



Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club

AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS

8th October 2015

Newsletter #93a

No advertisements are paid for in this newsletter.



2005 KIWI TEAM THAT BEAT AUSTRALIA 24-0 IN THE TRI NATIONS FINAL. IN SYDNEY FOR A REUNION OVER GRAND FINAL WEEKEND HOST BY THEIR FORMER MANAGER SIR PETER.

Back row (l to r) Paul Rauhihi, Manu Vatuvei, Sia Soliola, Dave Solomona, Shontayne Hape, Paul Whaitura, Bronson Harrison, Willy Halligan, Pat Carthy.

Front row (l to r) Frank Pritchard, Bluey McClennan, Sir Peter, Ruben Wiki, Nigel Vagana, Dave Kidwell.



Kiwis Reunited

WHAT CAN I say? It was huge having my 2005 Kiwis Reunion,. Being the football manager on that tour is my proudest sporting moment. We won the Gillette Tri-Nations 24-0 over Australia, and shocked the league world.

It is hard to believe that was a decade ago!

As well as the 2005 players, any number of former Kiwis from all sorts of sides were there, and it is fair to say we had an absolute blast.

As I mentioned, the Menzies Hotel people were superb, keeping us fed with beautiful food and making sure the glasses did not run dry.

DJ Shantayne Hape rocked, and even Isaac Luke had a go.

It turns out that David Solomona must harbour the urge to spin the tables too, but although lurking in the

background he didn't get the chance, while big Frank Pritchard got on the microphone and had a great time.

It was fantastic to relive our memories and catch up with a great bunch, including Sam Perrett, Sam Kasiano, Darryl Williams, a superb man in Jason Cayliss, and even Ken Stirling.

I always think we do not do enough to support our former players, so it was real privilege to host this one.

And I want to single out Paul Whaitura. He had a host of problems, all of which were very well-documented, after he finished playing. So to see him in fine spirits, back with his brothers in black brought a smile to an old butcher's heart.

I owe a big vote of thanks to BLK – the Kiwis kit suppliers, who did me a fantastic price on a range of gear to mark the occasion, and the players were absolutely stoked.

And my great friend Gary Clarke from Christchurch, who has Gary Clarke Plastics, did a commemorative plate for us. I like to think my league collection is pretty good, but Gary has a league museum in Christchurch, and if you love the game you would be a complete mug not to pay it a visit – not least because Gary is as good a bloke as you could hope to meet too.

How's This For Commitment?

I mentioned David Solomona gave the DJ-thing a go, but what I did not tell you is he must have won the keenest to be there prize, with daylight second.

He flew down from his home in Brisbane to be with the Kiwis, flew home again to be at his grandmother's 80th birthday, then flew back to Sydney to join us for the Grand Final.

Don't tell me get together with your mates doesn't mean much after that!

AT THE 2005 KIWIS REUNION & KANGAROOS REUNION IN AUSSIE



All the ex kiwis that turned up for the kangaroo reunion was great catching up with them all.



Matt King (ex Kangaroo and NSW player) was very funny at the reunion.



Kurt Gidley (NSW and Kangaroo player), Shontayne Hape and Craig Fitzgibbon (Ex Roosters, Dragons and Kangaroo player).



Was wrapped to catch up with Greg Inglis at the Kangaroo reunion.



Our resented DJ at the kiwis reunion Shontayne beating out the music.



The two coaches Brian McClennan the coach of the 2005 kiwis and our current coach Stephen Kearney who is also asst coach at the Broncos.



David Kidwell and his old mate Stacey Jones.



That Dexter turns up everywhere with Stacey and Darrell Williams who was one of the kiwis selectors in 2005.



Former kiwi Olsen Filipaina and former Mangere east Hawks player and Vodafone warriors new signing Issac Luke had a great chat at the kiwis reunion.



Paul, Shontayne, Frank, David all having a blast at the reunion.



3 former Kiwis Jason Cayless, David Kidwell, Sam Perrett all had a great time at the kiwis reunion.



Guests Of The Kangaroos

ON SATURDAY we were all invited to the Kangaroos Reunion, held each year before the Grand Final. See what I mean about us not celebrating our past players enough?

Imagine that, every year anyone who has worn the green and gold is invited to get together before the Grand Final. I think that is a superb idea, and I also have to give the Kangaroos their due.

On the field there is no love lost between the Kiwis and the Kangaroos, off it they could not have done more for us. They were incredibly generous and gracious hosts, and the boys loved catching up with some of their old adversaries.

They even recognised the Kiwis dominance in the latest tests, something incredibly sporting. The Kiwis, and we went on mass, were guests of NRL chairman John Grant, who represented Australia himself, and, as I say, they treated us like stars.



Mannering Out Of Kiwis Tour

Kiwi and Vodafone Warriors captain Simon Mannering has been ruled out of the tour to England on medical grounds. The 29-year-old has had a series of tests since finishing his 11th NRL campaign last month and he has some gastric issues.

Vodafone Warriors head doctor John Mayhew said the tests did not reveal anything to cause alarm, but our inspirational skipper wasn't right, and his decision to pull out of the tour was the right thing

Mannering hasn't been involved in any Kiwis training sessions and Vodafone Warriors head coach Andrew McFadden said he would be given a long break.

Simon played 71 of the Vodafone Warriors' 72

matches in the last three seasons, and has also been close to ever-present for the Kiwis since the 2013 Rugby League World Cup; playing in 11 of their 12 Tests, as well as a World Cup warm-up game against the Cook Islands.

Brits Get Ready For Us

Leeds Rhinos fullback Zak Hardaker has won the 2015 Steve Prescott MBE Man of Steel. The 23-year-old England player has been in fine form this season, and this one shows how much he has progressed, because he won Young Player of the Year in 2012.

Wigan Warriors stand-off George Williams picked up the Young Player of the Year award.

It was the Leeds Rhinos, 2015 Super League Club of the Year, Brian McDermott top coach, and

Kevin Sinfield Top Gun award for best successful kicking percentage who had the most to celebrate.

Sheens Goes

The Australian Rugby League has paid tribute to Tim Sheens, who is stepping down as Kangaroos coach. Sheens informed the Commission he will not be seeking re-appointment to the position, in order to pursue opportunities in the UK.

NRL Head of Football Todd Greenberg said Sheens had been a wonderful coach during his time with the Kangaroos from 2009 until 2015. "His record speaks for itself – his teams won 26 of 31 Test matches while he was coach. Tim has been an enormously successful Kangaroos coach, winning a World Cup and two Four Nations tournaments."

A Massive Nines Prize?

Did you realise that both the Queensland Cowboys and the South Sydney Rabbitohs have in the last two years won both the Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines and the NRL Grand Final?

That's actually quite a sensational statistic. How good would it be if Duco Events and the NRL put up a prize for the first team to win the Nines and the NRL Grand Final in the same year? \$1 million bucks bonus prize money sounds good to me. In fact, I rang Martin Snedden from Duco Events and spoke to him about it, he and the team there think it's a great idea and they have promised me they will look into it. It would sure make winning the Nines an even bigger proposition for all teams!

The 2005 Success Remains Just as Special in 2015

By John Deaker



FRIDAY NIGHT'S reunion for the successful 2005 Kiwis Tri Nations team was special in so many ways. The timing of it in particular was perfect, giving players the opportunity to reflect on how their amazing achievement during that 2005 series victory had been a catalyst for the tremendous success the Kiwis have gone on to experience in 2015.

There is a strong school of thought that what the 2005 Kiwis team achieved 'The Year the Kiwis Flew' has provided the platform for Kiwis teams ever since to believe that on any given day they can fly above the Kangaroos and 'Give them a taste of Kiwi!'

Talking to many of the players and management 10 years later it's very apparent that you can't put the success of 2005 down to just one thing. The team was undoubtedly more professional than ever before and got a large number of things right off the field.

Sir Peter Leitch and Pat Carthy's logistical efforts off the field are names that often crop up as the players of 2005 reflect on what they achieved. The way the coaching staff gelled and crucial changes that Bluey McClenan introduced are continually emphasised by the squad of 2005 as being very important while Bluey's strong rapport with the players was clearly invaluable when getting them to embrace the new concepts he brought to the table.

It's easy to forget that 2005 was Bluey's first year coaching the Kiwis – so for him to have had so much conviction in many of the new methods that he introduced to the team remains a credit to him as a coach.

Another crucial factor that shouldn't be underestimated from the 2005 tour is that it was the first time the Kiwis tour Kava on tour. The regular sessions became a way that players could socialize as much as on previous tours without relying on alcohol and the negative impact it can have on players' peak performance.

Stacey Jones's amazing involvement on the tour makes him even more of a legendary figure in New Zealand sporting history than he would otherwise have been if he hadn't come out of retirement. The 'Little General' remembers the culture and environment that was created in 2005 as being special. This bond the squad formed helped to ensure that once Lance Hohaia had injured himself in the first game of the tour it was a 'no-brainer' that Jones would try to be available for more than just the 2 games he'd initially agreed to play on tour.

Friday night's event didn't seem like a reunion for a rugby league team – it seemed more like a Family reunion. Like so many family reunions, one person was the driving force (and the financial backer!) behind Friday night, Sir Peter Leitch.

Clearly, Sir Peter is very proud of many of his 'family' members from within the 2005 Kiwis team - but it's just as apparent that everyone who went on the 2005 tour remain very proud and thankful to Sir Peter for the great work he did for them back in 2005 and the work he continues to do for New Zealand rugby league 10 years later.

John Deaker Chatted To Many Of The Players On The Night. Here Is What They Had To Say:

DARYL WILLIAMS: "We knew we were on the verge of New Zealand becoming a great national side."

DARRELL WILLIAMS doesn't hold back when he analyses the significant place the 2005 Tri Nations victory has in the history of New Zealand rugby league.

"I think that the Australians went away quite worried about what the future was going to look like – and that laid the platform for a lot of Kiwis to believe in the New Zealand rugby league side," he says.

Continued on next page...

Continued from previous page...

Tony Iro and Daryl Halligan were the other selectors back in 2005 while Howie Tamati was the Convenor of selectors. The four of them were very conscious of the team's potential – but they also knew that getting Stacey Jones on board could be an important element to the team realising their potential.

“We knew we were on the verge of New Zealand becoming a great national side. We knew with that team that if we could get it right – and they had to start with number 7 – we could build a team around Stacey and we could get a good result,” he says.

A touring squad's selection is never an easy task, but there were some key characteristics the selectors knew they wanted their players to have back in 05.

“We looked deeply into everyone – not just their football ability but how they gelled with the team, how they gelled with the coach, how they could handle adversity and how they could handle positional changes.

We gave Brian something to work with and you have to give him credit, at the end of the day he's the one that coached them. He also picked the team for the final which included Shontayne Hape (playing in the forwards at times) playing Jake Webster on the wing where he held his own and Nigel Vagana playing out of position at Stand-off.”

The difficulty of being the selector of a touring squad is having to do your work and then back off and leave other people to do their jobs. It undoubtedly makes it all the more satisfying for a man like Darrell Williams when the squad goes on to perform above most people's expectations the way the Kiwis side did in 2005.

DAVID KIDWELL : “We did something special and put that 05 team on the map.”

DAVID KIDWELL has been the Assistant coach for the successful Kiwis team during the recent golden period of 2014/15. Back in 2005 he was an experienced leader within the playing group. He remembers the unique impact Bluey McClennan had on the Kiwis squad in 2005 that quickly separated them from less successful Kiwi teams he'd been in prior to 05.

“Bluey bought in a real ‘Kiwiana’ feel about us – especially for that first test in Sydney I remember him showing that motivational video on the bus. It was Dave Dobbyn [singing] ‘I can remember last time I thank you’ and it was awesome ... you got the chills,” he says.

“You can't put your finger on it exactly (what worked) but you just felt that you were working together as one.”

Like many of the players and management, Kidwell felt something really powerful was forming the week of the Grand Final against Australia.

“Everything ran like clockwork and it was like it was meant to be. We were buzzing and I think we had that really good belief in ourselves that we could do something special here. Bluey always said you want to be a Kiwi team to be remembered. That was something that he always said to us from the start of the campaign.”

Kidwell has experienced a lot of success with the Kiwis in the last year, but 2005 still remains as important as ever to him.

“Ten years has gone like that [clicks fingers] but you look at the photos and it's just something really special.”

He's also watched fondly as a man like Manu has been able to act as an on-field link between the successful teams of 2005 and 2015.



David Kidwell

Continued on next page...

“I was looking at the photos before and Manu was so young in 05. I was one of the leaders back then and he was a young kid. Now I’ve moved in to a coaching role and he’s one of the leaders. But there’s no better person than Manu to bring the young guys through – especially the Polynesian boys.”

Kidwell also makes mention of the way that current coach Stephen Kearney has ensured the Kiwis culture remains unique within the squad of 2015.

“When you’ve been around Kiwi campaigns and the brotherhood you realise we’re not arrogant; we’re very humble,” he says.

“Steve’s bought that back to the current Kiwis. But also don’t let that humbleness seem like we’re not confident in ourselves and focused on the job at hand.”

Kidwell can take great pride in his own work too. He’s been able to play two crucial yet very different roles in two of the greatest years New Zealand rugby league has experienced.

STACEY JONES – “The way it played out was the stuff you can only dream of really.”

BEATING THE Australians 24-0 in the final was the culmination of so many things coming together. One of those key parts undoubtedly was Stacey Jones being available for the final. Initially he’d come out of retirement just to play a role in the early part of the campaign – but Lance Hohaia’s injury in the first game in England meant Stacey Jones availability for the rest of the tour became an extremely part of the team being as successful as it was.



Stacey’s team-mate on tour, Shontayne Hape describes the value of Stacey about as bluntly as anyone is prepared to do 10 years later.

“He was one of those players that you felt like you had to have in the team,” says Hape. ^{Stacey Jones}

“I think without him you can’t say we couldn’t have done it but I don’t think we would have done it. That’s how much impact he had on the team.”

There seems like a series of things that happened on this historical tour that were meant to be – with almost elements of destiny at work. Jones still remembers clearly what happened after the backup halfback for the tour, Lance Hohaia, got injured in the first game of the tour.

“Bluey said ‘We can make it work where you can be here – and be there’ so I thought well if you can wave your magic wand and make it happen then great,” the legendary halfback recalls.

At the time I thought – here’s an opportunity. Obviously, if Lance hadn’t got injured I wouldn’t have done it because he was the backup half. Lance being injured made it a lot easier from my point of view for me to make myself available.”

Jones’s specific memories of the tour are limited with so much of his time spent taking long-distance flights to ensure he met his family responsibilities (regarding the birth of his son) and also that he met commitments he’d made to his new club in France, the Catalans Dragons.

Jones remembers the strong bond the Kiwi players had established as being a key reason why he went to the lengths he did to change his original plan to only play two games on the tour before retiring again.

Manu’s performance in the final is one memory that is etched in Jones’s memory-bank.

Continued from previous page...

“Manu was great that day. If you got your kick across-field accurate he was going to win it. Manu that day just had a blinder – out-jumping Brent Tate on a couple of occasions.”

Jones also remembers vividly an interaction he had with Bluey McClennan at half time in the final.

“I remember Bluey coming to me at halftime and saying ‘Are you alright mate’. I said ‘No I’m F*cked! He said ‘just go for 40 more minutes’. I said ‘Sweet’. It always sticks in my mind that - because I’d gone pretty much gone from the airport, had a few hours sleep and then gone to the game. The way it played out was the stuff you can only dream of really.”

All the sacrifice he made back then is remembered just as fondly by everyone that loves New Zealand rugby league a decade later and is why Stacey Jones is remembered by most people as one of the greatest players to don the Kiwis’ jersey.

SHONTAYNE HAPE : “The most memorable achievement of my career”

SHONTAYNE HAPE’S most significant role on the 2005 Kiwis tour was played in the 24-0 Grand Final win over Australia. Bluey McClennan played him at lock for some of that victory and it proved to be a master-stroke. In a career that reached great heights in rugby and league, Hape remembers the 2005 series win as the achievement he still cherishes the most.

“In the concept of my career I told Sir Peter one day that it was the most memorable achievement of my career that stands out the most,” Hape reflects.

“I went over and represented England in rugby and won a Six Nations, a Super League with Bradford and also won the World Club Challenge. Those things could possibly have topped it but this one (the 2005 Kiwis win) for me was more about the group that we had and the bond we formed.”



Shontayne Hape

As a ‘convert’ himself, Hape says he took a pay cut to go to rugby union and the move was more about the challenge for him than the money. He’s taken special interest in Jarryd Hayne’s recent move to the NFL.

“Im on the Hayne train / plane – whatever you want to call it,” he jokes.

“I’ve been following him really closely and taking interest. I always watch the NBA and NFL. So I was really excited when i saw what he was doing ; that he’d just decided to pack up and follow his dream.

I always thought i could have done that – but to be honest it takes a special person. I’ve seen some of the stats of what it takes to make it and I don’t think a lot of people appreciate how special it is what he’s doing.”

Apart from the well-documented end to his career due to concussions, Hape also had to battle back from many serious injuries during his career.

“After my ACL injury in 2002 I was never going to be as fast again. You never seem to get that strength and speed back. I’ve had my fair share of injuries and I always look back and think what might have been.”

Having had his highs and lows on and off the field over the years it made Friday night an even more special occasion for him to be able to catch up with everyone at the reunion.

“This get together is pretty special because everyone had such a close bond on that tour and everyone kinda kept in touch– but just to hear about some of the other guys who went through some bad stuff as well – in terms of depression – I was someone who went through it when I got forced to retire from concussions. Some of the guys don’t want to open up about it - but I said to them that you’d be surprised how many people go through the same sh*t.”

Continued on next page...

Continued from previous page...

Hape has DJ'd since the age of 16 and his mixing on Friday night helped to ensure the night had an appropriately relaxed vibe where so many great mates could reflect on 2005 - and what's happened in all their lives since. His music will always remain a special part of his life.

"What I loved about it was that when I was playing footy you had a distraction to take your mind off all the drama - it was like a relaxing tool," he says.

"Over the last year I improved a lot (Djing) because I've done it a bit more. I'd love to look at doing some stuff like corporate DJing during the NRL Nines. It's just a massive passion. I love it," he says.

Being forced to retire in 2013 due to numerous concussions, Hape appears to finally be over the shock that the sudden end to his career was to him. He seems at peace with where he is at now - and while he's not settled on where he'll base his family and what work he'll get into long-term, he seems very much at peace with where he's at and ready to soak up whatever life after football throws at him.

PAT CARTHY : "The Planning was phenomenal"

IN 2015 the organisation and professionalism for the Kiwis went to an unprecedented level. This led to success on the field greater than ever before. Pat Carthy was the Business Manager in 2005 and remembers how with everyone doing their part and putting in a lot of hard work before and during the tour things came together smoothly.

"Bluey's preparation was fantastic. So the challenge for Sir Peter and me was to ensure that the off-the-field arrangements were 100%," Carthy says.

Pat Carthy had been part of the team's management since 2002. He credits Daniel Anderson with making some important changes within the Kiwis setup in 2004. The professionalism Anderson had introduced then went to a new level in 2005 though and it quickly became apparent to Carthy that something special was taking place.

"The first week in Sydney there was goal-setting for the players and management and you could see the players react to a theme like 'Bullying the bully'. We brought in the sports psychologist Craig Lewis and the players start to believe. Bluey brought in other concepts like the 'Kaizen' (the Japanese philosophy of constant improvement) one and created an environment that was special."

The work behind the scenes became even more crucial leading up to the final.

"What people don't remember is that the Kiwis weren't meant to be in the final," Carthy reflects.

"We were actually booked to come home. It was going to be an Australia v Great Britain final. We didn't even have a hotel... It was a pretty hectic period for me relocating 38 people... and things like the new training venues had to be booked."

The hard work behind the scenes during that crucial week paid off.

"That week in Leeds everything went to clockwork. Everybody was behind the Kiwis (making things work off the field) and the boys responded."

These days the Kiwis' team coached by Stephen Kearney are as conscious as ever of getting the preparation right off the field to ensure the team performs on the field. It will always be tough to match that special formula the team conjured up in back in 2005 though , during 'The Year the Kiwis Flew'.

Continued on next page...

KAVA – A KEY TO THE 2005 SUCCESS

IT MIGHT seem a bit strange for people to hear that Kava really is viewed as one of the keys to the Kiwis team's success in 2005. However, the more people you talk to from in and around the team, the more you become convinced that this drink that Ruben Wiki took on tour in 2005 really was one of the key ingredients that contributed to the Kiwis Tri Nations victory that year.

Wiki is convinced of the value Kava brought to the team.

"I was captain ... and it was the first time we took Kava on tour and it changed the dynamics of the whole tour. Everyone had to abide by it," says Wiki.

"It changed a whole aspect of the tour having Kava after the game instead of alcohol. And i think recovery-wise the boys recovered a lot quicker."

From the coaching and management perspective it was a magical secret weapon that meant the team could bond in similar ways to other tours – without having to deal with a lot of the counter-productive elements that alcohol can bring into the mix.

"Ten years ago we didn't understand as much about alcohol as we do now," says McClellan.

"Our social get together (in 2005) was around the Kava bowl so we weren't burning the candle at both ends. I'd put it in the top 5 (of keys to success on the tour) because football teams need that social interaction. I think that footballers need to like each other – and they (the 2005 Kiwis) actually LOVE each other."

The influence of Kava remained heavily apparent ten years later on Friday night as the Kava bowl became the central area for players to socialise at the reunion.



Ruben Wikis favourite - the kava bowl!

SIR PETER'S ROLE SHOULD NEVER BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

AS PLAYERS and coaches have come and gone over the years, one constant presence remains in New Zealand rugby league – Sir Peter Leitch aka The Mad Butcher.

There are times when he might be taken a bit for granted, possibly because win, lose or draw he's remained so loyal and passionate about New Zealand rugby league for so long now.

An event like Friday night was a typical example of the dozens of meaningful events that Sir Peter has organised over the years. It's not just about his priceless time and energy that ensures these events take place – it's also about his own personal money he injects that 100% backs events like Friday night's reunion of the victorious 2005 Kiwis team.

It's important that Sir Peter continues to realise his input doesn't go unnoticed. Here's what some of the men attending Friday's function had to say about him as a person and his invaluable contribution to NZ Rugby League:

BRIAN MCCLENNAN:

Rugby league in NZ is indebted to Sir Peter because he runs so many functions and creates so much awareness for the game – especially when we've had successes.

Continued from previous page...

And it's so important to celebrate your successes because that helps the current crop of players strive for similar success – and also they get confidence from knowing that it's been done before.

All the players that are under him love him to bits. He's the best manager ever... the Manager's job when you're touring in England is probably the toughest job – you've got to be first up, last to bed and checking everything.

You look at his success as a person – it all relates. He's a good man – he's got compassion for his fellow person. He's a great New Zealander.

DAVID KIDWELL:

You talk to any of the guys and they love the Butch. The same feeling goes – the Butch would give his right arm if he could to help you. He loves rugby league and the Kiwis – and he obviously loves the Warriors as well. He's a man with the biggest heart.

The Butchers a great mate and everyone loves him - we'd do anything for him and he'd do anything for us.

SHONTAYNE HAPE :

I think some people take him for granted at times. First and foremost he's so passionate about rugby league and cares about people – he's just an awesome guy to be around.

He always tells me the best thing you can do for someone is give them your time – and it's true – and I live by that motto now.

We took him out when we were in France and had a great night. Some of the French people were looking at him thinking 'Who is this guy taking on these 6 foot 4 French guys!?'



Panasonic
Ideas for life



SEALINK sentra
Auckland - Melbourne - Sydney



Support our sponsors as
they help support this
newsletter.

**Get movie deals
any day of the week**

Thanks to Vodafone Fantastic Fridays

Visit vodafone.co.nz/movies

Vodafone
Power to you



Eligible customers only. Not available to business customers. \$2.50 admin fee applies. Full terms go to vodafone.co.nz/movies. One 2 for 1 Movie Voucher offer per person, per week.

Extended by Public Demand - Closes 19th October

Greatest Ever Rugby League Jersey Giveaway

50 Jerseys to be won!

25 Vodafone Warriors and 25 Kiwis Jerseys.



2015 Kiwis Jersey



**Vodafone Warriors
Heritage Jerseys**

Greatest Ever Jersey
Giveaway
P.O Box 54295
The Marina 2144,
Manukau, Auckland

Name:
Address:
Phone Number:
Jersey Size:
Preferred Jersey:

To enter: **YOU MUST** subscribe to Sir Peter Leitch's Mad Butcher Club Newsletter, only one entry per person. Competition closes on **19 October 2015.**

Then post a stamped addressed envelope with your name, address, phone number, **Jersey size and which Jersey you would like** to the address.

Are the Young Guns Just Too Young?

By John Coffey QSM



The losses through injury of Thomas Leuluai, Shaun Johnson and Kieran Foran, and a firm policy of not recalling former captain Benji Marshall, exposes the Kiwis' lack of experienced inside backs for the short tour of Britain. The 23-man team is to be named this Thursday,

Alarm bells started ringing when vice-captain Foran was excused from a Sydney pre-tour camp to holiday in Fiji with his family. It was eventually revealed that Foran's new club, Parramatta, wanted an elbow problem he had carried for most of the season "seen to". The Eels are not letting their expensive investment out of their sights.

The Kiwis train-on squad was left with three young halfback candidates -- 20-year-olds Tuimoala Lolohea (Warriors) and Te Maire Martin (Wests Tigers) and 21-year-old Brisbane Broncos colt Kodi Nikorima. None are specialists, at least not at this stage of their careers.

Lolohea appeared at fullback, wing and centre before Johnson's broken leg caused him to don the No.7 jersey for three matches. Martin has not yet graduated from the Holden Cup. Nikorima played short minutes as the Broncos' substitute dummy half during the NRL playoffs.

Kiwis coach Stephen Kearney is correct saying these guys are the future. But there is no doubt a fit Johnson and Foran will be our halves for the 2017 World Cup and Marshall's experience would surely have been invaluable as the Kiwis defend their No.1 world ranking against a tough England outfit.

It has been suggested Peta Hiku, a Kiwis fullback and centre but a regular Manly wing, and Melbourne forward Tohu Harris, who partnered Johnson in the halves in the 2014 Anzac Test and has played a handful of club games in the centres, could slot in at stand-off. What is the point of that if they also are not long-term prospects at No.6?

England will have classy halves. Sam Tompkins has even offered to play scrum-half if the selectors want Zac Hardaker at fullback after his stellar season for Leeds. Tompkins' offer will not impress incumbent No.7, and Wigan club mate, Matty Smith. The stand-off will be Gareth Widdop, who spent the 2015 season alongside Marshall at St George-Illawarra.

Who, then, are "Kearney's Kids?"

Tuimoala Lolohea: A Marist Saints junior from Kelston BHS who joined the Warriors in 2013, when he was Young Player of the Year. Made his NRL debut late in the 2014 season and shared in the Holden Cup grand final win. This season he represented Tonga against Samoa (at fullback) and was a Dally M Rookie of the Year finalist. In 26 first-grade games he has scored 11 tries and kicked 13 goals. Is he ready to be the Kiwis scrum-half, play-maker, and maybe goal kicker?

Te Maire Martin: From Hamilton BHS and the Ngaruawahia club, he followed his idol Benji Marshall to Keebra Park HS on the Gold Coast in 2013 and on to Wests Tigers last year. Also a New Zealand under-18 touch representative. Kicked the winning field goal for the Junior Kiwis against Junior Kangaroos in 2014 and has starred for the Tigers in the last two Holden Cup competitions. Has signed for the Penrith Panthers in 2016.

Kodi Nikorima: After Sunday's grand final has played 417 minutes of NRL football in 20 games (average 21 minutes per game), mostly as a substitute dummy-half. Played stand-off half and fullback in the juniors, representing Queensland from under-12 to under-18. Born in Palmerston North, played juniors in Christchurch and moved to Brisbane aged 11. Pledged his allegiance to the Kiwis; younger brother Jayden has opted for Queensland and Australia.

In recent years Johnson and Foran have formed a settled Test halfback combination. Marshall last appeared against Australia at Townsville in late 2012. It was his 22nd consecutive Test and 19th as captain, equalling Gary Freeman's record. Kearney named Simon Mannering as the new captain in early 2013. Marshall missed that Anzac Test because of a toe injury and was dabbling in rugby union at the time of the 2013 World Cup.

But there is a favourable historical omen. In 2003 coach Daniel Anderson fielded one of the oddest of all Test halfback pairings. Transplanted loose forward Sione Faumuina debuted at stand-off, utility Motu Tony started at scrum-half after one previous Test at fullback and one as a sub, and 18-year-old Thomas Leuluai debuted off the bench. They helped the Kiwis beat Australia 30-16 at North Harbour Stadium.

Week in Northland Sport

By Ben Francis



Rugby League

NORTHLAND BORN U20s players James Fisher-Harris and Corey Harawira-Naera both started in the second row for the Panthers and both played big roles in helping the Penrith club win its second Holden Cup after beating the Manly Sea-Eagles U20s 34-18. The Panthers led 12-0 after 15 minutes and despite a couple of phases where it looked like Manly would fight back, the Panthers were just too good on the day. The Panthers also won the Holden Cup in 2013 when they beat the NZ Warriors 42-30 in the final.

Northland born Adam Blair played in his fourth Grand Final as an NRL player for the Broncos. Blair put up some good numbers which included playing 56 minutes, 9 runs for 85 meters and 36 tackles. His offload in the sixth minute of the game also set up Corey Oates game opening try. Blair played in the 2006, 2008 and 2009 finals with the Melbourne Storm. To sum up the Grand Final, it was like a fairy tale, Jonathan Thurston to win the Grand Final with a sideline conversion and it looked like it was going over before the footy Grinch's intervened as the ball hit the post. But it was only fitting for Thurston to kick the field goal, win his second career title. It was never in doubt but winning the title cements JT as one of, if not the greatest player to play Rugby League.

The New Zealand Rugby League National Youth Tournament was a huge success. Both the Northland U15 and 17s teams had great competitions both finishing 6th overall, the best both teams have finished overall in the history of the competition. In the U15s campaign started poorly going down 54-14 to Akarana. The next day they bounced back to beat WaiCoa Bay 24-16. The young Swords team played well against the Auckland Vulcans but didn't come away with a win going down 23-14. They then once again bounced back to beat the Central Vipers 30-26 in golden point. In their final game the U15 Swords played WaiCoa Bay again and they got their revenge on the Swords to win 24-8.

For the U17s they started off with three straight losses 22-4 to Counties Manukau, 26-16 to the South Island Scorpions and then 32-4 to the Auckland Vulcans. They bounced back to beat the Central Vipers 40-30. In their final game they faced the South Island Scorpions again and despite going down again it was a much improved performance going down 24-20.

Paul Turner who plays for the U15 Swords was named U15s player of the tournament, he was also named in the tournament team along with Dylan Brown. Their coach Joe Rau was named Coach of the tournament for U15s. Te Kahu Nathan was named in the U17 tournament team and Northland referee Tane Kaiwai was named referee of the tournament.

The Northern Swords first grade team went down 40-12 to the Akarana Falcons in round six of the New Zealand Rugby League Premiership. The Swords trailed 16-6 at the break and gave themselves a chance to claim victory but the Falcons pulled away against the young Swords team. The Swords will face the Canterbury Bulls at Toll Stadium in their final regular season game on Saturday 1:30pm kickoff. The Bulls are defending champions in the Premiership and currently sit second of the ladder on 10 points, they are ahead of the WaiCoa Bay Stallions on points difference. The Bulls were beaten 26-20 last week again Counties Manukau.

Continued on next page...



THE GREATEST WEEKEND

SAT 6 FEB & SUN 7 FEB 2016, WAITANGI WEEKEND
EDEN PARK, AUCKLAND

BUY NOW

Rugby Union

IT'S HARD to find many positives out of Northland's ITM Cup season and with only two games left in their season. On Saturday night they faced Auckland who seem to be one of the favorites to take out the premiership and they showed why by running in ten tries to crush Northland 64-21. The win was Auckland's biggest win over the Taniwha and continue their seven year dominance over their Northern rivals. Northland have really struggled in this year in eight games this season they have scored 95 points and conceded 330, some saying it's the worst season ever by a New Zealand provincial side and some even suggesting Northland be relegated to the Heartland Championship. Northland's final two games are against Otago and North Harbour.

Northland finished 7th overall at the 2015 Roller Mills Tournament. The annual Tournament which was held at Kensington Park in Whangarei this year was a great success. 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 first two games beating King Country and Thames Valley 48-12 and 71-0 respectively before going down 48-3 to Auckland East and then 32-5 to North Harbour. In the Quarter finals Northland faced Counties Manukau and went down 17-14 and then beat King Country 10-0 in the 7th v 8th playoff game. Bay of Plenty faced Auckland East in the final and in the first time in 20 years the final finished a tie at 13 all.

The Northland U19 squad finished their campaign at the Jock Hobbs Memorial U19 Championship in Taupo. Their tournament started off with a 23-22 loss to Southland in Taupo, which was then followed up with a 22-16 win over a Heartland XV. Northland then played Bay of Plenty in the 13th/14th playoff game and went down 20-7. Canterbury went on to win the grand final 41-34 over Waikato.

Blake Ayshford – “a good style of bloke.”

THE NEW Zealand Warriors have made an astute signing in Blake Ayshford, formerly with Wests Tigers and the Cronulla Sharks.

Blake is 27 years old and plays at centre, five-eighth and lock. He was a Sydney Roosters junior product and has played a total of nearly 130 NRL games in stints at Wests Tigers and with the Sharks.

He played a number of NSW Cup games in 2015 with the Newtown Jets, who are the second-tier partnership club of the Cronulla Sharks. He displayed outstanding form with the Jets, proving himself to be an inspiring leader, initiating attacking plays and always being sound in defence.

Blake topped off his 2015 season by winning the Newtown Jets blue ribbon Best and Fairest award, the Brian “Chicka” Moore Shield. Everyone at the Jets and Sharks wishes Blake and his family all the best in this new phase of his Rugby League career.



Blake Ayshford makes a speech at the Newtown Jets presentation evening after winning the Brian “Chicka” Moore Shield.
(Gary Sutherland photo)



Blake Ayshford in action.
(Michael Magee photo)



Blake Ayshford makes a break for Newtown against Penrith at Henson Park.
(Michael Magee photo).

MAD BUTCHER SPECIAL*



ONLY
\$29.99
FOR 31 ISSUES
valid for 12 months

YOUR RUGBY LEAGUE FIX ON TABLET



Download the latest issue now!

Apple, the Apple logo, iPad, and iPhone are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

*Special offer is only available on Zinio.



COMMUNITY CLUB PROGRAMME VISITS 2016

MEET YOUR FAVOURITE NRL STARS AT YOUR LOCAL
AUCKLAND RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB. FREE ATTENDANCE.

Club	Team	Programme
Glenora Bears	Cronulla Sharks	5.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Hibiscus Coast Raiders	North Queensland Cowboys	5.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Manurewa Marlins	Melbourne Storm	5.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
New Lynn Stags	Sydney Roosters	5.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Northcote Tigers	Wests Tigers	5.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Otara Scorpions	Vodafone Warriors	5.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Pt Chevalier Pirates	Penrith Panthers	5.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Waitemata Seagulls (Ranui)	Newcastle Knights	5.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Bay Roskill Vikings	Canberra Raiders	7.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Mangare East Hawks	South Sydney Rabbitohs	7.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Marist Saints	Brisbane Broncos	7.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Mt Wellington	Gold Coast Titans	7.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Otahuhu Leopards	Manly Sea Eagles	7.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Pakuranga Jaguars	Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs	7.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Papatoetoe Panthers	Paramatta Eels	7.00pm Thursday 4 February 2016
Papakura Sea Eagles	St George-Illawara Dragons	5.00pm Friday 5 February 2016

GET YOUR TICKETS TO THE DICK SMITH NRL AUCKLAND NINES TODAY



TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

» TWO DAY TICKETS FROM \$69* » KIDS HALF PRICE**

BOOK NOW

WWW.TICKETEK.CO.NZ/NINES

*Booking and venue fees apply **In most Categories



THE RUGBY LEAGUE BUSINESS NETWORK

www.rugbyleaguebusiness.net

INTERNATIONAL SERIES RECEPTION

HOUSE OF COMMONS
FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2015

**Celebrate the England v New Zealand
2015 International Series in style on the
eve of the second Test Match.**

Enjoy drinks, canapés and each other's
company overlooking the River Thames
from the Terrace of the Grade One World
Heritage listed venue.

Open to Members of the Rugby League
Business Network (free to join) and their
guests



Tickets: £50.

rugbyleaguebusiness.net/seriesreception

GUEST SPEAKERS

England's Eorl Crabtree & New Zealand's Robbie Hunter-Paul



Supported by

ADVANTAGESPORTS

advantagesportsuk.com

Bendon Man offer via Bendonlingerie.com
(Dates: 8th -22nd October)

Offer: Exclusive 40% Off Bendon Man styles*

Valid: 8th – 22nd October

Code: WARRIORS40

TC's: Offer valid on bendonlingerie.co.nz only and is available from 9th October until 22nd October 2015. 40% Off applies to the Recommended Retail Price (RRP) of selected full priced Bendon Man merchandise available at bendonlingerie.co.nz.

Discount will be provided at the time of the transaction by applying promo code 'WARRIORS40' at checkout. Valid while stocks last and excludes selected styles, accessories, and Stella McCartney Lingerie.

Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer and is not in addition to existing reductions.

Bendon
close to our customers for life

pleasure state™ STELLA MCCARTNEY HEIDI KLUM HEIDI HUMAN
BENDON BENDON MAN Jayreform Lovable EVOLOVE Davenport HICKORY



Another wonderful email...

Kia ora Butch

As a newcomer I just wanted to say thanks heaps for the newsletter mate. As an old school Rugby League New fan & Otahuhu Leopards old boy it's great to get to read rugby league news as well as watch Sky TV

Have a great time in the home of Rugby League.

Cheers

Moa Kingi

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

Our Sponsors

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



The Newsletter Team

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



Sir Peter Leitch
Editor



David Kemeys
Editor at Large



Hayden Woodhead
Graphic Designer



John Deaker
Correspondent



John Coffey
Southern
Correspondent



Barry Ross
Australian
Correspondent



Ben Francis
Northern
Correspondent