



Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

Newsletter ^{20th August 2015} #86

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All Blacks keep the
Bledisloe Cup

Photos courtesy of www.photosport.co.nz



All Blacks
VS
Wallabies

41 - 13

The Silver Ferns may have lost but they went down fighting!



Bailey Mes catching from Julie Corletto.



Bailey Mes gets hit in the air by Laura Geitz and Julie Corletto.



Kayla Cullen dejected after the game.



Kayla Cullen takes the pass.



Maria Tutaia shoots over Laura Geitz.



Maria Tutaia takes the ball from Laura Geitz.



Silver Ferns.



Silver Ferns after the loss.



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.co.nz

THE COWBOYS ARE COMING OVER THIS SATURDAY 7.30PM



ARL Results

Appliance Shed Fox Memorial Premiership Rd 18 (Last Week Of Regular Season)

Mangere East 34 Northcote 28

Glenora 6 Papakura 38

Pt Chevalier 22 Otara 6

Marist 44 Otahuhu 16

Howick 28 Mt Albert 36



The four teams advancing to the finals next week are Mt Albert, Papakura, Pt Chevalier and Marist. Otara have been relegated to the SAS Sharman Cup for 2016.

SAS Sharman Cup Finals Week One

Richmond 22 East Coast Bays 12

Te Atatu 26 Ellerslie 22

Manurewa 34 Bay Roskill 26

Mt Wellington 20 Pakuranga 26

Te Atatu and Richmond advance to the major semi-finals on August 29 as the two highest placed winners. East Coast Bays and Ellerslie are eliminated as the two lowest placed losers.

GAMES THIS Saturday August 22

11am: Pt Chevalier v Marist (Appliance Shed Fox Memorial semi-final) @ Birkenhead War Memorial Park

12.45: St Paul's College v Kelston Boys High School (SAS College Rugby League grand final) @ Birkenhead War Memorial Park

2.30pm: Mt Albert v Papakura (Appliance Shed Fox Memorial semi-final) @ Birkenhead War Memorial Park



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Thompson Back!

BODENE THOMPSON returns from injury and Sione Lousi has been recalled for the our final home match of the season against the North Queensland Cowboys at Mt Smart on Saturday at 7.30pm.

Thompson has recovered from the ankle injury that ruled him out of the last three matches, while Lousi has been brought up from the New South Wales Cup side.

Lousi starts in the second row for his fifth NRL appearance this year and the 47th of his career, while Thompson, who played in each of the first 18 games of the campaign, is on the bench.

They're in for Sam Rapira (suspended) and Raymond Faita-la-Mariner (to play NSW Cup).

Departing players will feature strongly in the final outing. Rapira's suspension has denied the 10-season veteran a farewell appearance before he leaves the NRL for Huddersfield in England.

Rapira played 173 NRL games for the club and will be acknowledged after the game along with Sam Tomkins, Dominique Peyroux, Chad Townsend and Nathan Friend.



Bodene Thompson

Chance To End Slump

The Vodafone Warriors will face another stern test battling the third-placed Cowboys as they seek to snap a run of five losses.

"It doesn't get any easier for us. There's no question we're doing it tough at the moment in what has been a disappointing season for everyone associated with the club," coach Andrew McFadden said.

The Cowboys have lost their last two games but have been playing fantastic football, and in Johnathan Thurston they have the best player in the game.

When we met in Townsville, North Queensland broke our hearts with a last-gasp 28-24 victory.

Buy tickets

Your team for Saturday night

Tomkins, Maumalo, Peyroux, Kata, Wright, Townsend, Lolohea, Lillyman, Friend, Vete, Lousi, Hoffman, Mannering. Bench: Hurrell, Thompson, Lisone, Gubb, Allwood.

The Fish Off To Rugby

Glen Fisiiahi is finishing at the end of the 2015 season to switch to rugby. Since making his NRL debut in 2011, the 24-year-old fullback-wing has been plagued by injuries, which has limited him to just 25 first-grade appearances from a possible 121 games in five seasons.

He scored 15 tries in those 25 games but played just four games in 2011, four in 2012, 11 in 2013, five last year and only one this season.

Fisiiahi was tipped for a big NRL career after he scored 22 tries in 29 games for the Juniors and helped

them to the club's maiden NYC premiership in 2010.

"There has never been a question about Glen's ability. He's a hugely exciting player when he's fit," said Vodafone Warriors head coach Andrew McFadden. "We've seen glimpses of what he can do, like the four tries he scored against the Tigers in Wellington last year. It's been frustrating for him, though, because while the potential was obviously there he just hasn't been able to get on the field.

"Glen is disappointed league hasn't worked out the way he'd hoped and so are we. We'd all been hoping he would come through his setbacks but it wasn't to be. We wish him all the best in rugby."



Glen Fisiiahi

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Maier at
**stephan.maier@med-
star.co.nz**

Sir John Walker Leaves Me In Awe

Every now and then I attend something that leaves me in awe. Last week that is exactly what happened.

I went to hear Sir John Walker talk about the 40th anniversary of his being the first man to break the 3minute 50second barrier for the mile.

The occasion doubled as a fundraiser for his Find Your Field of Dreams Foundation.

It is one thing to be a Kiwi sporting legend, and there is no doubt John Walker is. He's an Olympic champion, the first man to run 100 sub four-minute miles, a world record holder and probably our most famous athlete of all time. But he is much more.

He has not let Parkinson's Disease stop him from achieving the kinds of things he wants to, and that won't surprise anyone, since his athletics career was based on determination, aiming high, believing in himself and daring to dream.

He was a long-standing Manukau City councillor and now serves Auckland City. But he remains a proud South Auckland boy, Manurewa through and through.

When he realised the opportunities he had as a youngster were not always there for our young people he did something about it.

"Our aim is to impact the lives of young people in Auckland's areas of greatest need by providing them with opportunities to live healthy, active lifestyles and pursue a positive pathway through sport and physical recreation," he told the crowd.

That says more to me about the

man than the world records. He saw a problem and went out to try and help, and I will always salute him for that.

So Close For Silver Ferns

And I salute the Silver Ferns too. What a ride they took us all on at the Netball World Cup.

It was cruel to watch them fall short by three goals in the final, but take nothing away from Australia, they were outstanding, bouncing back from the earlier defeat we inflicted on them.

ABs send Richie off a winner

And speaking of bouncing back, the All Blacks demolished the Wallabies at Eden Park, a week after losing to them in Aussie. It was a privilege to be there when Richie McCaw became the most capped rugby player of all time.

So much has been said and written, so I will say simply this. Richie, you are a true champion.

Great Jersey Offer

This Saturday we take on the North Queensland Cowboys at Mt Smart, and they are travelling well, so things are not going to get any easier.

But even though we are not going well, I have a red hot offer for you. Visit www.warriorsstore.co.nz

and for \$99 - down from \$185 - you can secure the Vodafone Warriors Heritage Jersey that features the name and number of every player, starting with No 1 Dean Bell and going all the way to No 192 Tuimoala Lolohea.

Children's jerseys are only \$75 but get in quick because numbers are limited.

Three To Go And It's Getting Ugly

Finals footy has gone out the window, sad as it is, but that's life.

Vodafone Warriors coach Andrew McFadden has admitted he's more concerned with winning another game than making the eight.

Our 24-10 loss to the Panthers in Penrith on Saturday was our fifth straight loss.

We are alive mathematically, but I think we are all realistic enough to know it would take a miracle, and you just can't see one happening.

You would have to have more concern that we are about to match our 2012 effort, when we lost our last eight games.

We have the Cowboys in Auckland on Saturday, followed by the Tigers and Bulldogs away, and that looks a pretty tough run in to me.

McFadden said all efforts are on another win, rather than the play-offs. "It's the furthest thing from my mind. We're going to have to find something for our last home game."

Doyle Hangs Tough

There was a big story in the Sunday Star-Times with Jim Doyle at the weekend. Eight months on from taking over, he realises it might be the toughest job he's had.

"People follow success. We all see everyone get behind the All Blacks. We're not the All Blacks and we never will be, but there's no reason why we can't get constant success."

The Warriors have to carry that under-achievers tag and despite our recent results Doyle believes he is making progress.

Continued on next page...

Continued from previous page...

Sam Tomkins, Sam Rapira, Dominique Peyroux, David Bhana, John Palavi, Siliva Havili, Ngani Laumape, Matt Allwood, Sione Lousi, Bradley Abbey and Chad Townsend, are all going, Suaia Matagi has already gone.

Off the field it's been just as ruthless, Dean Bell, Carl Jennings and Ricky Henry all gone.

Under Doyle, everyone is accountable. "One of the things I've driven at any organisation I've been in is standards. There's no reason why we shouldn't be a top four side constantly. The objective is to get us up to becoming a winner."

Read the full article: [Here](#)

Shaun Johnson has defended Andrew McFadden and says fans need to be patient. Johnson is confident he is the man to bring stability to the club.

"With everyone putting heat on him and the club, it's not a short-term fix, that's not what we're looking for," Johnson said in an interview with Tony Veitch on Radio Sport.

"It's hard because he's at the top of it and ultimately everything falls back on him but he's not the one out there making errors or missing the tackles.

"People have just got to be a bit patient. Although we had big hopes for this year, things change and things happen, and you've just got to roll with it.

"It's hard for outside people to see but I know we're heading in the right direction and I'm behind Jim and Cappy 100 percent."

Listen to Shaun [here](#)

NSW Boys Get Home

Halfback Mason Lino was man of the match after a gritty Vodafone Warriors defensive performance produced a crucial 20-16 victory over Wests Tigers in the New South Wales Cup at Campbelltown.

Lino scored a try, kicked four from four and had a key hand in one of centre Marata Niukore's two tries.

Juniors Beaten Too

After ending a run of home defeats last week the Vodafone Junior Warriors faced the most demanding assignment of their season when they met Penrith on Saturday. The Panthers led the minor premiership race having won 14 of their last 15 games.

Now you can make that 15 of their last 16, with the Panthers too good, running out 36-28 winners.

Luck Gets The Nod

Club great Micheal Luck edged out Kevin Campion for the loose forward position in the Vodafone Warriors' People's Choice 20th Anniversary Team.

Luck's 150 appearances across seven seasons from 2006-2012 is still the most for the Vodafone Warriors by an Australian player.

While Campion's career comprised just 44 appearances he left an indelible mark.

It was anticipated the two Queenslanders would dominate voting for the No 13 jersey in the 20th anniversary team – and they certainly did. Combined they accounted for more than 80 per cent of all votes cast with Luck snaring 41 per cent and Campion 40 per cent.

Next up will be the vote to find the

halves.

The choices so far have been: Brent Webb, Manu Vatuvei and Francis Meli, Clinton Toopi and Brent Tate. The forwards have all now been picked. P J Marsh is at hooker between Steve Price and Ben Matulino, with Simon Mannering and Ali Lautiiti in the second row and Luck at loose forward.

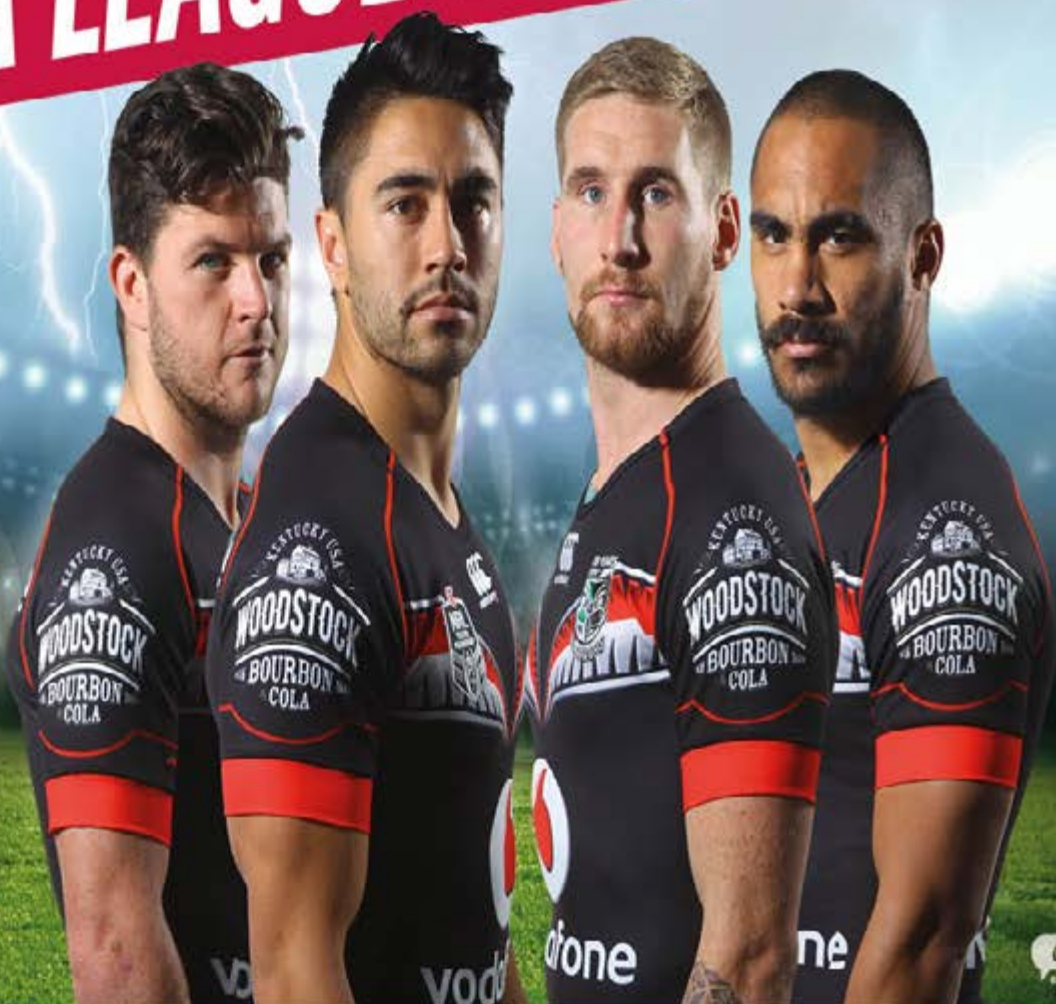
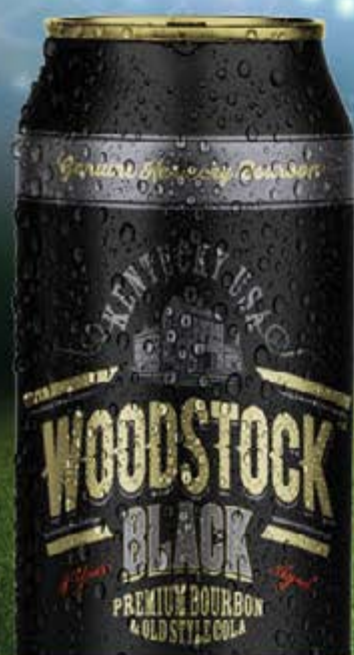


Micheal Luck

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Waiheke Rams

Road to the Grand Final - Waiheke Rams Open Age Restricted 2015

THE WAIHEKE Rams are on their way to a grand final. Aucklands smallest club who have only one team their under 85kgs Rams have had a dream season winning 17 games from 17 played and stand on the cusp of club history if they can overcome the giants in Hibiscus Coast Raiders at Mt Smart Stadium. The Rams have 22 registered players and no lower grades to promote from, players have played with injuries all season and on a shoestring budget, but the support of all of their fans keep this team rolling along. League is a game of fairy tales and heartbreak. So lets hope that this time the minnows of Auckland rugby league can come up trumps because nice guys need to finish first now and then..Ram hammer!!



**THE COWBOYS ARE COMING
OVER THIS SATURDAY 7.30PM**



Masters of Rugby League New Zealand *International Tournament 2015* Mountford Park, Manurewa, Auckland September 12th - 18th



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Joyce Putohe Is The Type Of Fan Any Team Would Be Proud Of

By John Deaker



JOYCE PUTOHE is one of the New Zealand Warriors' most loyal supporters. She's a hard-core fan that will go to great lengths to support her team - rain, hail or shine. Recently she went down to Wellington to watch the team take on St George Illawarra (she flew down in the morning then flew back home that same night) and by doing so ensure that she achieved her 'goal' of going to all of the Warriors' 2015 home games. By the Butchers words she is "One bloody good fan!".

The Warriors match each weekend has become a highlight of the week for Joyce who hails originally from Hamilton. She happened to move to Auckland around the time the Warriors club was formed and though it wasn't necessarily 'Love at first sight', Joyce has slowly fallen in love with the team and everything about them.

Joyce confesses to still supporting the All Blacks and the Chiefs, but she proudly claims that "The Warriors are my number 1 for sure."

As Joyce's love of the Warriors has increased, so has the need for her to work in Warriors matches around her job at the Event Cinemas in Queen St.

"Each year now I always pre-arrange with work the days I'm going to have off during the season and give them a list of all the Warriors games - home and away - to make sure I have the days off for their matches," she says.

Like so many die-hard fans, Joyce believes keeping Mount Smart Stadium as the Warriors base is crucial.

"Mount Smart is their home. You can't take away people's home from them," she passionately protests.

As well as her obvious love of the team (Shaun Johnson, Konrad Hurrell and Manu Vatuvei are her 3 favourites) Joyce gets a huge amount out of the comradeship she's now built up with other likeminded Warriors fans.

"A lot of my friends have to work when games are on so I usually travel in to matches on my own - but always meet up with many friends at the game. And I always have the same seats each week for home games."

Like all Warriors fans, Joyce is looking forward to the arrival of new exciting talent at the club next year and Issac Luke is the one she's especially looking forward to having on board. She also has her own 'supporter goal'.

"I've never been to a Warriors game in Australia so next year I intend to go over and watch a match."

A more successful year in 2016 and even making the finals series would provide a better 'excuse' for Joyce to travel to Australia - but for a real fan like her it seems those better results for the team would simply be a bonus. She's the type of fan who will continue to cheer on her team and get great enjoyment out of them regardless of their on-field results.



Joyce Putohe

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NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA ONLY

A Real World Cup Hero Retires

By John Coffey QSM



NOT ENOUGH of our finest footballers have experienced World Cup glory, in either rugby code. One would think that when one such achiever announces his retirement it would be loudly and proudly recorded by his homeland's news media. Not so, apparently.

David Fa'alogo (Kiwi #725) has reluctantly hung up his boots, bowing not to age – he will be 35 next month – but to an injury which requires him to undergo surgery on his neck. He steps down with a career total of 198 NRL appearances (142 for Souths from 2003 to 2009 and 56 for Newcastle during the last three seasons) and 57 Super League matches for Huddersfield.

New Zealand's stunning 34-20 victory over Australia in the 2008 World Cup final at Suncorp Stadium was the undoubted highlight of a fine career by an unassuming south Auckland and tireless forward who grafted his way to the top. That final was one of 13 Tests in the Kiwis jersey, to which can be added eight internationals for Toa Samoa.

Fa'alogo partnered Bronson Harrison in the Kiwis second-row on the night they roared back from an early 10-point deficit to break the Kangaroos' World Cup monopoly in front of 50,599 stunned fans in Brisbane. I recall leaving the ground – walking on air actually – and giving my unofficial Man of the Match award to Fa'alogo, who typically played the entire 80 minutes without taking a backward step.

David Fa'alogo and brother Sala, who went on to play for Widnes in England, came through the ranks of Auckland club football. David did not catch the eye of representative selectors at junior level, but he played for the Mount Albert Lions in the Bartercard Cup under the astute coaching of John Ackland before trying his luck in Sydney.

After only a handful of games for the Newtown Jets he was signed by South Sydney. His natural competitiveness came through at training – maybe he just enjoyed knocking the stuffing out of Australians -- and he further stepped up that high work-rate when given his chance at first grade level.

When British-based David Solomona was not available for the 2006 Anzac Test, Kiwis coach Brian McClennan replaced him with Fa'alogo, who retained his position for the Tri-Nations tournament later in

the year. It took a Darren Lockyer try in the seventh minute of golden point extra time to prevent the Kiwis retaining the title won in Leeds the previous year.

A suspension prevented him from touring Britain in 2007 but he was back for the glorious year of 2008 and the 2009 Anzac Test. His transfer to Huddersfield took him out of future Kiwis contention. But while in Britain he twice represented The Exiles (Australians and New Zealanders playing in the Super League) against England and switched his international allegiance to Toa Samoa.

After playing for Samoa at the 2013 World Cup tournament in England, including the 42-24 defeat by New Zealand at Warrington, Fa'alogo was the Samoan captain for the 2014 Four Nations series. The Kiwis were mightily relieved to escape with a desperate 14-12 victory at Whangarei.

Fa'alogo that day came up against four of his old team-mates from the 2008 World Cup final, Manu Vatuvei, Issac Luke, Adam Blair and Simon Mannering. It took a very late try by Shaun Kenny-Dowall to prevent Fa'alogo and his proud Samoans from causing an upset every bit as big as that of the Kiwis in their World Cup triumph.

When announcing his retirement, Fa'alogo said he regretted his neck injury prevented him from reaching a milestone of 200 NRL appearances. But another of his sporting ambitions had been well and truly ticked off. On the eve of his 2006 Test debut he told the New Zealand Herald what he hoped to achieve in his then fledgling footy career:

"I want to put my name in the New Zealand rugby league's record books," he said. David Fa'alogo did that, and all.

For the record, the winning 2008 World Cup final team was: *Lance Hohaia, Sam Perrett, Simon Mannering, Jerome Ropati, Manu Vatuvei, Benji Marshall, Nathan Fien, Nathan Cayless (captain), Thomas Leuluai, Adam Blair, Bronson Harrison, David Fa'alogo, Jeremy Smith.*



David Fa'alogo

An Incredible Journey – 84 Times Over

By John Coffey QSM



DAVE AND Lorraine McKee have not missed a Warriors home game for seven seasons. No doubt a few other enthusiasts have also been ever-present for that length of time. But nobody else surmounts the difficult, not to mention expensive, hurdle of travelling from Christchurch to Auckland and then on to Mount Smart Stadium to cheer on their team every second week.

This Saturday's game against the North Queensland Cowboys, the last at home in the 2015 campaign, will be the 84th consecutive time the McKees have left their Halswell home to travel north with Air New Zealand or Jetstar. They almost always have to stay overnight, adding to the costs, before making the return journey.

Most fans have become accustomed to likening their Warriors experience to a roller-coaster ride. Dave and Lorraine can encounter three such rides on one weekend if the weather around Auckland is a bit thundery or a raging nor-wester is battering the Canterbury plains on the homeward trip.

"We love the Warriors," said Lorraine, while admitting "it is a bit of a trek" to see them play. "Dave does two jobs to keep us going. We have stayed in some dingy places, but they are just somewhere to sleep and then we go home the next morning.

"Dave spends a lot of time on the computer looking for cheap flights, but that fluctuates a lot. We have had one-way fares with Jetstar as low as \$29 each. But one day when a Jetstar flight was cancelled Air New Zealand charged \$750 for the two of us just to get to Auckland. It hurt but we did not want to miss the game."

The McKees, married for 36 years, are rugby league to the core. Dave was a hooker for Marist-Western Suburbs in his playing days and they are long-time followers of their local Halswell club. Dave coached and Lorraine managed their son's junior teams more than 30 years ago. That grassroots support is ongoing. On the morning I talked to Lorraine, Dave was out in the cold and rain watching their grandson's team in its grand final.

"We have followed the Warriors from day one, but for years couldn't afford to go to Auckland. The first game we saw was in Newcastle when we were holidaying in Australia, and they won. It was probably three or four years before we started going regularly,"

said Lorraine.

"We met people who got us into the Mad Butcher's Lounge and that got us wanting to go even more. It's so much fun. Peter Leitch is just another reason we go to every game. He does so much for others. It was wonderful what he did for so many Christchurch people who had been affected by the earthquakes and for policemen and firemen who had been involved.

"Manu (Vatuvei) is my favourite man. He is such a gentleman, though they (the players) all are. Manu was the first player I met – he was probably only about 18 then with bushy hair and a big smile. It's a real shame he has been injured. Ruben Wiki is another great guy, but they really all are. We have got to know a lot of them personally. If they see us at the airport they come over and chat. Some of the younger ones are a bit shy, but if we keep going for another five years they will get used to us too!"

As far as Lorraine is concerned, she will be making excursions to Auckland "until I die", though there is one particularly worrying cloud on the horizon – the threat by the Auckland City Council to move the Warriors from Mount Smart to another venue.

"We wouldn't be able to go if they went to the North Shore, we just couldn't afford that. They have a very good thing going at Mount Smart. It's like being with a family and the Mad Butcher's Lounge is just like our clubrooms. Mount Smart is the true home of rugby league and most of the people who go to the football are from that side of the city," said Lorraine.

She has faith that Warriors CEO Jim Doyle is just the knight in shining armour – with the Mad Butcher as his first lieutenant – to fight off the forces of evil. It would just not be the same watching a Warriors home game on a television screen in a Halswell lounge.



Dave and Lorraine McKee

What's Happening Up North

By Ben Francis



Rugby League

WOW IS all I can say. Northland Rugby League fans experienced a grand final of the ages when the Hikurangi Stags took on the Takahiwhai Warriors in the 2015 Scott Electrical Grand Final. This was the second best club rugby league game I have watched, the other was with Brian McClennan coached the Hibiscus Coast Raiders to victory in the 2002 grand final in the Mad Butcher Fox Memorial Shield against Otahuhu Leopards.

A double overtime thriller in the Scott Electrical Grand Final saw the Hikurangi Stags win their sixth title in the last nine seasons as they beat the Takahiwhai Warriors 20-16. This was a repeat of the 2013 Grand Final and both teams showed why they were the top two teams on the standings at seasons end. Takahiwhai were leading 16-14 at the later stages of the game before a lack of discipline in front of the sticks handed a match tying penalty to Hikurangi on a silver platter as they tied the game up.

After playing out the first extra time, it looked like the game was heading for triple overtime before Hikurangi player Eric Abraham scored a brilliant try to give Hikurangi the win.

Hikurangi captain Joe Rau said after the game he was "happy to get the win. We did it the hard way, but full credit to the position; they played well."

Takahiwhai coach Mark Freeman said "it was a great game of footy. We had our opportunities, the boys fought hard but it just didn't come together."

Otaua Valley earned a promotion into the top flight Northland competition for the 2016 season after they beat the Pawarenga Broncos 28-12 in the Championship final. The KeriKeri Makos will play in the Championship after being relegated as they pulled out mid season.

In club sports in all countries I'd say a big problem is sideline abuse/violence towards referees, players and other spectators, it has been a massive talking point in New Zealand sport this year due to a number of bad incidents all involving players, fans and even referees. For those who did not see this on TV3's new show The Story last Thursday was a piece on this issue, and involved in this story was Northland Rugby League GM Alex Smits and his Don't Be An Egg campaign. This campaign is all about being a good sport. If you would like to watch the story you can see it here

otherwise head along to www.northernwords.co.nz for all the information on Northland Rugby League's campaign to stop this issue.

Football

LAST WEEK at the Northern Wairoa Football Club was a very special event took place, teams from North Harbour, Whangarei and Dargaville took part in a football competition in association with Special Olympics New Zealand. Now for those who don't know Special Olympics New Zealand is a sports organisation for people with a intellectual disability, providing these people with physical benefits of sport and most of importantly all about having fun. Despite each individual having their own disability some of them were actually very good players, one of the teams actually plays in a top North Harbour football league. The volunteers on the day also had a team and played this top North Harbour team and they were very good going down fighting in both games. It was great to see all the participants talking part having fun, and also all the fans who came up from North Harbour to watch and cheer. For all those from Sport Northland, the volunteers, the players and coaches from all teams and of course the team at Special Olympics NZ would like to thank you for putting on an awesome day. If you want to see if a Special Olympics event is coming to a town near you, head along to www.specialolympics.org.nz for more information.

Rugby Union

NORTHLAND PLAYED Hawkes Bay in round one of the ITM Cup, however the importance of this game was big, not only was it Richie Harris's first game coaching the Taniwha but it was for the Ranfurly Shield. Northland named a young squad for the game which included eight players making their provincial debuts. About 390 Northlanders made the trip down to Napier. It's probably going to be a long trip back up north however as the young Northland side struggled from the get go to lose 39-10. Northland struggled against the rolling mauls and also struggled to break the advantage line at times they were literally going backwards.

Hawkes Bay will next defend the Log O' Wood on September 5th against North Harbour and Northland will play Southland on Saturday up in Whangarei 5:35pm kick off for all those interested in watching.



THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S ROUND 24 ISSUE...

The back-to-back NRL challenge

FEATURES

- Back-to-back premierships are becoming the Holy Grail of the NRL era. A team is yet to do it, but **South Sydney** still look in the form and a position to give it a red-hot go. We look at what may stand in their way and why it is so hard these days;
- The Sydney Roosters have welcomed some new arrivals this season – **Suaia Matagi** the latest. He used to study video of the in-form **Jared Waerea-Hargreaves** and now they are taking it to the competition side-by-side, as well as expanding their families at the same time;
- A rich **free-to-air TV deal** was penned last week, so where can the money be best spent and what does it mean for the game? We asked Australia captain **Cameron Smith** and sports lawyer and former NRL player **Tim Fuller** what they think;
- There are many tales of incredible journeys to the NRL stage, but none quite like **Solomone Kata's**. From a distant Tongan island, through AFL, union to land at the Warriors, he's rocketed to the top grade and can only get better;
- There's one thing **Mal Meninga** wishes he could have done—played in the Auckland Nines.

PLUS... **Anthony Watmough:** at a time when people are riled up about deals and decisions, Choc takes us through a touching moment in his life that has given him clear perspective; **Matt Elliott** explains why the shoulder charge can be no more; **Nathan Brown** breaks down how things may pan out for those pushing for the final top-eight spots: the Bulldogs, Dragons and Sea Eagles.

AND: Official team lists; Warren Smith's Big Clash preview of Roosters v Broncos; News: Minor premiership not a concern for Roosters, Time to take league to America, Bedsy can be a top grade coach, Lyon leading Manly into form; Who's That Kid? Sharks' Jayden Brailey; Top 8 late season rallies; Cheerleader of the Year—the winner revealed!



THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

On sale at newsagents, supermarkets and at the ground from

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NewsLifeMedia

Field Of Dreams

By Tony Feasey

3.49.4 – 3 minutes, 49 seconds and 4/100ths, at first glance these numbers may not mean much to you or I for that matter... but they should. They represent a man and his dream and on Wednesday the 12 of August 2015 it was 40 years to the day since that dream was realized.

That dream belonged to John George Walker (now Sir John) and it has been forty years since that remarkable day when he not only dared to dream but he went out and made it a reality.

There were several hundred people in the room at the Aotea Centre and along with several others I was fortunate enough to be a guest of Sir Peter Leitch at the Find Your Field of Dreams breakfast on Wednesday morning. It was a fantastic opportunity to sit down and listen to some of the true greats of NZ Athletics as they shared some insight in to the man and that great day and what it took to get there.

Rod Dixon, Sir Peter Snell, Dick Quax, and Arch Jelly – all legends in their own right came together to honor Sir John and his achievement and to support the charity that is Find Your Field of Dreams, an organisation that encourages young people to pursue a more active lifestyle through sport and recreation.

Arch Jelly is one man who is a living testament to this lifestyle – he is 93 years old and was probably one of the fittest and most energetic men in the room (sorry Darren Brady). Arch was the great coach who guided Sir John during his running days and Arch's mind was just as quick as he didn't mind correcting the Radio Sport personality and MC for the day – Mark Watson, when he got it wrong.

As the morning went on – it dawned on me that were a number of parallels between the mindset required of a great middle distance runner and that of a rugby league player. Like most NZ'ers I grew up watching that momentous footage. I knew the man had won gold, I knew he had broken the 4 minute mile, but I never really considered what a feat it was to actually record that time and the will power and mind set it must have taken to run so hard and so fast until you broke that record.

Work ethic: Sir John spoke of how some mornings he thought of himself as a lazy trainer, how didn't want to train, he wanted to stay in bed where it was nice and warm. However in the back of his mind he knew that somewhere in the world his competition would be out there and would be training just as hard if not harder and if he didn't do the same he would be found out come race day. So he got out of bed every day put on his shoes and took his first steps out the door - he jokingly stated he ran harder and faster so that training would be over quicker.

Mind Set: Sir John spoke of getting inside his competitors minds and psyching them out. Despite not having all of the best gear, all the best training venues, all the best support like some of his opposition, he made sure that on race day when all the runners were in the same prep room – they knew who he was. He took off his track suit jacket and staunchly walked around in his black NZ running singlet so that could see he wasn't afraid to take them on and that knew who it was they had to look out for – the man in the black singlet and long wavy hair.

Mayor of Auckland Len Brown along with business guru – Sir Ralph Norris both spoke eloquently and fondly of their relationships with Sir John Walker sharing a small insight to his past and present.

Sir John now has a new challenge – a battle with Parkinson's Disease. As with most things he has done in his sporting life, he is getting out of bed and tackling it head on each day, as you would expect him to do. For a man who was in such a hurry – one message he gave stuck with me; enjoy your life, enjoy those you have around you; your friends, your family your children. Celebrate their milestones and achievements in their own right – life goes by so quickly and you don't want to miss out.

My humble thanks to Sir Peter Leitch for inviting me along to this special occasion:

Spc Early Favourites For Schools Nationals

By Grant Chapman - Communications Manager NZRL

SCHOOLS POWERHOUSE St Paul's College has returned to top seeding for the NZRL National Secondary Schools Tournament at Papakura, August 31-September 4.

Winner of 15 previous titles at the five-day event, including seven straight from 2004-10, the Auckland institution has found it harder to dominate in recent times, losing in the 2013 semi-finals and last year's final.

Their dynasty has now become an intense rivalry with two-time defending champions Kelston Boys High School, but the pendulum has swung slightly back towards St Paul's during this year's Auckland college competition.

They will meet in the local final this weekend, but whereas St Paul's have lost just once this season, Kelston have needed some good fortune to keep their title defence alive.

They actually lost to Otahuhu College in the first round of playoffs, but progressed after their opponents were found to have fielded an ineligible player. They then needed a field goal in extra time to edge Mt Albert Grammar for the other final spot.

At Papakura, St Paul's face a pool that includes Manurewa High School and newcomers Manukura School from Palmerston North.

Kelston have drawn a tricky encounter with reigning development champions Papatoetoe High School in their opening fixture, while Mt Albert and Otahuhu head the other two premier pools.

In the development division, Whakatane's Trident High School and Auckland's Onehunga High School are the others making their first appearance at the tournament.

Happy Birthday to Bill Whitehead or Rugby League Bill as he is affectionately known.

I'm sure all sports people wish him all the best.



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WARRIORS FANS watching Souths outmuscle the Cowboys last Thursday night would have been very happy. It wasn't the Rabbitohs victory that would have made them smile, rather the dazzling display from 2016 recruit, Issac Luke.

The 28 year old hooker was brilliant around the rucks while his no nonsense defence was also impressive. At his best, there is no better exponent of dummy half play than Issac and that includes Australian captain, Cameron Smith. Throughout the game he was continually probing at the Cowboys defence and the ground-work he did for the Dylan Walker try showed just how clever his dummy half work is.

After the Cowboys game, Issac had played 186 first grade matches, all with Souths and he will reach the 200 milestone next year with the Warriors. He now has 35 tries to his credit and a total of 410 NRL points. In his 18 games this year, Issac has averaged more than 30 tackles a game and over 100 running metres. He has now played 34 Tests, including the 2008 World Cup success, when he landed three goals in the 34-20 win in the final over Australia at Brisbane on 22 November.

At the time of writing, Issac had two charges to answer from the Cowboys game and I will make no comment on this. He is charged with a dangerous throw and a shoulder charge. If he is missing from all or any of Souths three remaining competition matches, the Rabbitohs will suffer.

On a positive note, back to the Warriors in 2016. When you add Issac's brilliance around the rucks to Shaun Johnson's electrifying speed nearby, plus Roger Tuivasa-Sheck out wide, how good will the Warriors try scoring ability become? Just the thought of these three, alongside several other highly rated attacking players, is mouth watering. But it is not only their attack that makes these players a fearsome trio. They are all excellent defenders and are the complete package.

Things are progressing well for Shaun Johnson after his ankle operation. The plaster will be off soon, if it is not already and everything is on track for a full recovery. He is keen to add to his 101 first grade games and 542 NRL points.

Only 22, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck brings plenty to his new club. He is outstanding under the high ball and has amazing ability to beat a tackle. He will play a major part in the Roosters charge towards this year's Premiership. Roger did not make his first grade debut until very late in the 2012 season at 19 years of age. He now has played 77 first grade games and crossed for 26 tries.

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2015 Ford National Hockey League Teams Confirmed

NEW ZEALAND'S eight regions have confirmed their squads for this year's Ford National Hockey League in Whangarei.

Defending champions Auckland, who won both the Men's Challenge Shield and Women's K Cup in 2014, have once again named strong line-ups.

Auckland Men boast seven current national squad members in Simon and Marcus Child, Ryan Archibald, Arun and Jared Panchia, Devon Manchester and Dwayne Rowsell, while they have also added South African Tim Drummond as an international guest player.

The Auckland Women include four national squad members in Katie Glynn, Liz Thompson, Amelia Gibson and Julia King, along with three Development Squad players. Furthermore, the team is strengthened by experienced campaigners Krystal Forgeson and Charlotte and Sam Harrison.

One of the biggest highlights on the women's side is the inclusion of Kayla Whitelock and Emily Naylor in the Central Mysticks side after a break from the sport following the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. Both players will play the Ford NHL before making any plans for a potential Black Sticks comeback ahead of the Rio Olympics.

For the men, the Capital Cobras have named four National Squad players in Stephen Jenness, Alex Shaw, Blair Hilton and Jacob Smith as well as former Black Sticks goalkeeper Kyle Pontifex who will be a force to be reckoned with as the side's custodian. The Cobras will also have the services of Dutch midfielder Steven Ebbers as an international guest player.

Round 1 of the Ford NHL gets underway on August 29, with Round 2 the following weekend at various venues around the country before all teams head to the ITM Hockey Centre in Whangarei for finals week from 12-20 September.

[CLICK HERE to see this year's Ford NHL team lists](#)

Earlybird tournament passes are still available online and are cheaper than purchasing at the gate. Daily passes will be available at the gate only.

The 2015 Ford National Hockey League is proudly supported by Trillian Trust and the Whangarei District Council.

[CLICK HERE for more on the 2015 Ford NHL](#)



TICKETS ON SALE NOW FOR OCEANIA CUP

The Oceania Cup is an international hockey event which will see the Black Sticks Women and Men take on Australia, Fiji and Samoa over Labour Weekend in Stratford, Taranaki.

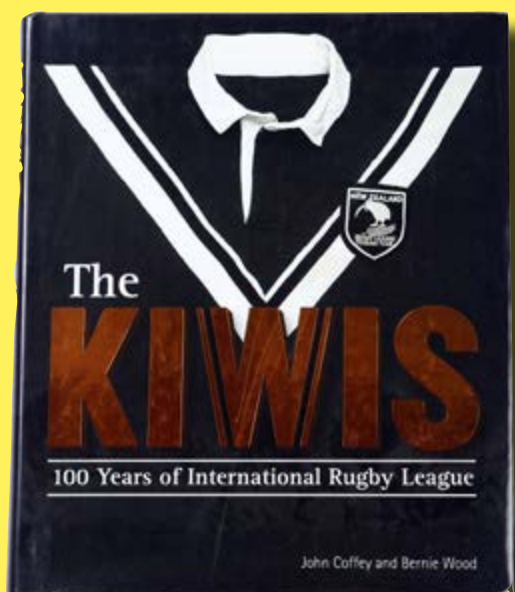
Multi Day Passes, Family and VIP tickets will go on sale at 9am on the 17 August.

All daily tickets will go on sale from 9am on the 31 August.

Tickets are limited. We recommend you buy online, rather than at the gate.

[CLICK HERE TO BUY TICKETS](#)

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NZ Falcons - Tackling inequality on the field...

RECENTLY, THE first international study on homophobia in sports, 'Out on the Fields' highlighted the homophobia faced by the LGBTI+ community in New Zealand on the sports field.

Breaking down stereotypes, the NZ Falcons RFC is an inclusive rugby union club with the goal of enabling players who may have felt alienated from the sport due to their sexuality to come together to participate and enjoy rugby in an open and supportive environment, along with others who are just passionate about the game.

- Based in Auckland with players and supporters throughout New Zealand and abroad
- Established in 2013 the Club has participated in the 2014 and 2015 Auckland Rugby Union club competitions
- Participated in the Bingham Cup ('World Cup of Gay Rugby') August 2014 and won third tier of the competition taking home the Bingham Bowl
- Gay, bi, trans and straight members/supporters

As a club we have grown quickly from a small group of eight passionate people to a player base of more than sixty and another seven in our team management.

The club is run by an elected committee of seven which operate under our constitution as a registered not for profit incorporated society.

We currently have one team competing in the Auckland club rugby Presidents grade with the potential to expand for upcoming tournaments and seasons.

What Is The Purchas Cup?

This 2015 Trans-Tasman gay and inclusive rugby tournament weekend is being held from 4 - 6 September in Auckland at Western Springs Stadium, hosted by the NZ Falcons.

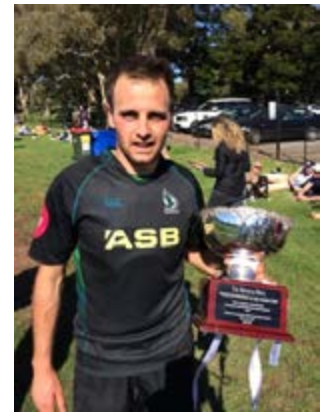
- 140 players
- 40 support staff
- 1000 supporters
- 10 service providers
- 7 rugby teams
- 5 events
- 5 supporting organisations
- 1 day long tournament



What Is The Bingham Cup?

Bingham is essentially the 'Gay Rugby World Cup'. The event is named in honour of Mark Bingham, who was fundamental in the establishment of two premier gay rugby clubs and is also internationally recognised as one of the heroes of 9/11. The next Bingham Cup is being held in Nashville, Tennessee, USA in May 2016.

Captain Jeremy Brankin holds the Bingham Bowl, won by the team at the 2014 Bingham Cup in Sydney



What's Coming Up For The NZ Falcons?

To help raise the funds required to host the Purchas up and attend the Bingham Cup, the team will be holding a range of events, including:

AN EVENING WITH RUGBY ROYALTY - A Gala Dinner: To be hosted by Sir Graham Henry and Sir Peter Leitch 29 August 2015 at the Ellerslie Events Centre

THE RUGBY BALL - A Purchas Cup Dance Party: Held during the tournament 5 September at Galatos

With about \$150K to be raised, along with these initiatives, the team will also be seeking further corporate sponsorship, donations and grants.

A few inclusive, dedicated, progressive, and passionate organisations currently support the NZ Falcons so thanks to our existing sponsors: ASB, Love Your Condom, and GABA.

For any further information please contact:

www.facebook.com/NZFalcons

nzfalcons@gmail.com

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MATT CUNNINGHAM (6) and James Cunningham (4) at Warriors home game.



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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.



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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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