



Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter

22 April 2015
#69

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Anzac Day Vodafone Warriors Test

Vodafone Warriors vs Gold Coast Titans



Anzac Day Jersey - Worn on the day by the Vodafone Warriors.



You can donate a gold coin and get a Poppy at the Gates on the day.

Timetable:

- 9.30am - Gates Open
- 9.40am - NYC Holden Cup Kick Off - Vodafone Warriors vs Gold Coast Titans
- 11.40am - NSW Cup Kick Off - Vodafone Warriors vs Newtown Jets
- 1.35pm - Official Anzac Ceremony with the Australian and New Zealand Flag Parade
- 1.45pm - NRL Kick Off - Vodafone Warriors vs Gold Coast Titans
- 2.20pm - NRL Half Time - Performance by the Royal New Zealand Navy Band
- 4.00pm - Approximate Finish Time

ON Anzac Day the Vodafone Warriors will play their first ever NRL game at home in commemoration of 100 years since the Gallipoli landing.

There will be strong support from the New Zealand Defence Force by special invitation from the Vodafone Warriors.

Current serving personnel with their families, plus veterans, will be hosted at Mt Smart and recognised on the day.

Be at Mt Smart to see a special performance by the Royal New Zealand Navy Band, and armoured vehicles on display from the Royal New Zealand Army.

We are hoping to have Air Vice-Marshal Mike Yardley, who is the Chief of the Air Force, reading the ode as part of the commemorative ceremony.

Remember, this is the first ever Warriors game on Anzac Day in NZ, so let's rally to show our support not only of the club, but our servicemen and women.

I happen to know that our big boss Jim Doyle fought for the Warriors to get a home Anzac Day game because he wants to make it as big a tradition in NZ as it is in Australia.

And consider this too, for the first time ever in the NRL our national anthem will be played at all five games on the day, showing how important the NRL sees the Kiwi influence.

It would be nice if all supporters could be at the game before 1.45pm so they're able to see the special pre-game ceremony commemorating our Anzacs.

Kick-Off Brought Forward

Kick-off for the Vodafone Warriors' first-ever Anzac Day match at Mt Smart next Saturday has been brought forward to 1.45pm.

The game against the Gold Coast Titans launches an epic programme of five NRL matches as New Zealanders and Australians unite to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli.

Warriors v Titans (1.45pm)

Knights v Cowboys (4pm)

Roosters v Dragons (6pm)

Storm v Sea Eagles (8pm)

Broncos v Eels (10pm)

Each match will be preceded by an official Anzac Day ceremony including the Last Post, a moment's silence, the Ode of Remembrance and both national anthems. The Royal New Zealand Navy Band will also perform.

It's A Triple-Header

The Vodafone Warriors' eighth-round match against the Gold Coast Titans caps another Mt Smart triple-header.

Junior Warriors v Gold Coast Titans (9.40am)

New South Wales Cup v Newtown (11.40am)

Vodafone Warriors v Gold Coast Titans (1.45pm)

Anzac Day Commemoration

Note the start time, the Vodafone Warriors Anzac Day ceremony is scheduled to start at 1.35pm when both teams will be brought on to the field, followed by the game kicking off at 1.45pm.

The Vodafone Warriors will wear

their Te Maumaharatanga (The Memorial) strip, specially designed by Canterbury with the country's servicemen and women, members, fans, club and Anzac heritage in mind.

A donation from the sale of each jersey in New Zealand and Australia will go to the Fields of Remembrance Trust (\$10 for an adult jersey, \$5 for a child's), as a mark of respect to past and current serving armed forces personnel.

The Returned Services Association will have collectors at Mt Smart during the game.

The Vodafone Warriors have provided the New Zealand Defence Force with more than 600 complimentary tickets for staff to attend, sitting in a dedicated bay in the West Stand.

Follow the Kiwis on Social Media

NZRL www.nzrl.co.nz

Facebook www.facebook.com/NZKiwis

Twitter @nzrl_kiwis #nzkiwis #anzactest

Instagram nz_rugby_league



Go To Trade Me And Help A Good Woman Out

[Click here to view the auction.](#)

I read the story of a brave mum named Rochell Adams in the Sunday News and was very touched by her moving story. In short, she has had a terrible cancer fight, and survived a broken back, but is determined to fight, especially to be with her young son.

She was given only a few months to live but like the fighter she is, she has met the disease head on. To help her out I have donated a framed set of Wendy's collector cards, with every card signed by the player, and it is being auctioned on trade me.

I've put the link to the auction site below and I tell you what, I am so confident league fans will help her out that I have made her a special promise, but I am keeping it secret for a while, to see how the auction goes.

Not everyone can bid for this sort of thing, so if you just want to spread the love and show a little support, help her out at [here](#).

And she and 10-year-old son Kane, who is already playing a bit of league, will be our guests in the lounge this Saturday.

[Click here to view the auction.](#)

She will be auctioning of this lovely piece of Vodafone Warriors memorabilia.



Tomkins Going Home To Wigan

Vodafone Warriors fullback Sam Tomkins is going home and it's been confirmed he'll join his former club Wigan in the English Super League.

The announcement was made during the halftime break in Wigan's home game against Warrington, and was met with a huge cheer.

Tomkins asked to be released because of homesickness. "Once again I can't thank the Vodafone Warriors enough for their consideration and support," he said. "As I said, I hadn't expected things to play out like this, but there are things I've been missing about home, most of all family and friends.

"I'm pleased about having the opportunity to go back earlier than planned and to have the chance of playing alongside my brothers, Joel and Logan, with Wigan next year."

In a special message for members and fans, Tomkins said: "I'm fully committed to this club until the end of this season. You've been outstanding welcoming me, whether it has been in Australia or at Mt Smart. It has been immense. It means a lot to me and to all the lads in the team. When I do finish up I'll take back some big memories of my time here."

Tomkins has been sidelined since the third-round against the Eels after injuring his left knee. He is being targeted for a return against the Gold Coast or Cronulla on May 9.



A Great Bloke Honoured

NZ Kiwi No 550 and NZ Rugby League president Howie Tamati was recognised recently for lifetime achievement at the annual NZ Sport & Recreation Awards.

Best known for role as an international hooker, playing 50 games for the Kiwis 1979-85, Tamati later coached the national side for two years and continues to make his presence felt in the game.

He has also served three terms on the New Plymouth District Council (1999-2007) and as chief executive of Sport Taranaki since 1994.

"I am lost for words," said Howie. "League has been a catalyst for taking me out of the small Taranaki town of Waitara and putting me on the international stage to fulfill my dreams."



Howie Tamati

Reality TV I'd Watch!

The NRL, in conjunction with Channel 9 and McGuire Media, has launched a new reality TV show called The NRL Rookie, which will perform a global search to discover new talent capable of playing league at the highest level.

During 2015, the NRL, supported by Telstra, will assemble a group of potential rookies who have what it takes. They will live in a Sydney house and undergo an intense

training programme, coupled with a variety of challenges to demonstrate their strengths and ability, and transform them into the elite sportsman.

As the show progresses, the number of rookies will be reduced on a weekly basis and will culminate with the winner being awarded a professional contract with an NRL club.

A guaranteed NRL contract, it's the greatest prize in sport!

The NRL Rookie will broadcast in 2016, and will find a player the NRL recruiters have never seen or have missed.

Right now, somewhere out there is a weekend warrior, a man playing in a local club, but dreaming of an NRL career – that man could be the winner of The NRL Rookie.

Visit nrlrookie.com for more information

Former Kiwi Passes On

I was very sorry to hear that former Kiwi Bill Schultz had passed on. Bill first played for the Kiwis in 1959, against Australia, and again in 1965 against Great Britain. He played four tests, scoring one try on his tour to Great Britain. Bill played for Auckland Marist and also represented New Zealand Marist.



NEW ZEALAND
RUGBY LEAGUE

Black Sticks Take Silver at Hawke's Bay Cup

A goal in the dying seconds has given Australia a 3-2 win over our Black Sticks Women to take out the Hawke's Bay Cup in Hastings.

The lead swapped constantly during the match and the result was sealed in the 60th minute when Australia scored after the Black Sticks defence failed to clear a penalty corner.

Black Sticks striker Gemma Flynn brought the large crowd to their feet in just the first minute of the match when she slotted home from the field before the game came alight in the third quarter when three goals were scored in the space of three minutes.

Emily Smith brought Australia level when she scored from a penalty corner and shortly after Australia hit the front for the first time when Brooke Peris found herself unmarked in front of goal and made no mistake from two metres out.

The Black Sticks mounted a number of promising runs and Olivia Merry brought the match level again when she smashed the ball home from a goal mouth scramble. The game was decided with less than a minute left on the clock when Jodie Kenny scored from a penalty corner.

New Zealand now head into preparation mode for June's World League Semi-Final tournament in Belgium, which also doubles as a chance to qualify for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.



New Zealand's Kathryn Henry drives forward during her side's 3-2 loss to Australia in the Hawke's Bay Cup final.

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.co.nz

Get Down to the Canterbury Clubhouse

ALSO at the ground will be match day sponsor's Canterbury Clubhouse with: the History of the Anzac Day Jersey featuring bleachers and a TV documentary, a photobooth plus plenty of giveaways during the day.



So get down to the Canterbury Clubhouse to get your very own photo with Shaun and the boys. There will be giveaways for the best photo and you get to keep a copy to put on your fridge too!

You can also cheer on your crowd favourites in the Canterbury Contenders Course on the pitch at half time, and keep your eye out for the Canterbury Fan cam which will be following one 'super fan' around to see how a true Warriors fan will be spending Anzac Day.



Anzac Day Team Named

BACK-ROWER Raymond Faitala-Mariner will become the Vodafone Warriors' 200th NRL player while veteran prop Sam Rapira will have his first outing of the season at Mt Smart on Saturday.

Also coming into the side for the first time this year is 20-year-old David Fusitu'a, replacing Konrad Hurrell in the centres.

Faitala-Mariner and 169-game NRL veteran Rapira have both been named on the bench for the encounter with the Gold Coast Titans.

Vodafone Warriors head coach Andrew McFadden said the selection of the trio reflected the intense competition within the squad.

"Ray has been impressive all season for us in the NSW Cup and fully deserves his debut," he said.

"Sam has been great working his way back into form from injury in the NSW Cup side and David was outstanding in his first game of the year last weekend.

"The changes are the result of the real competition for spots which is exactly what we want." Faitala-Mariner's call-up as the 200th NRL player in what is the club's 20th anniversary season provides yet another example of the success of the Vodafone Warriors' development system. He made his 25th and last appearance for the Vodafone Junior Warriors in the 2013 NYC grand final before joining the club's fulltime NRL squad last year.

Rapira and Faitala-Mariner come in for Albert Vete and Dominique Peyroux.

Peyroux stays in the NRL squad as 18th man while Vete joins Hurrell in the NSW Cup side against the Newtown Jets in the second match on Saturday (11.40am kick-off).

Team: Tuimoala Lolohea, Jonathan Wright, Fusitua, Solomone Kata, Manu Vatuvei, Chad Townsend, Shaun Johnson, Jacob Lillyman, Thomas Leuluai, Ben Matulino, Bodene Thompson, Ryan Hoffman, Simon Manning. Interchange: Nathan Friend, Faitala-Mariner, Sam Lisone, Rapira, Peyroux.

Tirimoana School Gala

Dear Sir Peter,

Thank you for all of your amazing community work and passion for our NZ Warriors. My family and I are huge supporters too, one person in particular, my just turned 11 year old daughter, Jaime. Her all time favourite Warrior was George Gatis but being a pre-teen girl, they all love Shaun Johnson at the moment. No surprises there.

I was wondering if it was possible to put something in your next newsletter about my daughter's school Gala coming up. We live out west but thought it might be a good idea to get it in your newsletter as I have managed to purchase some Warriors gear and donate it to the school for prizes.

Here are the details from the stuff.co.nz website if possible & thank you if you can..

Regards, Vera Campbell -

When: Sun 3 May, 11:00am – 3:00pm

Where: Tirimoana Primary School, 34 Kokiri St, Glendene

Tickets: Free Admission

Website: www.tirimoana.school.net

A great day out for all the family. All your favourite stalls - white elephant, cakes, plants, lucky dips, etc. Café and food available. Lots of fun activities for the children. Rain or shine!

Hornby Rugby League Centenary Weekend

THE Hornby Rugby League Club - champions of Canterbury a record 27 times - have turned 100 at Easter. The event was celebrated over four days with functions, games and a dinner with guest speaker Mark Graham. The weekend included a premier season kick-off match against Halswell. Hornby played a game befitting of the momentous event with a 44 -18 win. Huge crowds attended the junior and senior games all played at the Panther's home ground of Lesley park. Mark Graham (who flew in for the celebrations from Gladstone in Northern Queensland) attended the entire weekend catching up with old mates, having photos taken and signing autographs. Graham was impressed by the events and his welcome by the club. Hornby is hoping to continue with a strong 100 year season and possibly a 28th title!



Jacob Kerapa & Grant Woodgate cutting the Centenary Cake.



Jacob Kerapa & Grant Woodgate with Centenary Cake.jpg



Jacob Kerapa & Grant Woodgate followed by Centenary cake – that they had cut - just before Past v Present game.



Past v Present group photo.



Premier side – minute silence for past members.



Tevin Arona breaking the line and about to score.



Ho, Lyn and Mark Graham.



Players leaving tunnel.



Jordan Coleman kicking a winning conversion.



Panasonic

ideas for life



Auckland - Waikato - Barrier



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Grab your Ed Sheeran presale tickets, thanks to Vodafone Fantastic Fridays >

Vodafone Power to music lovers



Hokitika Taipos

MANY thanks Sir Peter for sending the kids a box of goodies - the Warriors magazines & posters were really well received!! An added bonus was winning the Auckland Nines jersey - WOW we are thrilled....thank you. We will be raffling that off to help pay for new uniforms.

The photo attached is of some of the Hokitika Taipos kids just before their 9's tournament at Wingham Park in Greymouth. They are looking very focussed in this pic - ha ha. It was a beautiful West Coast day, and overall as a club, we were very successful.

Once again, thank you so much.

Kirsty Wilson (Secretary)
Hokitika Rugby League Club



Message from a Fan

DUANE Fyfe, originally from Christchurch and a big league fan, who is travelling the world with his wife sent me this:

Hello Peter

I have really enjoyed reading the weekly newsletters. They seem to get better each year and it keeps me in touch with our Warriors and all the loyal supporters behind the scenes. I was also pleased to see that John Coffey is contributing to the newsletter. His piece on the Four Nations final wrap-up and the article about the grounds around the country in particular were a great read. He knows the game and the history so well.

There is no footy as far as league being played in South America. Although heritage teams representing Ecuador and another team called Latin Heat, made up of players representing all South American nations, are playing in different nine-a-side tournaments in Australia. I understand this is how they hope to start domestic competitions over here.

It worked for the Philippines and Thailand so here's hoping.

I will be catching up with an old Kiwi mate in Canada who has put a lot into league there, so will hope to have an article for you about how the Canucks are taking to the game.

I'm drafting this email as we cross Lake Titicaca from Bolivia to Puno in Peru, having started this year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil mid-January, and travelled through Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile. The carnival season in Brazil was spectacular. Different countries different challenges but it's a big continent with vast areas to travel, a 48-hour bus trip to get from A to B is quite common.

Many days with little sleep but you only live once, or better said you only die once you get to live every day.

Duane (The World Traveller)



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Signed Springbok Rugby Jersey

ON 1 January 2014, the South African Rugby Union signed a 6 year deal with sports apparel supplier Asics. The brand took over from the existing kit sponsors, Canterbury.

Shane Keohane, who hails from Feilding and is the current Team SA Press Attache' having attended the London Olympic and Paralympics as well as the recent Commonwealth Games held in Glasgow, recently visited Auckland and met up with Sir Peter Leitch to donate a Springbok rugby jersey, signed by all the players and head coach Heyneke Meyer.

The significance of the signed jersey is that it was signed before the announcement of the new kit sponsor Asics and will allow a collector to hold on to one of the last Canterbury signed Springbok jersey's post 2014. Said Shane Keohane, "while I am aware that Sir Peter is an avid Rugby League bloke, I am also aware that his passion for all sports runs deeply.

I am also conscious of all the charity work Sir Peter is involved in and am thrilled to be able to donate this special jersey, that I am confident Sir Peter will ensure finds a worthy home while benefiting one of his selected charities"

Regards
Shane

Shane travelled all the way from South Africa to give me this signed jersey!



This jersey will be auctioned off at the Kiwis Luncheon on the 12th of June. All proceeds go to Allergy New Zealand

State of Origin - 35 Years

IF you are a fan of State of Origin Rugby League this book is for you. This fantastically illustrated book takes the reader on a journey spanning 35 Years with 350 great photos capturing the action.

A detailed look at each series from 1980 to 2014. Every game in every series is explored in detail, with a blow by blow account of all the key incidents.

There is also a detailed list of results, captains, teams, coaches, man of the match winners and referees.

The book is available in bookshops, The Warehouse or by going online at www.batemanpublishing.co.nz

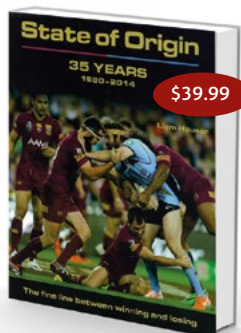
RRP is \$39.99

If you are a league fan, this is the book for you!

- Every State of Origin game explored in detail, with blow-by-blow accounts of all key incidents.

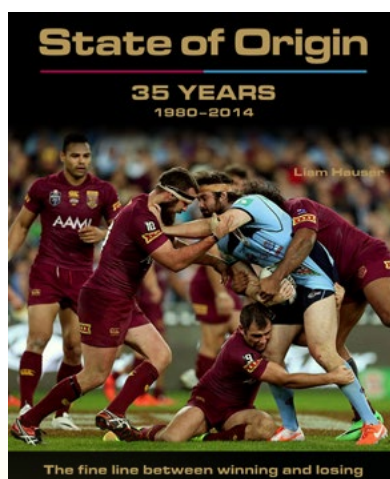
- Highs and lows, controversies and shocks.

- Over 350 great photos capturing the action.



Bateman

Available at The Warehouse, good bookshops or online at www.batemanpublishing.co.nz



2015 State of Origin Games:

Game I - May 27th - ANZ Stadium

Game II - June 17th - MCG

Game III - July 8th - Suncorp Stadium



Kiwi Ferns Make Impact On League Landscape

WHILE the NZ Kiwis have enjoyed considerable international success over the past 15 years, including a Tri Nations crown, two Four Nations championships and a World Cup title, their female counterparts have perhaps been even more impressive with far less fanfare.



Their journey takes another significant step next week, when they take on their archrivals, the Australia Jillaroos, in the Anzac Test curtainraiser at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium.

For many years, the Kiwi Ferns survived on the smell of an oily rag, outside the umbrella of NZ Rugby League, but due to the hard work of a few diehards, managed to capture three consecutive World Cup victories between 2000-08.

Their domination ended with defeat by Australia in the 2013 final, but the Ferns have rebuilt over the past 12 months, due in no small part to a renewed commitment to the women's game by both NZRL and the NRL. Administration on both sides of the Tasman have taken their women's teams into their high performance programmes, providing fresh opportunities for improvement and exposure at international level.

In their first meeting since that World Cup final, the Kiwi Ferns, under new coach Rusty Matua, toppled the Jillaroos with a last-minute try in the curtainraiser to last November's Kangaroos v Samoa Four Nations clash at Wollongong.

They repeated that dose in a three-game series at the Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines earlier this year, a performance that really opened the public's eyes to the power and skill on display in the women's game. When SKY's "Crowd Goes Wild" sports show compiled its "Smashed Em, Bro" selection of big tackles from the tournament, the top four hits came from Kiwis women, including two from power centre Maitua Feterika.

As Vodafone Warriors and Kiwis star Shaun Johnson conducted a post-game press conference under the Eden Park stands, he stopped interviews to admire a piledriving effort from veteran Laura Mariu showing on the TV monitor at the back of the room.

Since the Nines, experienced Taranaki coach Alan Jackson has taken the reins, as NZRL continues to build towards the next World Cup (2017) on home soil.

A veteran of all three World Cup triumphs and a double international through her early softball exploits, Mariu will lead the Kiwi Ferns for the first time against Australia next week and is excited by her team's prospects.

"The opportunities we've been given since last year have been really awesome for the game," she says. "I can only see it going upwards, as long as we have the support of NZRL and NRL in getting the women's game out there."

**NZ Kiwi Ferns v Australia Jillaroos Anzac Test
Curtainraiser 5.20pm, Friday, May 1 Suncorp
Stadium, Brisbane**



BLK

Kiwis we Needed to See More Often

By John Coffey QSM



KIWIS coach Stephen Kearney and his fellow selectors are currently poring over the form of players in line for the Anzac Test at Brisbane on May 1. It is a time when New Zealand fans shudder when our best players suffer potentially serious injuries or are put on report.

The first Test I covered as a sports journalist was an 18-8 series-clinching victory over France at Christchurch in 1964. That Kiwis side included Jarrod McCracken's father (Ken) and Stacey Jones' grandfather (Maunga Emery). That's enough to make one feel a little ancient.

But it also got me thinking that we don't always see our best players in a Kiwis jersey as often as we would like. I have come up with this short list from the last 20 years as Kiwi amateurs became professionals:

LOGAN EDWARDS was a truly gifted loose forward who was a replacement in five Tests from 1993 to 1995. He inspired Canterbury to a succession of victories over Auckland and the 1990 British Lions, and was a first-season Warrior. Coach John Monie thought him too small and it would have taken a tough training programme to rectify that. But Logan was, and is, a free spirit, and seemed just as happy playing for English minnows Rochdale Hornets, Swinton and Oldham before coming home to humble Auckland yet again.

LESLEY VAINIKOLO was the Manu Vatuvei of his day. He matched Manu in physique and had an even better try-scoring strike-rate with 14 tries in his 14 Tests from 1999 to 2006. But he virtually dropped out of sight when he transferred from Canberra to Bradford in 2002. Whenever the Kiwis went to Britain they were told that big Les was having off-season surgery. Not surprising maybe, for his Bradford coach, Brian Noble, was also the Great Britain coach. Les later switched to rugby union and represented England. What a waste!

SONNY BILL WILLAMS only played in seven Tests during his illustrious club career with the Canterbury Bulldogs, and then added five more at the 2013 World Cup after belatedly making himself available. When they tell you SBW has achieved it all in his cross-codes and boxing careers you can reflect that no-one else among 789 Kiwis played more Tests against Australia without winning one! He also went to rugby union for the first time in 2008, a year when the Kiwis went on to win the World Cup without him. So much unfulfilled potential.

STEVE MATAI has played in four NRL grand finals and is still one of the most resilient centres in the competition. A long international career seemed assured when he played four Tests in the 2006 Tri-Nations. But things began to go wrong when he was sent off for a stiff-arm tackle of Mark Gasnier at Wellington in 2007 and then withdrew from a tour to Britain. Steve played a minor role at the 2008 World Cup but the 2010 Anzac Test was the last of his 12 appearances. He opted to represent Samoa at the 2013 World Cup but did not turn up.

Then there are guys who are just unlucky – such as **CHASE STANLEY**, who scored two tries in his maiden Test against Great Britain at Wigan as an 18-year-old wing in 2007. Since then his career has been ruined by injuries. In five seasons for the Dragons, two for the Storm and two for the Bulldogs he has managed to get onto the field for just 92 matches. Chase turns 26 on May 31. Younger brother **KYLE STANLEY** (24) has also been injury-plagued in making only 45 appearances in five seasons at the Dragons before joining the Sharks this year.



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Biggest Weekend of the Year!

By John Coffey QSM



IT might be difficult to find any Australians who will agree, but to me the first weekend of May will be the most important couple of days of the rugby league year. Even more important than NRL Grand Final weekend or the days surrounding State of Origin.

Within 48 hours in south-east Queensland fans will be able to see three Tests, plus women's and junior internationals and a match between trans-Tasman defence force teams, the latter an addition which is appropriate to the overall Anzac theme.

On Friday, May 1, New Zealand will attempt to overturn its 2013 Defence Force World Cup loss to its Australian counterpart, the Kiwi Ferns will aim to build on their Auckland Nines successes over the Australian Jillaroos, and the Four Nations champion Kiwis will take on the World Cup holding Kangaroos.

That glittering array of talent is to be displayed at Brisbane's magnificent Suncorp Stadium, where the Kiwis have previously triumphed in the 2008 World Cup final, the 2010 Four Nations final and the opening match of the 2014 Four Nations tournament.

Next day the action moves south to Cbus Stadium on the Gold Coast, where the Junior Kiwis and Junior Kangaroos open a triple-header which continues with Fiji playing Papua New Guinea and Samoa clashing with traditionally fierce rival Tonga.

Why is this the most important weekend of the year? Because, unfortunately, it is the only opportunity in 2015 to convince rugby league's biggest nation that the game actually exists beyond its own NRL clubs and eastern states.

The Australians, fuelled by a largely insular media with their sensational BURNOUT headlines, blamed the length of their own season as a reason for the Kangaroos losing twice to the Kiwis in last year's Four Nations. They forget the Kiwis played in the same competition.

Instead of reducing the length of their 30-week NRL programme to ease that perceived problem, they bowed to players' demands for a longer off-season and refused to host Great Britain in a three-match

Ashes Test series. So much for resurrecting tradition and promoting international football.

The NZRL took up the slack and agreed to send the Kiwis to Britain for three Tests and a game against Leeds. That was presumably a better financial deal than hosting the Lions. But good luck convincing those NRL clubs they should release their New Zealand players for another pesky off-season tour.

It's great that we are seeing so many midweek Channel Nine and Fox Sports rugby league programmes – especially a triple dose of the excellent NRL360 – but they only underline the emphasis put on State of Origin ahead of the Anzac Test when discussing team selections and player availability.

Both Test teams have unique incentives to win on May 1. New Zealand has not beaten Australia in three or more consecutive Tests since 1952-53. That sequence began with a remarkable 49-25 victory at Brisbane in 1952 and continued through a 19-9 series-clinching win at Sydney, and to a 25-5 success at Christchurch in 1953 and another series-deciding 12-11 victory at Wellington.

Kangaroos coach Tim Sheens was hurt by last season's defeats, and will whistle up his trusty "Dad's Army" to exert revenge. Paul Gallen, Jonathan Thurston, Cameron Smith, Sam Thaiday and company know some of them will not make it to the 2017 World Cup and this is probably their last time together in green and gold. They won't want to go out as losers.

Rugby league in New Zealand is, for better or worse, judged by the fortunes of the Kiwis (and Warriors). Life is just that much sweeter for the fans if their teams are flying high. So get to Brisbane and Gold Coast if you can; if not tune into Sky Sport for the biggest weekend of the year.

For more info on these tests check out our special ANZAC Test Newsletter on my website.



[Click here.](#)



Doctors Required to Rule on “Brain Bruises”

By John Deaker



IT seems stunning that in the year 2015 one of the main topics of debate in rugby and union continues to be the irresponsible and inconsistent way that both codes deal with players' concussions. For decades now lip-service has been paid to this serious issue by the respective sports' administrators.

As these sports' understanding and awareness of this topic has improved in recent decades a few regulations have been introduced to supposedly address the problem. However, in reality not much genuine progress has been made when it comes to ensuring that the athletes' long-term health is put before the short-term playing demands of the teams and individuals.

We are still yet to see either code experiment with the use of an independent sideline doctor to rule on whether players from both teams can remain on the field after head knocks. This is a simple solution that for a long time many people have believed would provide a much more effective process than the status quo.

Players are often reluctant to discuss the issue, but last year West Tigers' Captain Robbie Farah gave a refreshingly honest appraisal of why the system needed to be changed:

“I almost think there's got to be an independent doctor at every game. What I'm concerned about is inconsistencies from club to club,” Farah said.

“The other thing is, in a big game I guarantee you that if JT goes down or a Cam Smith or a Paul Gallen – someone like that – the coach and the doctor are doing everything they can to get them back on the field. And I'd be doing the same, and I'd want my team-mate to do the same.”

“If my club doctor was there telling me I'm not going back on the field I'd tell him to get stuffed – and he'd probably listen to me.”

Administrators' failure to act reflects very poorly on them considering how often the ineffective systems we've seen in place have lead to negative publicity for the oval ball codes. Time after time we've seen the same mistakes repeated.

After the outrage in 2013 when the Wallabies' George Smith was badly knocked out against the British Lions yet returned to the field 5 minutes later you thought finally rugby union might get the message. Last weekend when Josh Hohnock came back on the field after being knocked out during the Highlanders v Crusaders match it was one of the more graphic examples of evidence we've seen that the message still hasn't got through.

Hopefully it doesn't take a death on the field in professional rugby or league for the penny to finally drop. We've experienced deaths happening on the field at club level in recent years but as yet no professional player in Australasian rugby or league has passed away in the middle of a live televised match.

The use of an independent sideline doctor at professional levels could make an impact that would have a flow-on-effect to the grass-roots level of both codes. Currently people of all ages see their role-models coming back on the field to play after being knocked out. This naturally makes it more widely accepted for players at lower levels to push the limits and their support staff less likely to take a hard stance on the issue.

Rugby League's Richard Fa'aoso is one professional case that has the potential to end in a tragedy. People that have followed his history of head knocks would be stunned to know he was back playing at the weekend for Parramatta. Fa'aoso appears to be the extreme case of why these sports need to protect their players rather than expect them to make sensible decisions relating to their health. *Continued on next page...*

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Most young men are full of bravado and in rugby and league they make their living by not taking a backward step. Fa'aooso has shown time and time again that he'll continue to stay on the field or return to the field whenever given a chance, no matter how much damage he takes to his melon. Many other players are of a similar mentality, especially when they're caught up in the heat of battle.

One way that players' and administrators' attitudes to concussions could improve is through people more commonly referring to concussions as a 'bruised brain'. In reality, that is what we are dealing with and we all know from bruises to other parts of our body that we don't take heavy knocks to our limbs and then suddenly find the bruising magically disappears 5 minutes later. Why would our brain be any different!?

Eventually it's likely that independent doctors will at least be trialed by one of the codes. It's just as likely that this will prove to be more successful than the current system and that in many years from now we'll look back and wonder why change took so long. They say good things take time – but it's long overdue for rugby and league to embrace this change before it's too late.



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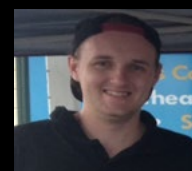
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Another Great Weekend of Local Club Sport

By Ben Francis



IT was an exciting round 5 in the Scott Electrical Northland Rugby League Premiership, two of the top four sides lost, and Kerikeri still searching for a win. HoraHora Broncos got their first win of season beating Otangarei Knights 18-14, The Northern Wairoa Bulls got back to back wins, crushing the Kerikeri Makos 80-10, Hokianga Pioneers had a great 40-32 win over the Hikurangi Stags, Takahiwai Warriors had a very close win against Muriwhenua Falcons 32-30 and finally the Portland Panthers beat table topping and previously undefeated Moerewa Tigers 30-18.

Round three of the Bayleys Southern Districts Premiers was on the weekend, Welsford is the only unbeaten side in the competition after they beat Otamatea 28-6, Western Sharks bounced back from last weeks defeat to beat Hikurangi 34-12, Mid Western claimed a close 18-13 win over Waipu, Old Boys Marist beat HoraHora 25-24 in a thriller and Kamo remain winless after they got beaten 47-17 against Mid Northern.

Round two of the Bay Of Islands Premiers was also played, Kaeo continued their good start to the season beating Otiria 32-17. Also staying undefeated after two rounds is Moerewa, they dominated Okaihau 62-10. Other results saw KeriKeri defeat Kaikohe 48-20 and Ohaewai scrape past Kawakawa 25-24

Also Mangonui Premiers played their round two matches, all three games played were one sided, with the combined scores being 222-7 in all three matches. Awanui tore Aupouri to shreds winning 90-0, Eastern won away against Kaitaia 75-7 and TeRarawa had a convincing win over South Hokianga 57-0.

Round two of the Northland Football Premiership was in full swing with some high scoring matches, Kerikeri continued their dominant start to the season winning 4-0 over Onerahi. Kamo bounced back from last weeks loss to beat Bream Bay 3-0. Kaitaia had a convincing 5-2 victory over Whangarei. Finally Central and Tikipunga played out a goalless draw.

All club sports will be played on ANZAC day.

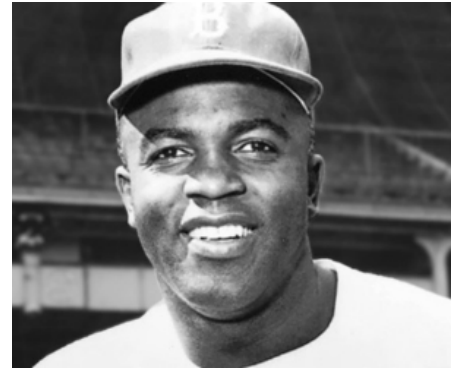
Jackie Robinson & Pat Tillman, Two Icons of US Sport

By Ben Francis



Jackie Robinson Is An Icon In World Sport

IF you are an American Sports fan and mainly a Baseball fan April 15th is a special day. Since 2004 it has been known as Jackie Robinson Day. I expect most people who are reading this now probably do not know who Jackie Robinson is.... Well Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play professional sport in the United States ending sixty years of segregation in professional sports. Robinson made his debut for the Brooklyn Dodgers (now Los Angeles Dodgers) on April 15th 1947. Robinson wore the number #42 which is firstly the only number in baseball to be retired so no club in the major leagues can issue out that number to a player. The first athlete in professional in any sport to have this honour.



The only time Robinson's number can be worn is on April 15 for Jackie Robinson Day where all, players, coaches, managers and umpires wear the number in hour of Robinson. 2015 marks 68years since this event. Baseballs Rookie Of The Year award is also named after Jackie Robinson. Robinson was not your average player either, Robinson is a champion, he played in Six World Series and a Winning one in 1955, the first In Dodgers history. Also won MVP in 1949, and in the Major League Baseball All-Century Team, a batting average of .311, 1518 Hits which 137 went for home runs and 734 runner batted in. If you had no clue who Jackie Robinson is, hopefully now you do. Go watch the film about his career named after his number "#42"

Who is Pat Tillman?

ADVANCE forward one week to April 22nd and this day is remembered for another former athlete, ironically this guy also wore #42 when he was at Arizona State University. Once again you probably have not heard of this man but Pat Tillman is somebody who I think is best described as a patriot. Tillman was a Safety for the Arizona Cardinals between 1998-2001 playing in 60 games for the club. He loved his country. Of course in September 2001 the horrible evens occurred as we now call 9/11 rattled the United States. Advance to May 2002 and Pat was a free agent, he turned down a \$3.6 million deal by Arizona and enlisted in the U.S.



Army along with his brother Kevin who turned down a professional baseball contract with the Cleveland Indians. Pat joined cause he loved his country, he wanted Americans to live free. When this was announced the media were all over Pat, but he just wanted to be treated like all the other soldiers.

After spending time in Iraq, he was then redeployed to Afghanistan. This then brings us to April 22nd 2004, Pat Tillman was killed outside a small village called Sperah. At first the world was told he was killed by the enemy combats. But sadly he was shot in friendly fire by other U.S. Platoon His brother Kevin was not a witness to what occurred but arrived ten minutes later, and the other U.S. Soldiers were told not to tell Kevin he was killed in friendly fire. This was when Pat was turned into a "poster boy" to try recruit others into the Army, and also awarded the Silver Star, third highest military medal you can receive. Then the truth started to get out after the media received anonymous leaks, which found the cover up to be done by some of the highest ranked members in the military. Despite consistent denial the Tillman family know the truth. Pat had a statue of himself, both his college and professional number retired.

Both Jackie Robinson and Pat Tillman are iconic figures in U.S. history, and both deserve to be known world wide for what they have done.

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Hi Sir Mad Butcher

Thanks for you call this morning regarding our photo on Twitter.

A rule for game day, Warriors gear must be worn! Realising we all had a different jersey on, we couldn't resist a photo. Go the Mighty Vodafone Warriors!

L to R Steve Leef, Steve McNabb, Jo Leef, Sian Leef, Donna Neville, Rick Leef

Regards
Rick Leef and Mates



Nathan Hughes a
trucker that loves the
Vodafone Warriors.



League legend Andrew Johns and former Warrior Tony Tuimavave dropped in on the lounge to pay us a visit.



Tim Gillbert (channel 9s Star) made a visit to the lounge a few weeks ago and insisted on having his picture take with regulars; Yvonne, Trevor, Lorna and Derek.

If you wish to **subscribe** or **unsubscribe** please email Stephen Maier at stephan.maier@medstar.co.nz

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