The club has been running these little trains there over the past 30 years.

Every Waitangi Day they run a FREE day for all the kids with special needs. The kids and their families come along and have a sausage in bread, drinks, fruit and an iceblock. All these goods are supplied free of charge to Manukau Live Steamers for this special FREE day. The Mad Butcher has been giving them sausages all that time.

The club members take the kids for train rides all day. This year they gave out over 1600 FREE train rides. The kids had a great time and the drivers and volunteers of Manukau Live Steamers had a wonderful time helping all these families enjoy their day out at the train club.

I still say this is the best kept secret in Mangere.





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Northland Rugby League By Ben Francis

After the success of the Kiwis v Samoa game held in Whangarei last November as apart of the Four Nations, Rugby League Northland is hopeful that this one single game Will encourage people in Northland to give Rugby League ago.

Rugby League Northland General Manager Alex Smits saying "The benefits of the Kiwis v Samoa game were huge, it shows Whangarei to be a good host, and hopefully the future possibility of hosting NRL preseason games, along with the economic benefit. It also gives the chance for kids to rub shoulders with their role models and idols."

The secondary schools competition (Northtec Adam Blair Trophy) starts this month with twelve teams confirmed for this years competition. This is an increase of two from last year. Kano College are defending champions.

While the Premiers start in March and the juniors start in April.

The official number of participants won't be known till later on in the year, but Northland Rugby League is expecting an increase.

Plenty to look forward too up here for Northland League. We are set for a big year.

If you want to play rugby league in Northland, contact Alex Smits General manager of Northland Rugby League on 09 437 9640 or alex.smits@nzrl.co.nz You can also head along to www.northernswords.co.nz



Blair Bags a Thousand By John Coffey QSM

t can sometimes be frustrating to see a highly promising young rugby league player achieving in another sport, especially if he has been poached by a rival code.

But no-one can begrudge the success that former New Zealand junior and Canterbury senior representative Blair Orange has achieved in harness racing.

Blair last week became only the 23rd driver in harness racing history to rein home 1000 winners, a milestone appropriately reached at Addington Raceway in Christchurch.

It was at the adjacent Addington Show Grounds that Blair emerged as a scrum-half of exceptional ability. He compensated for his lack of size with pace, elusiveness, anticipation and a keen tactical sense.

In 1996 Blair toured Fiji with a New Zealand 18-years team captained by David Solomona, having earned provincial junior honours as he came through the grades at the Hornby club.

At 19, Blair was an integral part of Hornby's 1997 grand final winning team and made four appearances for Canterbury off the bench. Early in the 1998 season he played against the Warriors Reserves. In two years of premier club football he crossed for 21 tries.

But by this time Blair was showing extreme prom-

ise as a harness racing driver, despite having had no family background in a sport-industry fairly sprinkled with familiar surnames such as Butt, Dalgety, Dunn, Butcher, Jones and Purdon.

So Blair understandably shelved his dream of a professional rugby league career and directed his energies to working full time in harness racing. For many seasons he was part of the highly successful All Stars stable headed by Mark Purdon.

To the uninitiated it must look glamorous, powering home to win on a major race day. But that occurs only after a long apprenticeship of early rising, mucking out stables, working horses in all weather and learning the hard way behind outsiders at country meetings.

This season Blair has joined up with trainer Ken Barron. The longer term plan is to train horses in his own right. Blair's winners (not to mention the place getters) have already returned his appreciative owners more than \$13 million in stake money.

Footnote: Blair will have some way to go to become the most successful trainer to emerge from the Hornby club. Dean Taylor (brother of Kiwi Ross), who captained Hornby to victory in the 1982 Thacker Shield challenge and was a member of the club's 1983 and 1984 grand final winning teams, has trained more than 450 winners since 1990.

Want a 2015 Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines Programme?



To get free 2015 Nines program just send a stamped, addressed envelope or postcard to me in the mail with your name, address and phone number on the back to the address below.

> **Nines Programme** P.O Box 54295 The Marina 2144, Manukau, Auckland

Only 20 Available - So Act Quick

Costume Madness at the 7s

Seagulls, bees, Star Wars Storm Troopers and superheroes invaded our capital on Waitangi Weekend at the Sentinel Homes Sevens Wellington – and those were just the costume competition winners.

Fans were treated to superb rugby at Westpac Stadium with the All Blacks Sevens winning 27 - 21 against England in the final. In return they turned out in their fancy dress finery.

The winner of the Best Combined Group and Supreme Overall Winner award in the Museum Art Hotel Costume Catwalk were are pair of seagulls - Graeme Walker and Alexis Trevethan. Their costumes were fashioned from rubbish bins, chicken wire and papier-mâché. Their wings are made out of camping foam mattresses.

Graeme confessed it is the first time he has worn stockings.

"We knew no-one else would be a seagull; they hover from above and scavenge from below. That's how we made our costumes, by scavenging for materials".

Construction of their costumes began in October 2014 and winning the \$15,000 prize money came as a big surprise and as the couple are getting married at the end of the year they will use the money for their honeymoon.

For the first time, there was a kids costume section in the competition, a reflection of the greater number of families attending the event.

Photographer Murray Short.



Best Female Group



Best Female.



Best Junior Effort



Best Male Group



Best Male



Judges Choice



Supreme Overall Winner \$10,000

Graeme Walker and Alexis Trevethan (Were also Best Combined Group Winner)

The Steven Seagulls From Wellington







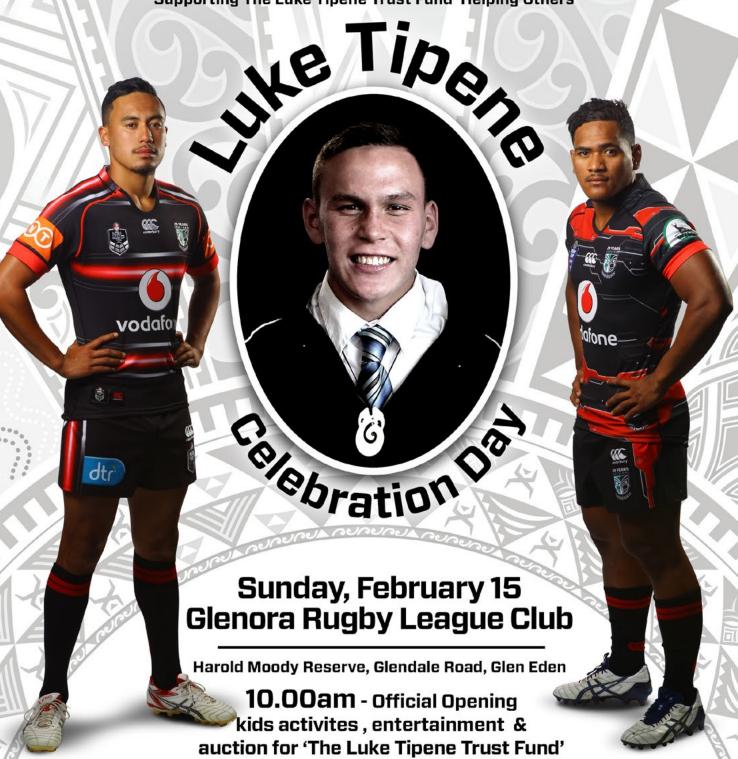












11.00am - Glenora Premiers v Vodafone Junior Warriors Selection
12.45pm - Vodafone Junior Warriors v Vodafone Warriors New South Wales
2.45pm - Glenora 17/18 Selection v Vodafone Warriors Academy

#LukeTipeneCelebrationDay

The 2016 Olympics can be a Saviour for the Wellington 7's By John Deaker

2016 shapes up as a crucial year for the survival of the Wellington 7's. The crowds were down significantly this year again as stricter alcohol regulations and the Auckland Nines continued to impact on the tournament that has traditionally been sold out within hours of the tickets going on sale.

Most countries are likely to give their 15's stars that are available for the Olympics a chance to prove themselves in many tournaments leading up to the Olympics in August 2016. Gordon Tietjens indicated last week that for him and the New Zealand team Wellington is very likely to be one of those tournaments where the stars are on show.

"Logically, Wellington is perfect timing. If you wish to be considered for the Olympics, you have to be involved in World Series tournaments next year. The minimum number for a player will be four and the maximum generally six," Tietjens said.

This could mean the organisers of the Wellington 7's end up with a product that contrasts dramatically in its marketability from the 2015 version. With all due respect to Rieko Ioane , it'll be much easier to get publicity and generate excitement for the tournament in 2016 if Sonny Bill Williams is playing 7's on home turf for the first time than it was this year when a 17 year old no-name became the headline act of the tournament!

The tournament is also likely to benefit greatly from other country's stars. The tournament instantly becomes more attractive to ex-pats or international travellers to New Zealand if it's confirmed that people like Israel Folau, Quade Cooper, Karmichael Hunt, James O'Connor and Bryan Habana are playing.

This isn't to say the Wellington 7's should give up on trying to be a great party and focus 100% on the product on the field. However, focusing more on the on-field aspects of the event for 2016 may be necessary for them to get their spectator numbers up again. From a public relations perspective focusing more on the players and the sport in the promotion of the event might get some of the fun police that have ruined the event for some people to relax a little. The reality is that people these days actually expect the best of both worlds. 50 Inch televisions and the couch are much more attractive options than

they were even 5 or 10 years ago when the "original" Wellington 7's was at the peak of its powers.

Even the very efficient and successful Auckland Nines organisers have struggled to come in with a fresh blue-print and provide the exact product on and off the field that people want. It's such a tough balance to obtain because everyone has different requirements. Some things are also out of the hands of the organisers too - for instance trying to make Eden Park as user-friendly as Westpac Stadium would be an almost impossible mission for anyone. There is also no perfect formula because every punter wants a slightly different balance between on and off the field entertainment.

The challenge for the Wellington 7's organisers will be that even if they can get the fans back in the gate they will then need to make the 7's so enjoyable for fans that it again becomes the hottest ticket in town. It's unlikely the big names like SBW will turn out in the years between the Olympic Games - which is why making the event so attractive on AND off the field for the 2016 crowd remains so important.

Nobody knows the exact extent that the Olympics' introduction will have on the respect that 7's obtains as a sport in its own right internationally. It is likely to be substantial though - and even without the big names like SBW returning to Wellington in 2017 it's something the Wellington 7's organisers might be able to utilise to keep interest high in the event.

The Olympics is very likely to give Women's 7's an even bigger boost than it gives to the Men's game. The Wellington 7's organisers would be silly not to play off this and incorporate a women's element to their event going forward - even if it's just a compact quadrangular tournament involving key teams like New Zealand and England. This might mean getting rid of some of the men's Plate games which would probably be a smart move anyway.

If 2016 was a "normal" year then after the 2015 experience the organisers of the Wellington tournament would be justified in being very concerned about its future prospects. Fortunately, the Olympics changes all that and 2016 should be viewed as the year the Wellington 7's not only bounces back but reinvents itself to become a better mix of entertainment and sport than its ever been before.

Cricket World Cup: NZ's Team Naming v Sri Lanka is Eagerly Awaited By John Deaker

The Cricket World Cup kicks off this Saturday and New Zealand's team it names has already received the type of conjecture and debate that is usually reserved for All Blacks' team-namings. Grant Elliott and Martin Guptill's recent form mean that the top 7 places in the side pick themselves.

However, then things get difficult. The 7 bowlers in the World Cup squad are all a genuine chance to fight it out for the final 4 places in the team to take on Sri Lanka.

For the players themselves the naming of the team on Saturday is even more significant because if the Black Caps get on a winning run they are likely to avoid experimentation with their selections right through the rest of the tournament.

All the bowlers available bring different pros and cons to the table and there is no right or wrong selection. This means a lot will come down to the coach and captain's judgement - and they'll even need a bit of luck getting their decision right.

We'll probably have to wait till Saturday morning to know the final 11 that will run out on to Hagley Oval. Whoever the individuals are that Brendon McCullum and Mike Hesson decide to select on Saturday let's hope that they form part of a winning combination in the opening match that provides the impetus for a magnificent 6 weeks for New Zealand Cricket.

J.A Russell at the 7s

Roger Spooner & Chelsea McLaren – Roger is Director / Shareholder of J. A. Russell Ltd, Chelsea McLaren is Marketing Assistant at J. A. Russell Ltd



Andy & Michelle Swainbank – Andy is our Auckland Area Manager

Dave Nelson & Leigh Hamilton – Dave Nelson is a Sales Representative at Schneider Electric.





Peter & Kathleen Bakker – Customers of J. A. Russell Ltd



(L-R) Donna Warren, Helen Ferraby, Helen Doar, Bib Hill, & Michelle Manihera – the first four ladies are Customer's wives/partners and Michelle is our Northern Area Manager's wife. Deans Auto Electrical AND Men @ Work invite you to...

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Savannah's Story

Savannah was born at 27 weeks and as a result has spastic diplegia cerebral palsy. Now a happy three year old, she has made incredible progress but surgery and Botox are still not enough to help her walk unaided. A specialist surgeon in St. Louis Children's Hospital in USA would give Savannah the best hope of walking unaided. We are hoping to raise \$85,000 by August 2015.









Amelia and Dexter are all smiles at the nines.

Was great to catch up with Amelia who used to help with the newsletter.



Woodstock and the Vodafone Warriors has a ring to it that is about to become more familiar to fans of the club with the announcement that Woodstock is a major sponsor for the next 3 years.

"With 2015 signaling a new chapter in our history we are delighted to welcome WWoodstock into the Vodafone Warriors' family," said Vodafone Warriors chief executive Jim Doyle, of the new sponsorship deal.

Independent Liquor plans to promote the sponsorship significantly in key retail stores and also with a strong presence on Facebook.

Hope you are enjoying the newsletter. If you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe please email Stephen Maier at stepehen.maier@medstar.co.nz

Our Sponsors

A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORSHIP PARTNERS! Without our sponsors' fantastic support the Mad Butcher Club wouldn't be as great as it is. If you get the opportunity to support them please do whenever you can.



























The Newsletter Team

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



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David Kemeys Editor at Large



Hayden Woodhead Graphic Designer



John Deaker Correspondent



John Coffey Southern Correspondent



Barry Ross Australian Correspondent



Ben Francis Northern Correspondent