



# Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

# Newsletter #92

No advertisements are paid for in this newsletter.



# 17 Days until the Kiwis leave for their tour of the UK.



## NRL Dally M Awards



Aaron Wood from the Tigers caught up with his old mate Andrew Webster the assistant coach at the Vodafone Warriors



All the boys wanted their photo with Erin Moran. Star of the Footy Show.



Always great to catch up with this lady Corene Strauss CEO OF MEN OF LEAGUE check them out [www.menofleague.com](http://www.menofleague.com)



Always enjoy Greg Eastwoods company



Always great to catch up with our fantastic fans even at the Dally M awards so loyal true fans



Always great to catch up with Rugby League Legend Peter Sterling' Host of the Sunday Footy Show on Channel Nine



Here I am with Erin Moran from the Footy Show and her date for the night Thomas Chell who sadly lost his dad to bowel cancer. He was the envy of every bloke at the Dally M awards!.



Here I am with the lovely ladies Emily, partner of Andrew Webster Vodafone Warriors assistant coach, and Joanne, wife of Vodafone Warriors CEO Jim Doyle..



I caught up with the man of the moment - Broncos captain Justin Hodges. Will he play or won't he My money is on he will!.



It's always great to have a chat to Des Hasler one bloody great guy.



Kelly and Nathan Friend joined us on the Vodafone Warriors table at the awards he even pick up award for spectacular back flip pass.



Me and Bruce had a great chat to my old mate a rugby League Legend Peter Stirling now the host of the Sunday footy show on Channle 9 in Sydney.



Nathan receiving his award THE HEADLINE MOMENT OF THE YEAR that back flip pass will be talked about for years to come.



Paul Gallen told me he can't wait to knock out our Bodene Thompson in there up coming fight ( what do you think readers).



Roger Tuivasa-Sheck won the NRL fullback of the year and took his mum to the awards.



The 3 musketeers on the red carpet at the dally m awards - Aaron Woods, me and Andrew Webster, Vodafone Warriors assistant coach..



Was great to catch up with Nathan Friend at the awards one real nice guy.



Vodafone Warriors CEO JIM DOYLE AND HIS LOVELY WIFE JOANNEON THE RED CARPET AT THE DALLY M AWARDS.





Andrew and Aaron with his lovely partner



Bruce caught up with Michael Ennis and had a chat



Bruce was stoked to meet the Vodafone Warriors new signing for 2016 Roger Tuivasa-Sheck



Great to catch up with these Brisbane Broncos players on the night. From left are Ashley Taylor, Anthony Milford, Justin Hodges, Ben Hunt and Cory Parker.



Great to catch up with these guys - Ashley Taylor, who won Holden Cup Player of the year, and Anthony Milford of the Broncos who has the game of his life coming up on Sunday!



Here I am with Broncos Cory Parker who won Best Representative Player of the year. And is a bloody good bloke



## 2015 Dally M Award Winners



Dally M Player of the Year: Johnathan Thurston (North Queensland Cowboys)

Lock of the Year: Jason Taumalolo (North Queensland Cowboys)

Second-rower of the Year: Josh Jackson (Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs)

Hooker of the Year: Michael Ennis (Cronulla Sharks)

Prop of the Year: Aaron Woods (Wests Tigers)

Halfback of the Year: Johnathan Thurston (North Queensland Cowboys)

Five-eighth of the Year: Blake Austin (Canberra Raiders)

Centre of the Year: James Roberts (Gold Coast Titans)

Winger of the Year: Semi Radradra (Parramatta Eels)

Fullback of the Year: Roger Tuivasa-Sheck (Sydney Roosters)

Female Player of the Year: Jenni-Sue Hoepper (Queensland/Australia)

Holden Cup Player of the Year: Ashley Taylor (Brisbane Broncos)

Representative Player of the Year: Corey Parker (Queensland/Australia)

Provan Summons People's Choice Medal: Johnathan Thurston (North Queensland Cowboys)

Ken Stephen Medal: Luke Douglas (Gold Coast Titans)

Coach of the Year: Wayne Bennett (Brisbane Broncos)

Peter Moore Award for Rookie of the Year: Jack Bird (Cronulla Sharks)

Captain of the Year: Johnathan Thurston/Matt Scott (North Queensland Cowboys)

Top Points-Scorer: Jarrod Croker (Canberra Raiders)

Top Try-Scorer: Semi Radradra (Parramatta Eels)



**WHAT AN** NRL Grand Final it is going to be. In the preliminary finals the Brisbane Broncos dealt to the favourites, the Roosters, 31-12, and the next night the North Queensland Cowboys did almost exactly the same thing, beating the Storm 32-12 in Melbourne.

That sets up an all Queensland final, which must stick in the craw of the NSW sides, but both sides deserve to be there.

### **In Time For The Dally M Awards**

As I write this for you I am sitting in my Sydney hotel, where I have been since Monday.

Arriving in time for the Dally M celebrations was amazing and I owe a big vote of thanks to Dave Smith of the NRL and Jim Doyle the big boss of the Vodafone Warriors, because they arranged for me to attend with my son-in-law Bruce, and it was fantastic.

To say I love events like the Dally M celebrations is an understatement. Catching up with old friends, and making new ones is brilliant, especially among all that red carpet, glitz and glamour.

One of those I caught up with was Queensland great Nate Myles. I mention this to bring it all back to a bit of reality. Nate's wife, who I was introduced to, has been battling cancer and it was an honour, being a survivor myself, to chat with her. I was also being accompanied by Janice, who endured her own breast cancer scare, so they exchanged stories.

Bronco Corey Parker was there, with his pregnant wife. So I gave her a card and told her to let me know when the baby comes and I will send the world's No 1 doll – the Mad Butcher doll. She at least got a smile.

My good friend The Footy Show presenter Erin Molan was looking stunning on the red carpet, and it was great to see all the Vodafone Warriors fans out, with their flags waving.

The other big buzz was catching up with a lot of the Kiwi lads, men like soon to be Warrior Roger Tuivasa Sheck, Greg Eastwood and Jarred Waerea-Hargreaves. The Aussie-based Kiwis don't always get many chances to socialize, so it was a pleasure to be able to invite them along to the Kiwis reunion.

### **Nathan Friend Gets Special Recognition**

Vodafone Warrior Nathan Friend's backflip-between-the-legs try assist against Melbourne was voted the headline moment of the year at the 2015 Dally M Awards.



*Nathan receiving his award.*

Among the other winners was Vodafone Warriors-bound Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, named Dally M fullback of the year after his outstanding season for the Roosters.

Vodafone Warriors utility Tuimola Lolohea was in contention for the rookie award but that went to Cronulla's Jack Bird.

Dominating the awards was North Queensland halfback and co-captain Johnathan Thurston, named Dally M player of the year for a fourth time. Thurston polled 32 points, beating Michael Ennis, Aaron Woods and Benji Marshall.

Thurston accepted his award in a

special ceremony in Townsville, where he's preparing for the 2015 Grand Final. He was also awarded captain of the year award (with Cowboys co-captain Matt Scott), halfback of the year award, as well as the People's Choice.

The Cowboys' opponents in Sunday's all-Queensland grand final, Brisbane, also had a successful night. Wayne Bennett earned the coach of the year as he attempts to win an eighth premiership, while Corey Parker won best representative player.

Other Dally M Awards: Winger, Semi Radradra (Eels); centre, James Roberts (Titans); standoff, Blake Austin (Raiders); lock, Jason Taumalolo (Cowboys); second row, Josh Jackson (Bulldogs); prop, Aaron Woods (Tigers); hooker, Michael Ennis (Sharks); points, Jarrod Croker (Raiders); tries, Radradra; Holden Cup player of the year, Ashley Taylor (Broncos); female player of the year, Jenni-Sue Hoepper; Ken Stephen Medal, Luke Douglas (Titans).

### **Roll On The Grand Final Lunch**

I have the Carbine Club Grand Final lunch to attend on Thursday and I am looking forward to it very much. It is an amazing experience and this year both teams will be there of course, and I hope to grab the chance to catch up with the best in the business – Broncos coach Wayne Bennett.

The atmosphere around Grand Final week is incredible. There have already been a huge range of firsts, activities and events, including the inaugural launch of NRL Nation, an interactive fan site at Darling Harbour. I will be going down after the lunch to check it out myself.

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Celebrations, as I mentioned, have included the Dally M Awards; the announcement of the NRL Telstra Premiership Grand Final teams and referees; the launch of NRL Nation; The live Grand Final Footy Show; the NRL Community and Player Education Awards; and of course Grand Final Day itself at Sydney Olympic Park - with a special pre-game concert from Cold Chisel.

Fair to say they take it pretty seriously isn't it?

And it all follows sellout crowds for the two preliminary finals, so the NRL is on track to record its highest attended finals series since 2009, and the second highest ever.

### **Can't Wait To See My Kiwis**

Despite everything that is going on the adrenaline will really kick in for me when my 2005 Gillette Tri-Nations winning Kiwis get together for our reunion. The first to arrive at the hotel is going to be Shantayne Hape, so he and I will get a little one on one time before the celebrations.

It all starts with a big get-together in our hotel, and we are even hoping former Kiwis coach Daniel Anderson will call in.

I will let you in on a little secret. Janice tells me off for bringing up the 2005 Kiwis all the time, but it's pretty much my only moment of glory!

I can well remember walking around the ground that night in Leeds after we had whacked Australia 24-0, coach Bluey McLennan alongside me. I'll never forget it actually. He turned to me and said: "We love winning finals Butch."

So come Friday it will be all on, with any number of former Kiwis, not only from the 2005 team, but from all sorts of sides.



### **A Date With The Kangaroos**

Fair play to those Aussies. On Saturday all those former Kiwis have also been invited to the annual Kangaroos reunion, held each year before the Grand Final. I think that is a huge gesture of respect to our boys, and let's be honest, we love bagging each other.

I love going along to this catch-up and seeing blokes like Eric Grothe and sports store mogul Peter Wynn.

As I say, a very fine gesture to invite us all along. The Aussies are very good at celebrating and recognizing the men who have worn the Green and Gold, and we could learn something from them about that.

### **A Father remembered**

Former Vodafone Warrior player and coach Ivan Cleary and another former player, and one I am very close to in Jason Death, are actually brothers-in-law.

Ivan's very charming wife Becs is the sister of Jason's wife, Yvette.

Sadly all four were together this week because Yvette and Bec's father passed away.

Our thoughts go out to them. I can tell you if you stuck four people in a room you would be doing well to find four better ones than this league family.

It's a timely reminder with the

Grand Final set to be played, that it is only a game, and there are some things a lot more important.

### **Bring it on**

After 26 weeks of regular season play, weeks more in the finals series, it comes down to 80 minutes.

Will it be another amazing chapter in the career of Brisbane coach Wayne Bennett, or will the big prize head all the way to Townsville?

There is only one way to find out, watch the final!

### **Justin Morgan Returning**

There have been a number of changes to the Vodafone Warriors football department, with coach Andrew McFadden announcing former Warrior Justin Morgan as a new assistant coach.

He's been with the Melbourne Storm as defensive coach. "It's exciting to sign a coach of Justin's calibre and experience, especially with the work he has done with the Storm," McFadden said.

Morgan made 28 appearances for the Warriors in 2001-2002 after playing for Parramatta and Canberra. He and McFadden were team-mates at the Raiders in 2000 and then again as NRL assistant coaches in 2012, before McFadden joined the Warriors.

Morgan retired at 26 to turn to coaching, initially in France before he had seven seasons with Hull Kingston Rovers. He returned to Australia as an assistant coach at Canberra in 2012-2013 and has been with the Storm the last two seasons.

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“This is a great opportunity to come back to Auckland to work with Cappy, the rest of the staff and the players,” said Morgan. “I have great memories of my time with the club in 2001 and 2002 and really look forward to this opportunity.”

### **Iro Steps Up**

Tony Iro has been appointed recruitment and development manager. “We have changes in the football department as a result of our end of season reviews,” McFadden said. “The recruitment position is vital for us. In Tony we have the ideal person to fill it, with his knowledge as an NYC and NRL coach, and also his experience in high performance with the NZRL and Kiwis.”

Iro said he relished the opportunity to work in the recruitment area. “I’ve gained a lot of experience in a number of roles since first joining the Warriors in 2005 and then working with the NZRL,” he said. “Recruitment is critical area and I’m excited about working with Cappy and to ensure we continue to improve our performance.”



Tony Iro

### **New Boys Drop By**

New Vodafone Warriors signings Blake Ayshford and Henare Wells have spent time at Mt Smart seeing their new surroundings and meeting with the football depart-

ment.

They’re due to assemble with their new team-mates when offseason training starts on November 2.

Centre Ayshford (27) is joining the Warriors after 104 appearances for the Tigers from 2009 to 2013 and 20 for the Sharks in the last two seasons.

He’ll find at least two familiar faces in back rower Bodene Thompson and centre-wing Jonathan Wright. Thompson was a teammate in his last season with the Tigers and Wright in Ayshford’s first season with the Sharks in 2014.

Taumarunui-born Wells (22) had two seasons in the NYC with the Roosters before starring for the Newtown Jets in the NSW Cup in 2013 (fullback of the year). For the last two seasons he has been with the Burleigh Bears in the Queensland Cup.

He’ll also find familiar faces in the squad, not least Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, one of Wells’ teammates in the Roosters’ NYC squad.

### **Muscle From Manly**

Brendan Inkster is joining the club from Manly as the strength, power and rehab manager. “Brendan will benefit our players hugely. He has been part of a great programme working with Donny Singe at Manly, a club which, like Melbourne, has an impressive record over a long period of time,” McFadden said.

### **Juniors Dreams End With A Bump**

Penrith smashed the Vodafone Junior Warriors’ 50-16, ending our hopes of a third consecutive NYC grand final. There was just 10 points in the contest at halftime but the minor premiers ran away with it, the Warriors unable to find

a way back.

I think five games on the road finally caught up with our brave boys. They were also up against a high-quality side and the Panthers were in the mood to finish with a flourish. But it was a disappointing end to the campaign.

Penrith Panthers (1) 50 (Dylan Edwards 2, Soni Luke, Fuimanau Enese, Robert Jennings, Kaide Ellis, Corey Harawira-Naera, Tyrone May, Jake Ennis tries; Dylan Edwards 6 conversions; Reed Izzard conversion). Vodafone Junior Warriors (7) 16 (Marata Niukore, Jazz Tevaga, Tomas Aoake tries; Ata Hingano conversion; Brad Abbey conversion).

### **Recognition For Palavi**

He was named Vodafone Warriors’ New South Wales Cup player of the year and now captain John Palavi has been named in the competition’s overall team of the year. The back rower made 19 appearances this season leading the side to a fourth place finish. Palavi was chosen on the bench in a side including former Vodafone Warriors Omar Slaimankhel and Russell Packer.

The Vodafone Warriors’ 2015 campaign ended with losses in the first two weeks of the finals to the Mounties and Bulldogs, with the Newcastle Knights coming from seventh to beat the second-ranked Wyong Roos 20-10 in the Grand Final.

NSW team of the year: Omar Slaimankhel (Wyong), Tyrone Phillips (Bulldogs), Kerrod Holland (Newcastle), Sami Sauliluma (Newtown), Kurtis Rowe (Tigers), Josh McCrone (Mounties), Mitch Cornish (Mounties), Russell Packer (Illawarra),

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Mitch Williams (Wyong), Luke Page (Mounties), Mitch Barnett (Mounties), Adam Elliott (Bulldogs), Leilani Latu (Penrith) Interchange: Damien Cook (Bulldogs), John Palavi (Warriors), Daniel Alvaro (Wentworthville), Shaun Lane (Bulldogs).

### **Don't Forget To Enter The Jersey Draw!**

If you subscribe to the newsletter you get all sorts of amazing chances to win things, but this is our biggest yet – and probably the biggest jersey giveaway in the world!

It's just to celebrate league, with the NRL Grand Final set for this weekend, and the Kiwis preparing to head to England for their end of year tour.

I have 25 Vodafone Warriors jerseys to give away, and 25 Kiwis jerseys too. And I'll even let you choose what size.

The details are all included in the newsletter, so don't forget. I am expecting to get backache lugging the entries home from the Post Office.

### **Kiwis Add Five More**

Junior Kiwis five-eighth Te Maire Martin and try-scoring supremo Curtis Rona are the latest newcomers brought into the NZ Kiwis train-on squad for the upcoming England tour. Born in Tokoroa, Martin (19) was recently named to his second consecutive Holden Cup team of the year. He played for the Tigers but will switch to Penrith next season.

In his first season with the Bulldogs, Rona, from Waitara, showed his knack for crossing the chalk, leading the NRL try rankings for much of the competition.

The pair join recent internationals Gerard Beale (Kiwi #767), Greg Eastwood (Kiwi #737) and Sosaia Feki (#788) in the extended Kiwis group, which now numbers 23.

The tour of England features three tests – November 1 in Hull, November 7 in London and November 14 in Wigan – with a warm-up game against Leeds on October 23.

The squad so far is: Beale (Sharks), Lewis Brown (Panthers), Manaia Cherrington (Tigers), Eastwood (Bulldogs), Feki (Sharks), Kieran Foran (Manly), Bryson Goodwin (Rabbitohs), Peta Hiku (Manly), Solomone Kata (Warriors), Tui-moala Lolohea (Warriors), Issac Luke (Rabbitohs), Simon Mannerling (Warriors), Martin (Tigers), Matulino (Warriors), Manu Ma'u (Eels), Sam McKendry (Panthers), Jason Nightingale (Dragons), Rona (Bulldogs), Tim Simona (Tigers), Martin Taupau (Tigers), Elijah Taylor (Panthers), Bodene Thompson (Warriors), Dean Whare (Panthers).



### **International Call-ups**

Six Vodafone Warriors have been named in the Mate Ma'a Tonga train-on squad to prepare for the World Cup qualifier against the Cook Islands on October 17. Rookie NRL prop Albert Vete is joined by Sione Lousi, John Palavi, Sebastine Ikahihifo, Siliva Havili and David Fusitu'a.

Also included in the squad is former Vodafone Warrior Ukuma Ta'ai, now with Huddersfield in the Super League, former Vodafone Junior Warriors Nafe Seluini and

Malakai Houma and former NRL squad member Saulala Houma. Seluini is playing Queensland Cup football with the Burleigh Bears while the Houma brothers are with the Newtown Jets in the New South Wales Cup.

Cook Islands coach and ex-Kiwi Alex Chan has also named a preliminary train-on squad which includes former Vodafone Junior Warrior Eric Newbigging.

### **Souths step up on drugs**

The NRL has welcomed an offer by South Sydney to pilot hair follicle testing for prescription drugs. The prospect of hair testing has been the subject of discussion between the NRL and the players association for several months, and the NRL is currently conducting more than 2000 tests a year to determine whether the misuse of prescription drugs is an issue, and whether action is required.

The testing regime detects the use of sleeping medications and pain relievers or opiates.

The NRL's testing exceeds any other sport in the country but after the major incident involving two Souths players seems obvious the additional measures proposed by Souths get tested there.

### **Manukau Women On Top**

When Counties Manukau needed inspiration to defend their NZRL National Women's crown, they found it in veteran international Laura Mariu. Carrying a heavy injury toll into the final against the Akarana Falcons, the Stingrays had enough to win 34-0 in Rotorua.

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In their seventh game over three days, the experience and skill of Mariu provided the spark in a 22-point first half. She provided a tackle bust and offload to set up the first Stingrays try for Louisa Gago. Then the lead hit double figures, Langi Veainu fielding a wayward clearing kick and showing great pace to go over.

Mariu converted then fed an inside ball to Kiwi Ferns team-mate Maitua Feterika for the third try, before notching up another try assist, sending Karly Te Kawa in.

Mariu was duly named MVP, with captain Sarina Fiso earning overall tournament honours.

“If we had had to play one more game, we probably would only have fielded about five players,” Fiso admitted. “This was a hard battle, and the score probably didn’t reflect how hard it was.”

6/7 play-off: Wellington Orcas 28 (Sieni Mose 3, Shayna Kidwell, Elaine Akavi & Ana Pereira tries; Acacia Claridge goal) Wai-Coa-Bay Stallions 10 (Sarah Bass 2 tries; Jamie Tautari goal): HT: 14-6

3/4 play-off: Central Vipers 14 (Kristina Sue 2 & Freedom Giddy tries; Talia Poutini-Lawrence goal) Auckland Vulcans 6 (Petronella Lefale try; Irian Huriway-Sasulu goal); HT: 4-6

### Kiwi Ferns Training Squad Named

The Stingrays dominance was reflected in the national squad named afterwards, with 11 players in a 28-strong group, and several others included through dispensation. In his first squad selection, Ferns coach Alan Jackson drew from far and wide, with a view to next year’s Anzac Test against

Australia.

Kiwi Ferns training squad: Mary Jane Ale (Wellington), Ngatokotoru Arakua (Akarana), Anita Berry (Akarana), Aleasha Brider (Mid Central), Alexandra Cook (Akarana), Maitua Feterika (Counties Manukau), Sarina Fiso (Counties Manukau), Teuila Fotu-Moala (Counties Manukau), Georgia Hale (Akarana), Amber Kani (Counties Manukau), Sita Kuruyabaki (Mid Central), Tori Lauvoa-Araia (Mid Central), Te Maari MacGregor (Mid Central), Kelly Maipi (Counties Manukau), Laura Mariu (Counties Manukau), Lilieta Maumau-Pinomi (Counties Manukau), Vanessa Molia-Fraser (Akarana), Sieni Mose (Wellington), Krystal Murray (Mid Central), Kimi Nati (Counties Manukau), Annetta Nuuasala (Auckland), Kahurangi Peters (Counties Manukau), Yasmin Puru-Tongia (Canterbury), Krystal Rota (Counties Manukau), Kristina Sue (Mid Central), Crystal Tamarua (Akarana), Tasha Tapu (Akarana), Langi Veainu (Counties Manukau)

### Super League Dream Team Announced

The 2015 First Utility Super League Dream Team sees six clubs represented– Leeds (4), Wigan (2), St Helens (2), Huddersfield (2), Castleford (2) and the Catalans Dragons (1).

Seven players make their debut in the form team of the season, as selected by a panel of media and broadcasters.

Leeds prop Jamie Peacock extended his record to 11 appearances in the team. He retires this season to become Hull Kingston Rovers football manager after first making the Dream Team in 2000.

Dream Team: Zak Hardaker (Leeds), Jermaine McGillvary (Huddersfield), Kallum Watkins (Leeds), Michael Shenton (Castleford), Joe Burgess (Wigan), Danny Brough (Huddersfield), Luke Gale (Castleford), Alex Walmsley (St Helens), James Roby (St Helens), Jamie Peacock (Leeds), Zeb Taia (Catalans), Liam Farrell (Wigan), Adam Cuthbertson (Leeds).



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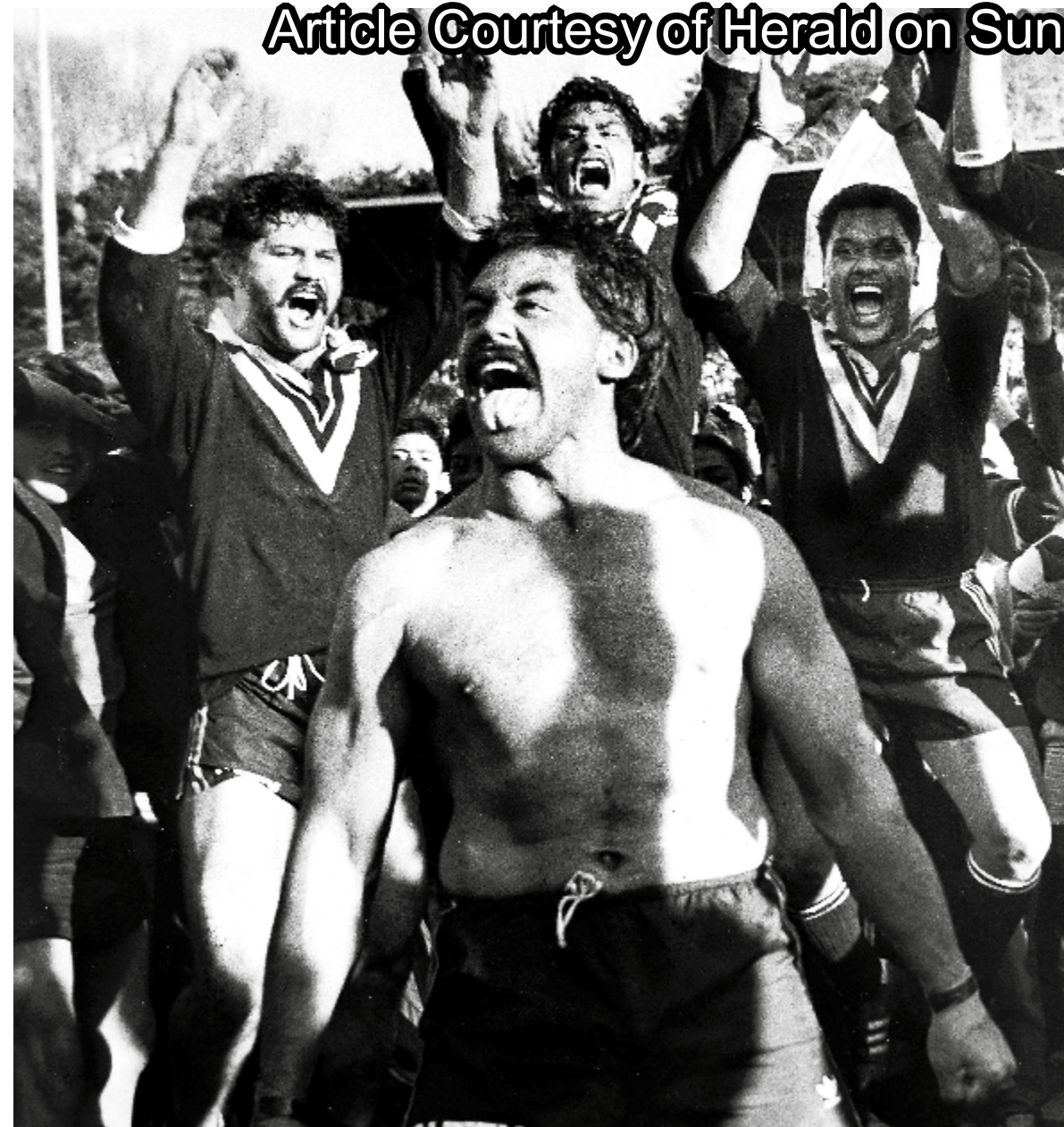
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# Article Courtesy of Herald on Sunday



Olsen Filipaina starred for the Kiwis.

## What they said

**“I'm sorry, mate, that it had to happen to you. I could think of a lot of other blokes I'd far rather this had happened to.”**

— Wally Lewis to Graham Lowe after the second test defeat.

**“Australia will have few more fortunate wins. Rarely in any code of football has any team played as well and as dominantly as New Zealand did and been beaten.”**

— post-second test reaction from Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*.

**“What's it like to walk on water?”**

— Kevin Tamati when asked how he felt after third test victory.

Kevin Tamati led a haka, backed by Joe Ropati, Hugh McGahan and Olsen Filipaina, after the Kiwis hammered Australia 18-0 in the last test of 1985 at Carlaw Park.

# Given a taste of Kiwi

In many ways, it was the week that put league on the map in this country. A special Kiwis team full of names that have endured across decades captured the imagination of the sporting public. **Michael Burgess** reports.

**I**t seems unthinkable now. On the eve of the third rugby league test between Australia and New Zealand at Carlaw Park in 1985, Kiwis coach Graham Lowe dropped off his side at the bottom of Queen St in Auckland and told them they were “going for a walk”.

It was a walk, though, with a difference. Lowe, who became famous for his motivational tactics as a coach, had called Radio 1 and several other stations to let the public know what was happening. Office workers came streaming out of their workplaces, while onlookers shook hands, cheered and clapped the team.

“We started walking as a team and soon it felt like the whole city came out to see us,” says Kurt Sorensen. “People wanted to slap us on the back, shake our hands, went out of their way to talk to us. You can't describe that feeling unless you were there.”

“By the time we reached the Civic Theatre, I knew we would crush them, no matter who we were

playing,” says Lowe.

They were playing the mighty Kangaroos, a team stacked with stars.

The Kiwis came close to beating Australia in 1982 and the following season broke a 12-year drought with a famous 19-12 victory at Lang Park. In 1984, they whitewashed the touring Great Britain side 3-0 and the Kiwis were becoming known outside the confines of their sport.

These were very different times. With no television coverage of the Winfield Cup, local league fans hired weekly highlights tapes from video stores. The grand final was broadcast almost a week later on *Sport on One* or *Sunday Grandstand*, as were State of Origin highlights. But there was a growing audience — and interest — that culminated in the 1985 trans-tasman series.

The first test at Lang Park was a thriller. Both sides scored some wonderful tries but focus fell on two ugly incidents.

Firstly, Kiwis captain Mark Graham

was taken out of the game, blindsided by a swinging arm from debutant (and current Bulldogs scout) Noel Cleal, which went unpunished.

The second was the infamous sideline stoush between Kevin Tamati and Greg Dowling, after both had been sinbinned late in the match.

It added spice to the rest of the series, played at Carlaw Park. Before that, the Kangaroos beat the South Island 56-0 in Christchurch and Central Districts 24-4 in Wellington — not that they needed any tuning up given they were coming off Origin and featured the likes of Wally Lewis, Mal Meninga, Wayne Pearce, Paul Vautin and Des Hasler.

“We knew we could match them,” says Graham. “They didn't have that unbeatable aura of the past.”

The Kiwis conducted training runs on Takapuna beach close to their hotel and at Fowlds Park in Mt Albert, from where the players would race each other back across the bridge, with Kevin Tamati, driving

the forwards' van, rarely beaten.

In the hotel, hooker Howie Tamati and halfback Clayton Friend practiced scrum feeds (“It was contested scrums in those days,” explains Tamati) while Graham hosted cards sessions in his room.

The team had a core of English-based professionals, including the Hull trio of Gary Kemble, James Leuluai and Dane O'Hara and a quintet based in Sydney. But, improbably as it sounds, more than one-third were from the domestic scene; freezing workers, a storeman and a forklift driver, mostly drawn from Auckland's Fox Memorial competition.

“We were getting about \$100 a week in camp plus a win bonus,” says Hugh McGahan. “Some guys had to take time off work but it was the pride, the honour of representing your country.”

That pride soared when the team were told they would be getting together with the All Blacks, who were building up for a Bledisloe

Cup game in Auckland the same weekend. Coach Brian Lochore had invited counterpart Graham Lowe for a casual drink and had no problem when Lowe suggested he would bring his team as well.

However, just after Lowe had instructed his players to get their “No 1 tracksuits on” he received a call from the All Blacks manager, who sternly suggested the invitation was for Lowe alone.

Auckland was buzzing with test-match fever, with Carlaw Park sold out days ahead of the Sunday, 2.30pm kickoff.

“It was a special occasion,” remembers Allen McLaughlin, who assisted Des White in commentary for 1ZB. “The concrete terraces were packed, as was the wooden Railway Stand, while people stood six and seven deep on the No 2 ground.”

After the traditional softening up period, the Kiwis completely dominated. Leuluai finished off a 60m move, with the ball passing through

# In a League of Extraordinary Gentleman

Article courtesy of the Herald on Sunday



Victory over Australia in the 2005 Tri Nations final transformed the game in NZ.

## RUGBY LEAGUE

By Michael Burgess

In a Sydney hotel next week, some of the most famous names — and faces — of New Zealand league will convene. There will be banter, laughs, maybe even a few tears, as they commemorate one of the most momentous occasions in Kiwis history.

The class of 2005 is having a reunion next week, organised by Sir Peter Leitch.

It's the 10th anniversary of that 24-0 victory at Elland Road, a win that started a new chapter for the Kiwis.

That series, which included two wins over Australia for the first time in more than 50 years, seemed to break a psychological barrier. It arguably laid the platform for the successes in 2008 and 2010, and even sowed the seeds for the current golden generation.

"Time has gone quickly," says coach Brian McClennan. "But you never forget. With what we did, we'll be friends for life."

From the outset, things didn't look that flash. Benji Marshall, fresh from the Wests Tigers' grand final glory, was ruled out due to off-season surgery and Sonny Bill Williams, Matt Utai, Jerome Ropati, Dene Halatau and Lesley Vainikolo withdrew for the same reasons and Thomas Leuluai was out with a broken leg.

Was the rookie coach nervous?

"No, I was excited," says McClennan. "I'd met with Ruben [Wiki] and he wanted to have a big one. [Assistant coach] Graeme Norton was full of ideas and I had the Butcher [Leitch] as manager — he makes things happen. And I was confident in what I could do, what I was going to bring."

McClennan and Norton spent hours planning and plotting, creating unique themes for each match, starting with 'Bully the bully' for the first match in Sydney.

"Australia had been dominant for

## For the record

- » The 2005 Tri Nations triumph was New Zealand's first major international trophy.
- » The 24-0 victory in the final was the first time the Kangaroos had been held scoreless since 1985.
- » It was also the first time the Kiwis had topped Australia in a three-test series since 1953.
- » In that final, Ruben Wiki became the first player in international league history to amass 50 caps.
- » Brian McClennan's team also recorded the first Kiwis victory in Sydney in 46 years, and the highest score against Great Britain (42-26).

## 2005 Tri Nations

▼ **Australia**  
38-28, Sydney

▼ **Australia**  
26-28, Auckland

▼ **Great Britain**  
42-26, London

▼ **Great Britain**  
12-38, Huddersfield

▼ **Australia**  
24-0, Leeds

Also

▼ **England A**  
30-22, Warrington

▼ **France**  
38-22, Toulouse

so long, and particularly in Sydney," says McClennan. "They had been the bullies but we wanted to turn things around."

At the team meeting, McClennan played footage of the last Kiwis victory in Sydney in 1959 and of Muhammad Ali beating the formidable George Foreman. There was also 'Burn the boats' for the first match in England, based on the Vikings practice of destroying their ships at the start of an invasion, and 'Slay the Dragon' for the final.

Such methods, and the close bond within the team, gave the squad confidence and belief but it wasn't just about motivation.

"We needed good tactics,"



Ruben Wiki and Paul Rauhihi celebrate defeating Australia in the 2005 Tri Nations final at Leeds.

## The final line-up

Brent Webb, Jake Webster, Paul Whatuira, Clinton Toopi, Manu Vatuvei, Nigel Vagana, Stacey Jones, Paul Rauhihi, Motu Tony, Ruben Wiki, David Kidwell, Louis Anderson, Shontayne Hape.

**Interchange:** David Faiumu, Roy Asotasi, David Solomona, Ali Lauitiiti.

McClennan says. "I spoke with our leaders about our territorial game and they bought into it. We wanted the Aussies back-peddalling. We wanted aggressive defence, winning the ruck."

Stacey Jones came out of retirement for the first two matches, then kept playing, despite commitments to the Catalan Dragons.

"I leaned on him at first but, from then on, it's the team environment," says McClennan. "He could feel something special was happening."

It turned into a campaign for the ages, full of indelible memories, like Clinton Toopi grabbing three tries in Sydney to inspire a 38-28 victory against a team that included Darren

Lockyer and Andrew Johns, the fearsome defence in Auckland and the free-scoring display in London, when the Kiwis racked up a record 42 points against England, and McClennan dancing along the touchline after the incredible finale at Elland Road.

It was one of the last Kiwis squads with a mix of NRL and Super League players (the Kiwis used eight British-based players) and McClennan wasn't afraid to innovate.

Nigel Vagana was a revelation at five-eighth and Motu Tony proved a capable hooker. McClennan introduced the mousetrap move with double dummy-halves, last seen in Auckland club league in the 1980s. And in the final he switched centre Shontayne Hape to the back row, using him and Paul Whatuira close to the ruck for extra pace.

Off the field, too, instead of boozy bonding sessions, Wiki passed the kava bowl around after games. And to prevent cabin fever, those outside the matchday squad were allowed to break camp for a few days, with Wiki, Vagana, David Kidwell and others enjoying a memorable break in Sardinia one week.

The buildup to the final was complicated by Jones' round-the-world dash for the birth of his son William. He flew from Europe and back again within five days, returning on the evening before the test. Despite extreme jet lag, Jones orchestrated three of the Kiwis' four tries.

"It still amazes us to this day," says McClennan. "At halftime, he turned to me and said, 'I'm f\*\*ked'. I patted him on the back and said, 'you'll be right, mate'. It means a lot to all of us that he won a final, to top off his career."

The Kangaroos were stunned and coach Wayne Bennett resigned soon after returning to Australia.

"We made a mark and each Kiwis team since has kept progressing," says McClennan who, along with the team, will be guests of the NRL at next Sunday's grand final. "I'm really proud of the current boys. They are the greatest Kiwis team of all time."

# New Rugby League Park on The Horizon

By John Coffey QSM



**M**ORE THAN a century of Canterbury Rugby League tradition is about to be consigned to history as negotiations with the Christchurch City Council progress towards a permanent move away from the game's spiritual home at Addington. The first-ever rugby league game in Christchurch was held at the Addington Show Grounds in 1912, and that was also the venue when the first club games were played in 1913.

After unsuccessfully trying to establish its own ground at Monica Park in Woolston from the 1920s until after the Second World War, the CRL in 1951 became the Agricultural and Pastoral Association's winter tenant. With rugby union authorities vetoing use of Lancaster Park, the Show Grounds hosted all of the major matches in the city.

But an uneasy alliance developed between the CRL and the City Council after the council conducted a land swap with the A and P Association in 1997. Much-needed maintenance was not carried out and the league had to fight hard to prevent being evicted in 2008 when council staff advocated the land be sold and proceeds used to improve facilities for other sports.

The controversial plan ignored a legal CRL lease which extended until 2037 and made no provision for an alternative headquarters for the game. Council inspectors had already condemned one of the two grandstands. It was clear the renamed Rugby League Park would gradually fall into further disrepair unless the council changed its stance.

Then the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 did the job for those who wanted rugby league off this very valuable commercial land. Government emergency regulations over-rode the lease, both grandstands were demolished and the spiritual home of rugby league was redeveloped into what was to be a five-year "temporary" stadium for the Crusaders.

I'm sure none of us who were part of the fight to save Rugby League Park in 2008 believed we would ever return there. With earthquake repairs at snail pace, the "temporary" stadium's life will extend into the 2020s. Meanwhile, the rugby union lobbies for a 500-million dollar roofed inner-city monolith that will financially burden Christchurch ratepayers for decades.

Led by CRL and NZRL board member Reon Edwards, the search for a new Rugby League Park has led to Nga Puna Wai, a sports hub being developed by the city council. Ironically, it will be situated alongside Canterbury Agricultural Park, the latter-day Show Grounds operated by the A and P Association.

Athletics, hockey and tennis – whose previous homes were also earthquake victims -- are already confirmed as tenants. Rugby league is a latecomer to the party. Edwards last week told club officials the first games could be played there as early as the 2017 season, though facilities would be very basic.

Some points Edwards made included: there would be two sand-based fields separated by an embankment; club games would be played there each week; it was close to the current junior fields at Canterbury Park and would be suitable for tournaments; temporary changing rooms and seating for up to 1000 spectators would be available; the CRL area would be fenced off from other sports; it had the lowest financial risk factor.

Among the downsides: floodlighting of the two fields and erecting a grandstand (up to 2500 seats) are planned but may not be in operation by 2017. No date is given when they might be added, a worry in any such proposal. Even the completed venue would be not be suitable for Test matches, but could be used for second tier games involving New Zealand Residents or the Junior Kiwis, and the Kiwis could use it as a training base if they visited Christchurch.

Overall, the Nga Puna Wai option is not as good as a refurbished Show Grounds, properly maintained by the city council, would have been. Another venue still needs to be found for Test matches or NRL fixtures. Supporters will have to rug up against the chilling winter winds and rain until some form of cover is provided after 2017.

But once some spectator comfort has been provided and the players have proper facilities the project sounds much better than Denton Park, the dilapidated 1974 Commonwealth Games cycling venue where the CRL has been forced to stage matches when it could not afford to use the "temporary" stadium which now sits on its long-cherished Addington playing field.

# Lucky Jersey Winners from Our Earlier Giveaway

Hi Sir Peter,

**P**LEASE SEE attached photos of the signed Jersey we won through your newsletter. My son Josh and my daughter Annabelle. Hold the jersey with great delight

Enjoy your Sunday.

Kind Regards

Jamie Bromley

# BLK



Talofa Sir Peter,

**T**HANK YOU for the NZ v Samoa jersey which I won in your recent Kiwis merchandise giveaway. My family are stoked and it is a toss up between my Dad and my older brother as to who will end up with the jersey. I am so happy with my prize.

Ia soifua ma ia manuia, Fiona

Hi Sir Peter,

**J**UST WANT to say a big thanks for the BLK Kiwis Training Polo which I received last week, it made my day.

Can't wait for the Kiwis end of season tour.

Thanks again, Jason MacWilliam

Jason gave his BLK POLO HE WON TO HIS DAD nice one Jason now that's sharing the love.



Good Afternoon Sir Peter'

**A**NOTHER PETER (but definitely not a 'Sir!') e-mailing, to Thank you very much for the great signed Kiwis Rugby League jersey I won c/o of your informative and interesting newsletter. I look forward to showing the jersey to the members of the Rangitoto College (where I try to teach) Under 85kg's Rugby League team who in fact last week won the North Harbour competition!

Cheers and Thanks again, Sir Peter!

All the best J

Peter Harwood

# BLK

PS: Keep up the good work with promoting male health with the Prostrate Cancer campaign!

# Week in Northland Sport

By Ben Francis



## Rugby League

**T**HE NORTHERN Swords continue to improve this season, they are still searching for that maiden win, but on the field huge improvements have been made. They played the WaiCoa Bay Stallions on the weekend and for the second straight week they half a half time lead and a lead heading into the final quarter before the Stallions put the foot down on the young Swords side to eventually win 40-18 in the latest round of the New Zealand Rugby League Premiership. The Swords had a couple of opportunities late to score but couldn't convert on them. WaiCoa Bay currently sit in a tie for second place on the standings tied with Counties Manukau who are ahead on points differential. The Northern Swords will head into their round 6 game with lots of confidence, they will play the Akarana Falcons this Saturday in Te Atatu 2:30pm kickoff. Akarana lost 38-28 to Counties Manukau in their last match and are still looking for their maiden victory in the 2015 season.

The New Zealand Rugby League National Youth Tournament kicked off on Monday at U15s and U17s age groups. The Akarana Falcons won both the 15s and 17s titles in 2014. The Northern Swords had to face Akarana in the opening game of the U15s competition and it did not go according to plan for the young Swords team going down 54-18, whilst the U17 Swords went down 22-4 to Counties Manukau. The U15 Swords had a better day two winning 24-16 over the WaiCoa Bay Stallions and the U17s had another loss this time against the South Island Scorpions 26-16.

## Rugby Union

**D**AN PRYOR played in his 50th game for the Taniwha in front of his home fans but it wasn't the result he would have wanted as once again Northland went down 37-5 to the Bay Of Plenty Steamers team who are hitting all cylinders at the moment. Fellow Northland players Namatahi Waa, Shane Neville and Kurt Davies played their 15th (blazer) game for the team whilst Tyler Lansdowne made his Debut off the Bench. The Steamers dominated up front and only led 9-0 at the break when it could have easily been more. Four tries to Bay Of Plenty and two yellow cards to Northland did not help at all during the second half either. Northland have one final home game on October 7th when they host Otago but before then Northland travel down to play Auckland at Eden Park on October 3rd, both games 7:35pm kick off.

Now last week I mentioned how Northland flanker Kara Pryor hopefully caught the eye of Super Rugby coaches not only from last week's game v Counties but from how he has played in 2015, well it looks like one coach either saw what I wrote or he also agreed Kara should be playing Super Rugby in 2016 cause Kara Pryor has signed with the Blues rugby franchise for two years. Kara joined the Taniwha in 2014 after making his ITM Cup debut for Auckland in 2013 and Kara thanks his brother Dan for convincing him to move up North saying it was one of the best decisions he has made to move up North.

The 2015 Roller Mills Tournament kicked off last week which is being held at Kensington Park in Whangarei. The Roller Mills Tournament is the second oldest Provincial Rugby Tournament behind the Ranfurly Shield. This is played by kids in primary or intermediate school (13 or under by January 1) and this year under 57kg. Northland won their opening game of the competition being King Country 48-12 which was then followed up with a crushing 71-0 win over Thames Valley. Day three the young Northland team struggled going down 48-3 to Auckland East.

Also on over the weekend was the Jock Hobbs Memorial U19 Championship's started in Taupo. Northland's first hit out was against Southland. It was a very close game but Southland came out on top 23-22. Northland's next game will be against Hartland with the result to be published in next week's issue. Northland finished 15th at last year's competition.

The rest of the results for the Jock Hobbs Memorial trophy, Roller Mills, and League U15s and U17s remaining games will be posted in next week's issue.

# Central Otago Mustangs Junior Team Fundraiser



*Back row :Callum Smith (Wanaka Tigers), Guy Morganty (Queenstown Titans), Nico Bowering (Wanaka Tigers), Sam Pearce (Wanaka Tigers), Ollie Holloway-Williams (Wanaka Tigers), Jaxon Collins (Queenstown Titans), Levi Collins (Queenstown titans).*

*Front row: Sam Teal (Wanaka Tigers), Isaiah Sadler (Queenstown Titans), Masyn Opetaiia (Wanaka Tigers), Lucas Irskine (Queenstown Titans), Tom Roberts (Wanaka Tigers).*

*Sitting: Toby Duffy (Queenstown Titans)*

**T**HE CENTRAL Otago Mustang's Junior Rugby League Team held a fundraising evening at the Lone Star, Wanaka on Saturday Night. It was a great evening and the team management celebrated with a special presentation of the new Jerseys amongst family and friends.

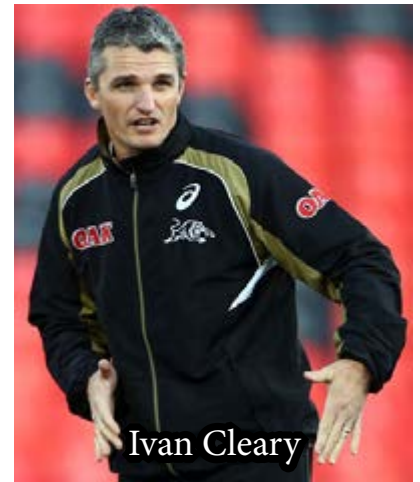
The young team heard good luck messages from various players and coaches in the game and even had their own hip hop dancers to cheer on the team.

The team head off the Wellington on October 5th and it will certainly be a new experience for many.

Coaching and management staff are excited about offering a new kind of experience to the young boys

## Nathan Cleary

Well done to Nathan Cleary son of former Warriors coach and now coaching the Penrith Panthers Ivan Cleary. Nathan captained the Australian school boys team that beat NZ school boys, 70-24. Nathan also plays for Penrith Panthers.



Ivan Cleary

## A Big Happy Birthday for Yesterday to Dave McKee

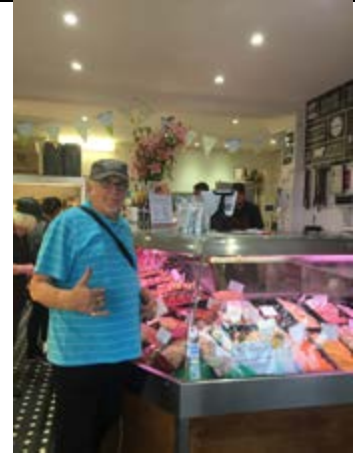
HAPPY BIRTHDAY to former Marist WS hooker, Dave McKee, who had a birthday yesterday. Dave and his wife, Lorraine are avid supporters of the Vodafone Warriors and attend Every home game in NZ and the Mad Butcher Club on a regular basis. Not bad when you consider they live in Christchurch!



Lloyd Whitelaw and Dave McKee.



# Warriors Fans Everywhere




**W**HERE EVER you go you meet Vodafone Warriors fans. I bumped into this guy Steve Rota and his wife Robyn who are massive Warrior fans and just happens to be a butcher! He wanted to show me where he works and it turns out he is the nephew of an old mate of mine Donny Rota whom he took me to catch up with. I had a blast.

Millions Fine Food butchers - 71a New St West Balgowlah Heights and he asked me to check out the shop and I gave it 10 out of 10



**D**ONNY AND Roger Rota. Two former Auckland Rugby League players. Donny played for Ponsonby Ponies and the mighty Mangere east Hawks plus Auckland and now lives in Sydney. Roger played for Ponsonby Ponies and Otahuhu Leopards his brother who still lives in Auckland also played for the Ponsby Panthers and Otahuhu Leopards and is know in Sydney for the Maori League tournament. They are two great mates.

## 2015 NRI Honour Roll

2015 HONOUR ROLL			MULTIPLE WINS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Fullback</b> Roger Tuivasa-Sheck</li> <li><b>Winger</b> Semi Radradra</li> <li><b>Centre</b> James Roberts</li> <li><b>Five-eighth</b> Blake Austin</li> <li><b>Halfback</b> Johnathan Thurston</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Lock</b> Jason Taumalolo</li> <li><b>Second-rower</b> Josh Jackson</li> <li><b>Prop</b> Aaron Woods</li> <li><b>Hooker</b> Michael Ennis</li> <li><b>Player of the year</b> Johnathan Thurston</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Captain of the year</b> Johnathan Thurston/Matt Scott</li> <li><b>Coach of the year</b> Wayne Bennett</li> <li><b>Rookie of the year</b> Jack Bird</li> <li><b>Rep player of the year</b> Corey Parker</li> <li><b>Provan Summons Medal</b> Johnathan Thurston</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Peter Frilingos headline moment of the year</b> Nathan Friend/Warriors try</li> <li><b>Holden Cup player of the year</b> Ashley Taylor - Broncos</li> <li><b>Female player of the year</b> Jenni-Sue Hoepfer</li> <li><b>Top point-scorer</b> Jarrod Croker</li> <li><b>Top try-scorer</b> Semi Radradra</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>4</b> Johnathan Thurston (2005, 2007, 2014, 2015)</li> <li><b>3</b> Andrew Johns (1998, 1999, 2002)</li> <li><b>2</b> Peter Sterling (1986, 1987) Gavin Miller (1988, 1989) Michael Potter (1984, 1991) Cliff Lyons (1990, 1994) Jarryd Hayne (2009, 2014)</li> </ul>



**Watch the NRL Footy Show**  
**The NRL Footy Show screens on Sky Sport 2 on Thursday nights.**



Saturday September 12, 2015



## BATTLE OF THE REBUILD - SATURDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2015, HORNCastle ARENA

### Battle of the Rebuild a HUGE success!

**I**T WAS a huge night for the Construction Industry on Saturday September 12th at the Horncastle Arena in Christchurch! This gala event brought together the Construction industry for a fantastic evening of entertaining boxing action! A record breaking \$278,349 was raised for our charities, Rise Nepal and Pillars!

Well done to all of the contenders who gave their everything in their training and fundraising for the event this year. Fast feet, hard punches, blood sweat & tears made for seven great fights.

In the main event professional fight local pro boxer Reece Papuni got the win against Samoan champion Tony Iapesa with a fourth round TKO to bring his tally to ten wins and one loss. Reece's next appearance will be on November 3rd at SUPER8 in Auckland.

The results are:

#### WINNER

#### RUNNER UP

- David Groat (Corbel Construction) v Zane Bull (Farrell Construction)
- Lisa Barber (PlaceMakers CHCH South) v Claire McCallum (Southbase Construction)
- Hamish Wright (CCL) v Dan Francis (Road Metals)
- Paul Lally (D J Hewitt Builders) v Todd Morel (Morel Construction)
- Matt Higgins (Active Plumbing & Edward Gibbon) v Simon Becroft (Constructa)
- Shaun Trask (Golden Homes) v Darren O'Rourke (Earthtech Contractors)
- Mike Shearer (Bonisch Consulting) v Dan Christophers (Fletcher Construction)

Sadly, not everyone can win their fight, but they can certainly raise a ton of money for charity!! The contenders this year smashed the \$200,000 goal and had a total of \$114,831.57 before anyone even stepped into the ring!!

A special mention to our top 3 fundraisers: Simon Becroft who raised \$13,303.70, Todd Morel who raised \$12,888.88 and David Groat who raised \$12,115.65.

We are ready to do it all over again and are straight into planning for the Battle of the Rebuild 2016!

With a lot of interest already we are on the hunt for key industry match-ups! If you or anyone you know would be perfect for the event send them to our website to register, or click [HERE!](#)

Regards, Justin Wallace - [www.enthdegree.co.nz](http://www.enthdegree.co.nz)



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## TONIGHTS GUESTS - EP.23

**BEN BARBA**

*Australia's Cronulla Sharks*

**TRINA TAMATI**

*NRL Nines CEO*

**KEITH QUINN**

*Sports Broadcaster*

**MONTY BETHAM**

*Former Warrior & Boxer*

**GLEN OSBORNE**

*Former All Black & CODE Presenter*

**LUCY GIESEN**

*NZ Mini Putt Champion*

*... and Liam pops in via SKYPE  
from the Rugby World Cup in  
Cardiff!*



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## THIS WEEK IN BIG LEAGUE'S GRAND FINAL ISSUE...

### BRISBANE BRONCOS V NORTH QUEENSLAND COWBOYS

#### FEATURES

- **Justin Hodges & Johnathan Thurston** write about how much this grand final and their clubs mean to them;
- Feature on **Adam Blair & Sam Thaiday** and their reversal of form this season
- **Matt Scott, Scott Bolton & Gavin Cooper**—who won a Queensland Cup title together in 2005 and now have a shot at an NRL one in 2015;
- **Darius Boyd** talks about the motivation given to him by close mate Alex McKinnon;
- No grudges for former Bronco **Benn Hannant**;
- Both club's **Road to Glory** in pictures;
- Q&As with **Andrew McCullough** and **Michael Morgan**;
- Columns by **Nathan Brown, Matt Elliott** and **Damien Lovelock**;
- The **Wests Tigers** from 2005 sit down and watch the game again together;
- Farewell to the 2015 **retirees**; **Vale** and Grand Final quiz; and full wrap of the **Dally M Awards**;
- Top Eight Unlikely Grand Final Heroes

**PLUS...** NRL Telstra Premiership official team lists; team lists for the NRL State Championship Grand Final and Holden Cup Grand Final; NRL team photos; Player profiles for all three divisions; Warren Smith's NRL match preview; Lower grade previews; Holden Cup gamebreakers; Grand Final records.

**It's 100 pages of full Grand Final coverage for this historic match-up between Brisbane and North Queensland.**



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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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