



Kiwis UK Tour Special

Newsletter ^{15th October 2015} #94

No advertisements are paid for in this newsletter.

Kiwis Open Training Session **Mt Smart, 10AM THIS Sunday 18th** **October** **Free Tegel BBQ**

Come along and wish the boys all the best!



Kiwis UK Tour 2015 below:

The team assemble in camp on the evening of Saturday 17 October 2015 in Auckland.

We will have an open training session for our fans at Mt Smart Stadium at 10.00am on Sunday 18 October 2015. **PLUS TEGEL ARE HOSTING A FREE BBQ** they then depart Auckland for England on the evening of Sunday 18 October 2015 and will be away for 30 days returning on Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 November 2015.

Our games are as follows:

WARM UP GAME v LEEDS RHINOS

Date: Friday 23 October 2015
Venue: Headingley Stadium, Leeds, UK
Time: 8.00 pm Kick Off GMT
(8.00 am NZ Time - Saturday 24 October 2015)

TEST 1 v ENGLAND

Date: Sunday 1 November 2015
Venue: KC Stadium, Hull, UK
Time: 5.00 pm Kick Off GMT
(5.00 am NZ Time - Monday 2 November 2015)

TEST 2 v ENGLAND

Date: Saturday 7 November 2015
Venue: Olympic Stadium, London, UK
Time: 2.30 pm Kick Off GMT
(2.30 am NZ Time - Sunday 8 November 2015)

TEST 3 v ENGLAND

Date: Saturday 14 November 2015
Venue: DW Stadium, Wigan, UK
Time: 1.00 pm Kick Off GMT
(1.00 am NZ Time - Sunday 15 November 2015)

We will be making a quick trip to France and will do some community activity with the Catalans Dragons and the Youth Rugby League players following our warm up match.

The team will be part of the Hull FC 150 Year Celebration Dinner on Thursday 29 October 2015 at the Hull City Hall.

We intend to have an afternoon tea at the NZ High Commission whilst in London.

We will also be having some attending some unique training venues throughout our tour including Harrow School in London which was founded in 1572 and no fewer than seven British prime ministers are counted as distinguished old boys along with the likes of Winston Churchill.

We will have the opportunity to use the facilities at Liverpool Football Club for a training session prior to our third test.

We will stay in the following destination throughout our tour:

- Leeds, UK
- Perpignan, France
- Hull, UK
- London, UK
- Liverpool, UK

We have an open training session for our fans and the community at each of the above locations.

What A week !

TALK ABOUT a one-arm paper-hanger, I'm as busy as a bee with a bum full of honey.

On Monday I was making a TV ad for my good friends at Dick Smith.

Tuesday was really special because I got to go out with my daughter for her birthday and there is nothing I like more than a bit of quality time with my two girls and their mum, the lovely Janice.

Wednesday it is recording all the Mad Butcher radio ads before shooting off to my doctor for my annual bladder cancer check-up, and then over to the North Shore where I am doing a presentation for the NRL and just in case I have not got enough on, it's back to Mission Bay and the Coffee Club for a Blue September prostate cancer wrap-up.

On Thursday I get a bit of a breather before heading to West Auckland to see Joseph Parker in his boxing bout against Kali Meehan.

On Friday I am at Middlemore Hospital with the Minister of Sport and Health Jonathan Coleman doing some work around battling diabetes.

It's all about a five-year plan for people with diabetes, something I am very interested in.

The plan is called Living Well with Diabetes and is all about people at high risk of, or living with diabetes. There are six priorities, preventing high-risk people from developing type 2 diabetes, letting them self-manage their problems, improving services, early detection and reducing the risk of complications, integrated care, and meeting the needs of children and adults with type 1 diabetes.

On Saturday it is into camp with the Kiwis and on Sunday there is the public training session at Mt Smart before we all get together with family, something Stephen Kearney started, and which is hugely popular with all involved.

Then of course it is on to the plane and headed to England. I am very excited to be part of the touring entourage and in camp, but remember, I pay my own way.

There is nothing more to say except Go the Kiwis!

A Lazy Sunday

What a lazy Sunday I had. I was up at the crack of dawn to watch Samoa play Scotland at the Rugby World Cup, and what a thrilling game it was.

Scotland got home in the end but Samoa can count themselves unlucky. They were just too ill-disciplined, giving away penalty after penalty, even if they did seem a bit of a lottery to me.

And then it was straight into Australia versus Wales, and despite not one try in the match, it was gripping.

You have to hand it to the Wallabies, two men in the sin bin, down to 13 and clinging on as Wales launched wave after wave of attacks on its line, but they held on to take top spot in what was named the Pool of Death, as England found to their cost.

It is all or nothing from here on in at the cup, and after the All Blacks dealt to Tonga on Saturday, the critics are still unconvinced about our chances.

I do not profess to be a rugby expert, but winning, pretty or ugly, is the only thing that matters, and I do believe we will get past France/Ireland in our quarterfinal.

That will set us up for a semifinal against South Africa, who I think will have few problems accounting for Wales, despite the boys from the valleys defying the odds after a cruel run of injuries.

On the other side of the draw France/Ireland will play Argentina, while our Tasman foes Australia face Scotland. I can not see Scotland stopping Australia, but the other game is anyone's guess.

Sneak Peek At Leeds

I should have got up off my backside after all that rugby but I could not resist switching to the English Super League for Wigan against Leeds, who won the game.

My Kiwis take on Leeds in the opening game of their tour to England so it was the perfect chance to see what we will come up against.

I love going to Leeds, because down the road is the set of my favourite TV show Emmerdale. I will be doing a disappearing act and sneaking off to catch up with some of the cast on set that's for sure.

The Kiwis assemble on Saturday for that tour, and I can not wait, because I will be travelling with the squad in my role as the patron of the New Zealand Rugby League, and before anyone starts wondering what that little donut cost, I am paying my own way!

Good Luck To The New Boys

Vodafone Warriors utility Tui-moala Lolohea is among the new faces while Vodafone Warriors-bound Issac Luke and Adam Blair will be co-captains, replacing the unavailable Simon Mannering in the 23-man Kiwi team.

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20-year-old Lolohea missed only one game this year - and played in every backline position - culminating in him being named Vodafone NRL Rookie of the Year at the club's annual awards.

He is one of six newcomers named in the touring squad, the others being Broncos outside back Jordan Kahu, Roosters back rower Isaac Liu, Brisbane halfback-hooker Kodi Nikorima, Bulldogs wing Curtis Rona and Roosters back rower Sio Siua Taukeiaho.

Eight players have appeared in 10 or more tests for New Zealand with Adam Blair, Luke, Ben Matulino and Jason Nightingale all boasting 20 or more internationals.

On the NRL experience count, 10 players have made 100-plus appearances, Blair (215) with the most followed by Nightingale (197), Shaun Kenny-Dowall (196), Matulino (173), Alex Glenn (168), Kevin Proctor (155) and Lewis Brown (150) in the 150-plus category.

Farewell The Kiwis

We fly out with my great friends at Air New Zealand on Sunday evening but before that the public gets the chance to farewell the boys.

The Kiwis are holding a training session that is open to the public at Mt Smart on Sunday at 10am.

Come along and show the Kiwis you are right behind them, and you can even have a Mad Butcher sausage off the barbecue courtesy of Tegel!

Book The Dates

The Kiwis' tour starts against Leeds on October 23, followed by Tests in Hull (November 1), London's Olympic Stadium (November 7) and Wigan (November 14).

I'll Be On Mobile...

I fly out on Sunday to the UK, as I say, arriving home on about Thursday, November 19. I will be available by mobile (courtesy of Vodafone) and I will be checking my emails regularly.

Send The Kiwis A message

If you want to send the Kiwis a message please forward to Nadene Conlon, email Nadene@nzrl.co.nz; please remember the time difference in England is 12 hours behind NZ.

England Squad Named

England coach Steve McNamara has named his squad. The 24-man squad will be captained by Wigan Warriors Sean O'Loughlin, and includes 16 survivors from last year's Four Nations.

McNamara has selected seven uncapped players, with four that featured in England's Academy tour of Australia in 2012 - Warrington Wolves forward Ben Currie, Wigan Warriors trio John Bateman, Joe Burgess and George Williams. Castleford Tigers half-back Luke Gale and leading try-scorer in Super League Jermaine McGillvary, from the Huddersfield Giants, are rewarded after a strong season in the domestic campaign. NRL based forward Mike Cooper, who toured with the national side last year, is included but has yet to be capped.

St Helens hooker James Roby, Huddersfield centre Leroy Cudjoe and Warrington's Ben Westwood

all return after missing selection 12 months ago through injury.

Six players - Rabbitoh George Burgess, St Helens' Alex Walmsley, Leeds' Stevie Ward, Bronco Jack Reed, Warrington's Stefan Ratchford and Wigan's Joel Tomkins - have not been considered because of injury.

England coach, Steve McNamara, said: "We spent a long time selecting this squad and there were some close calls. There is a tremendous challenge in front of us against the best league nation in the world. New Zealand will be formidable opponents."

England's international schedule kicks off at Leigh Sports Village on October 24 with a match against France.

The three-game series against New Zealand follows.

England Squad

- John Bateman, Wigan Warriors
- Joe Burgess, Wigan Warriors
- Thomas Burgess, South Sydney Rabbitohs
- Mike Cooper, St George Illawarra Dragons
- Leroy Cudjoe, Newsome Panthers, Huddersfield Giants
- Ben Currie, Warrington Wolves
- Liam Farrell, Wigan Warriors
- Brett Ferres, Huddersfield Giants
- Luke Gale, Castleford Tigers
- James Graham, Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs
- Ryan Hall, Leeds Rhinos
- Zak Hardaker, Leeds Rhinos
- Chris Hill, Warrington Wolves
- Josh Hodgson, Canberra Raiders

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- Jermaine McGillvary, Huddersfield Giants
- Sean O'Loughlin (captain), Wigan Warriors
- James Roby, St Helens
- Matty Smith, Wigan Warriors
- Sam Tomkins, Wigan Warriors
- Kallum Watkins, Leeds Rhinos
- Ben Westwood, Warrington Wolves
- Elliot Whitehead, Catalans Dragons
- Gareth Widdop, St George Illawarra Dragons
- George Williams, Wigan Warriors

PNG Gets World Cup Games

Papua New Guinea league fans have the chance to follow their national team at home during the Rugby League World Cup in 2017.

Prime Minister Peter O'Neill has announced details of a partnership that will see three pool matches played in Port Moresby.

Organising Committee boss Michael Brown welcomed the announcement.

"We are excited about taking the Rugby League World Cup to one of the world's most passionate league nations," he said.

"Our agreement will see three pool matches played in Port Moresby, all involving their national team."

The announcement means the 28 matches in the tournament will be played across three countries. – PNG, Australia and New Zealand.

SkyCity Back On Board

SkyCity and the Vodafone Warriors have extended their partnership for another two years meaning, at 17 years, it will be among the longest-running sporting

sponsorships in New Zealand. SkyCity boss Nigel Morrison said SkyCity was delighted to continue its support.

"We place great value on our partnership with the Vodafone Warriors," he said. "Having been with the club for the past 15 seasons, we've developed a fantastic relationship. We look forward to the boys hitting their full potential over the next couple of years."

Vodafone Warriors managing director Jim Doyle said SkyCity will continue to have its name on the lower back of the club's jersey while SkyCity will also be the venue for all major Warriors events.

World Cup Race On Already

The journey towards the 2017 Rugby League World Cup continues on Saturday night when the Cook Islands face Tonga in a qualifier at Campbelltown Stadium.

The match, which will decide the final Pacific entrant to the Cup, will feature a number of NRL players, including Tonga's Solomone Kata, Jorge Taufua, Mahe Fonua, Sika Manu and Manu Ma'u, as well as Cook Islands' Jordan Rapana. The match, which kicks off at 7.30pm, will be streamed live via nrl.com.

Time To Renew Your Tickets

2016 Vodafone Warriors renewals are now live for business! Your seats and Sir Peter Leitch lounge passes can now be purchased via the membership team, by following the online link below and logging in.

[Click here!](#)

The Sir Peter Leitch passes will be \$150 as per 2015 but there are some price changes to the seating categories. If you need clarification on this matter please get in touch

with the membership team.

You have until October 28 to renew and guarantee your same seats and retain your lounge passes at this exclusive renewal price. There is a lengthy waiting list so be sure to renew before the window closes or your places could be snapped up.

To add a little incentive the Vodafone Warriors are giving away some great prizes, including flights and accommodation for one of our games in Sydney in 2016.

If you have any questions you can contact the membership team on 0800 839 839 or by emailing memberships@warriors.kiwi

NSW Cup To Grow

The Canberra Times is reporting the NSW Cup is set to be expanded before the NRL competition, with no new teams to be added to that until all 16 clubs are financially viable and independently owned.

The success of the all-Queensland Grand Final between the Cowboys and Broncos sparked calls for a fourth NRL franchise in the state, but the financial problems at the Titans and Knights has put paid to any new clubs in the near future.

The NRL will not consider expanding the competition until they are able to relinquish ownership of those clubs, and the other 14 are financially strong.

NRL head of strategy Shane Richardson has been working on a Whole of Game Review, which focuses on creating a genuine second tier.

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To do that, Richardson is expected to recommend new franchises in an expanded 14-team NSW Cup from regional and rural areas, as well as Fiji and New Zealand.

“There could be a couple of teams in the bush, where we want to encourage our young men and young women to stay at home for longer, and regional sides from New Zealand or the Pacific Islands. Expansion doesn’t just have to be whether we have 17 or 18 NRL teams.”

National Premiership Final At Mt Smart

The Counties-Manukau Stingrays go head to head with the Canterbury Bulls in the NZRL National Premiership final at Mt Smart on Saturday at 3.05pm.

The Stingrays ended the unbeaten run of Canterbury Bulls in Christchurch recently and the final is sure to be a belter. It’s a great chance to get along and support league, and it’s incredibly cheap too – just a gold coin donation.

Despite that, you could not write

off the Bulls, who had dominated the competition until that loss.

Counties’ 26-20 triumph came as a bit of a shock to be fair, so the Bulls will be looking to turn the tables.

The curtain-raiser at 1pm is the CMSRL Ethnic Rugby League Final between the Eagles and Piranhas.

Gates open at 12.30pm, with entry at Gate B only, and the only parking is via Maurice Rd.



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2015 Kiwis Tour to England Squad



Gerard Beale (Sharks)
25, 7 Tests, 118 NRL games



Adam Blair (Broncos)
29, 31 Tests, 215 NRL games



Jesse Bromwich (Storm)
26, 14 Tests, 132 NRL games



Lewis Brown (Panthers)
29, 8 Tests, 150 NRL games



Alex Glenn (Broncos)
27, 10 Tests, 168 NRL games



Tohu Harris (Storm)
23, 7 Tests, 76 NRL games



Peta Hiku (Sea Eagles)
22, 6 Tests, 60 NRL games



Jordan Kahu (Broncos)
24, 0 Tests, 35 NRL games



Shaun Kenny-Dowall (Roosters)
27, 14 Tests, 196 NRL games



Isaac Liu (Roosters)
24, 0 Tests, 64 NRL games



Tuimoala Lolohea (Vodafone Warriors)
20, 0 Tests, 26 NRL games



Issac Luke (Rabbitohs)
28, 33 Tests, 188 NRL games



Ben Matulino (Vodafone Warriors)
26, 20 Tests, 173 NRL games



Sam Moa (Roosters)
29, 6 Tests, 73 NRL games



Jason Nightingale (Dragons)
29, 25 Tests, 197 NRL games





Kodi Nikorima (Broncos)
21, 0 Tests, 20 NRL games



Kevin Proctor (Storm)
26, 8 Tests, 155 NRL games



Curtis Rona (Bulldogs)
23, 0 Tests, 32 NRL games



Sio Siua Taukeiaho (Roosters)
23, 0 Tests, 28 NRL games



Martin Taupau (Wests Tigers)
25, 6 Tests, 66 NRL games



Roger Tuivasa-Sheck (Roosters)
22, 8 Tests, 84 NRL games



Dean Whare (Panthers)
25, 12 Tests, 88 NRL games



Manaia Cherrington (Wests Tigers)



Stephen Kearney - Coach



ENGLAND SQUAD



Kiwis' Success Allows Selectors to Gamble and Plan for the Future

By John Deaker



THE SUCCESS of the Kiwis team during the last year strongly influenced the final squad that was selected for their three test series coming up against England.

The features of the squad were the co-captains they named as well as many examples where the selectors looked to the future rather than taking the more conservative and experienced player options available.

Former Kiwi and current selector for the team, Tawera Nikau gave some clarity on Newstalk ZB at the weekend around some of the key selections – in particular their reluctance to revert back to a guy like Benji Marshall despite Kieran Foran becoming the latest in a long list of key playmakers to pull out of the tour.

"We have invested and put time into the young guys and they have thrived," said Nikau.

"They are starting to lead the culture. The likes of Johnson, [Issac] Luke, Jesse Bromwich, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Tohu Harris... there is a whole new regime of those young guys coming through who want to play at that top level, who are committed, and it's all about the team."

The term 'culture' is something selectors, coaches and even fans are more conscious of than ever before as we become more accustomed to professional sport in New Zealand. In the amateur days when teams spent less time around each other and had other jobs and wider interests it wasn't deemed to be quite as important; the best players were expected to be able to come together and quickly bond on and off the field despite the limited preparation.

Now coaches are much more conscious of how one person can upset the whole balance within an environment. They adopt the general philosophy that a good feeling within a group can lead to a synergistic effect that enables teams to perform well above the sum of their individual parts.

In the case of the current Kiwis selection policy it's obvious they are mindful of continuing to move forward from problems associated with the poor performance at the 2013 World Cup.

"In the past, Benji [Marshall] was probably more about Benji and not the team. That is where we were looking as a selection panel," Nikau explained.

"There were a couple of other guys in that team - Jared Waerea-Hargreaves was one, Sonny-Bill Williams another. We made some tough decisions over the last couple of years and that's given us plenty to think about but, if you look where we have headed, it has made a huge impact."

Naming Issac Luke and Adam Blair as the co-captains would probably be debated a lot more by the media and fans if the team wasn't on such a successful winning run. The most obvious reservation about having Luke and Blair as co-captains would be that both players have been known to be a bit 'hot-headed' over the years. They both play in positions where they get subbed off the park more often than not too.

How both players embrace their roles and develop on tour will be fascinating because there are many examples in sport over the years where getting the captaincy has bought out the best in the individuals and enabled them to kick on and lead teams well over a long period of time.

The Warriors in particular would be thrilled if Issac Luke comes away from the tour viewing himself as a true leader of men and can then demonstrate that same attitude by helping to mentor young players at their club. Stephen Kearney is confident Luke and Blair are the right men to get the job done for him.

"As far as the co-captains [decision's concerned], all I'm wanting to establish there is there's a shared responsibility amongst those two individuals, but [also] amongst the whole group, to get a job done on what's going to be a really challenging tour," said Kearney.

"Both guys have made wonderful contributions to the jumper. The way that Adam's finished this year off, everyone would have seen in his performances, particularly through the finals series, and he's been wonderful for the Broncos all year."

What all Kiwis supporters know is that there aren't many more passionate men about playing for the their National team than Issac Luke and Adam Blair and watching them both lead the Haka as co-captains promises to be inspirational in itself. It is the type of passion the under-strength squad will require to perform well in England at this time of year and despite the team's inexperienced halves, only a 3-0 whitewash of England will be viewed as a success by this current Kiwis' culture.

Pritchard's Career Heads North – but not as a Kiwi this time.

By John Deaker



As the Kiwis team looks to the future with its injection of Youth to the England tour, John Deaker sat down with some proud former Kiwis and talked to them about rugby league and a bit about their lives away from the game.

FRANK PRITCHARD is heading up to the Northern Hemisphere to play rugby league soon – but it's not with the Kiwis squad that he played 27 tests for. Pritchard finished his NRL career this year and has signed a three year contract to play in the UK's Super League.

"I've signed with Hull. It's a three year deal," says Pritchard.

Playing in the Northern Hemisphere was a tough call for Frank 'The Tank' to make. Another just as tough decision he's made in recent years was to become unavailable for the Kiwis and play for Samoa.

"I ended up captaining Samoa in the Four Nations last year and I still had a bit of energy and blood pumping and fight in me... I didn't want to go and play for them on my last legs," he says.

"I'd played 27 tests for the Kiwis and put my heart on the line for the Kiwis but it was time to get back to my parents... to play for my [other] country."

Pritchard's NRL career started right back in 2003. Initially he played a bit in the centres for Penrith outside fellow Kiwi Paul Whataira. A twist of fate that year helped him to solidify his place in the Panthers first team.

"I broke my ankle before the 2003 season started and was out for six months," Pritchard recalls.

"For me it was a blessing in disguise. I went back home to Samoa and left Australia weighing 93 kgs and came back weighing 123kgs. I ended up playing second row for my whole career since then."

Controlling his weight has been an ongoing concern for Pritchard throughout his career but his much bigger frame - a playing weight of around 112kg in recent years - has generally been more of a good thing than a bad one.

If Pritchard can play out his 3 year contract with Hull FC it will cap off a lengthy professional career for a forward in the modern game. He played for Penrith from 2003 to 2010 and Canterbury from 2011 to 2015.

When you also add in his 27 tests for the Kiwis and 4 tests for Samoa it's a remarkable career – one that might have been aided considerably by the ankle ("blessing in disguise") injury right back in 2003.



Frank Pritchard

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Rugby League Remains a Huge Part of Willie Talau's Life

By John Deaker



WILLIE TALAU is an excellent example of what the great game of rugby league can do for a person and their family. Talau came to New Zealand from Samoa as an 8 year-year old and his family settled immediately in New Plymouth where his father worked as a scaffolder.

Since then rugby league has been the vehicle that's given him the ability to travel the world and be exposed to experiences that most of his classmates coming through Spotswood College could only dream of.

"I left the Bulldogs the year before they won the competition. Some people think I'd regret that but I tell them I wouldn't change that for the world because I went to the UK [to play at St Helens] knowing I could do plenty of travel from there and it was great," says Talau.

"The biggest disappointment I think is staying in your bubble that is home and not getting to experience other cultures.

It can work either way – make you fall in love with the place or making you appreciate where you come from. I was privileged to get the opportunity to travel and the only way I could have got that was through rugby league."

These days Talau works as a Personal Trainer at Bondi Junction but also coaches his eldest son's rugby league team. Coaching league was something he didn't anticipate wanting to do when he hung up the boots in 2010 but with his son getting player of the season this year it's clearly helped him to get a lot of satisfaction out of putting back into the game that provided him with such great opportunities.

"I love it. When I stopped playing I didn't want to coach – but a few years later there's something special that reminds me why I love rugby league," Talau passionately explains.

"There's no money involved and you see it in the eyes of the kids how much they want it and it reminds me that I used to be like that. Until money became involved and that's when it became a job."

His wealth of experience in rugby league combined with having a son in the team has made Talau more conscious than most people coaching teenagers of trying to do his best to steer the players clear of ob-

stacles they face in their everyday lives.

"The biggest thing for me is about trying to develop people. You see so many people get close but fall short because of the many variables outside the game... I like them to hang out with their teammates because they can help each other along the way."

During Talau's career a trainer (also of Samoan heritage) was the biggest influence on the philosophies that he tries to bring to his coaching, personal training and even his parenting.

"Apollo Perelini was our head trainer at St Helens. He was all about family. He wouldn't tell you one thing and then walk away and do the opposite. He lived it as well... He invited us into his house – him and his family setup. Having us at his place exposed us to more of him and the more we saw the more we liked," says Talau.

"Him and his wife were just top people. So to be a really top coach I think you need to invite your players into your life so they can see it first hand because it's one thing to say it – but it's another thing to see it."

Like Perelini, Talau tries to also practice what he preaches in all aspects of his life today – especially as a parent.

"You should always be your hardest critic whether you're playing or coaching rugby league or parenting. Nothing changes. You have to re-evaluate... I think where most parents go wrong – they get set in one role. One kid won't be the same as the next. They are all individuals and you need to treat them differently."

Talau admits he now has ambitions to kick on with his coaching. If he continues to set a good example the chances are he will push on to coach at a higher level. You also wouldn't be surprised if at least one of his sons follows in their father's footsteps by playing at the highest level based on the fine example that Willie Talau is setting for his sons.



Willie Talau

Sam Perrett is Busy Building a Life After Football

By John Deaker



YOU HEAR many people talk about players that ‘Take great pride in playing for their country’ but you’d come across few that were as proud and gave 100% every time they wore the Kiwis jersey as Sam Perrett did.

These days Perrett is still performing well for his Canterbury Bulldogs club in the NRL. However, he played the last of his 21 tests for the Kiwis back in 2013 and has clearly missed being involved with the team in recent years.

“Personally I am disappointed that I didn’t make the last World Cup tour and since then I’ve accepted it,” he reflects.

“I’ve just cherished every moment and made sure everything’s a positive. I love my country and I love every opportunity I’ve had to represent it and that’s the way I’ll remember it.”

The upside of missing out on the Kiwis tour is that Perrett has been able to spend more time preparing himself for life after football in recent years. He always had a dream of getting into building and construction and for many years at the Roosters he went out and did practical work on sites on his days off. He also acquired relevant qualifications from night-classes and studying extramurally.

With the valued guidance of a mentor who “Showed me how to engineer and structure things” the Perrett Group became a reality a few years ago. This building company has three arms : Construction , Property Development and Property Sales and Marketing.

“Over the last 2 years I’ve started to really crack down more and head in the right direction,” Perrett says.

Perrett will need the Perrett Group company to keep ticking over nicely for him to support his own expanding ‘Perrett Group’ at home that means so much to him.

“Family is my number 1 – that’s what I always took with me when I played for the black and white... I’ve got my beautiful wife [who’s originally from Hastings] and we have 3 beautiful kids who are 8,7 and 5. Potentially we’re looking at having number four – that’d be nice,” he says.

Perrett has fond memories of his time in the Kiwi jersey despite the team performing poorly on his first tour to Great Britain in 2007. He remembers the significant difference Stephen Kearney made (with Wayne Bennett) when he took over the team in 2008.

“Winning the World Cup (in 2008) was massive... and in 2010 winning the Four Nations. I pass on some of the lessons and principles [from those tours] to my team-mates now, ” he says.

Perrett doesn’t have much more time left in his career to pass on his wealth of knowledge on to young players but when he does finally hang up his boots for good he can take comfort in knowing that he’s already clearly prepared the foundations for his life after football.



Sam Perrett

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Tuimoala Lolohea

By Ben Francis



NEW KIWI Tuimoala Lolohea took the NRL by storm this season, earning a call-up to the Kiwis tour to England.

The youngster appeared in 23 of the 24 Vodafone Warriors games this year despite playing at fullback, wing, centre, and replacing Shaun Johnson at halfback.

Lolohea racked up 11 tries, including the one scored off Nathan Friends' back flip pass, and kicked 13 goals.

It was a performance that saw him win Warriors Rookie of the Year and win a nomination for NRL Rookie of the Year, a Dally M award that was eventually won by Cronulla's Jack Bird.

After all that Lolohea was one of six new faces in the Kiwis 23-man squad to play three tests against England and a game against the Leeds Rhinos.

Lolohea remembers well getting the call to tell him he was to be a Kiwi. "It was a really special moment for me getting named in the squad. Playing for the Kiwis has been one of my goals ever since I was a kid. It's a massive honour and I'm really looking forward to it."

It was made more special by the reaction of his family, particularly his father. "They were really proud of me. Dad made many sacrifices for me growing up, to help me achieve my goals. He knows this was my biggest goal so he couldn't be any happier for me."

Much will rest on the shoulders, after Kiwis coach Stephen Kearney named an untried halves combination, but little throws him.

"It is a big opportunity for me to gain experience and play alongside some of the best. I'm nervous but excited for the chance to play against one of the best teams in the world. It's one of my biggest achievements so far."

Despite what he has already achieved, Lolohea remains grounded. "Getting playing time would be huge, so I can gain more experience and knowledge and take that back to the NRL with the Warriors."

And he is confident being a Kiwi can only help his game and improve him as a player. "It will be big for me, and hopefully for Andrew McFadden. He and other coaches have shown faith in me to play my game, so I hope gaining experience on this tour will help my game in the future."

Lolohea had hoped to play alongside Kieran Foran, but he was ruled out by injury. That's seen Lolohea shift his focus already. "I was really looking forward to playing alongside Kieran but he's injured and not taking part in the tour. So now I'm looking forward to playing behind our forwards. Running off them will be awesome. We have a big strong pack and they will be big for us this tour."

England named its squad this week and Lolohea says he doesn't see any weaknesses. "I'm looking forward to playing against them. It is a good team, strong across the park. It will be a great challenge playing against the Super League players."



Tuimoala Lolohea

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Some Reflections on The Kiwis

By John Coffey QSM



THERE HAVE been few quibbles about the composition of coach Stephen Kearney's Kiwis, who are about to embark on a three-Test tour of Britain. Without Thomas Leuluai, Shaun Johnson and Kieran Foran, the halfback positions inevitably lack depth and experience but that was known before the announcement. There were few surprises when the 23 tourists were named.

Some reflections, then, on a squad which will be co-captained by Adam Blair and Issac Luke:

History: Kearney's Kiwis will be seeking New Zealand's first series win on British soil since the Frank Endacott-coached 1998 team won two Tests and drew the other. In fact, New Zealand's only other triumphs in three-Test series in Britain were by the original 1907-08 All Golds and the 1971 Grand Slam Kiwis, who both won two Tests and lost the other. The Kiwis were beaten in 1926-27 (0-3), 1947-48 (1-2), 1951-52 (0-3), 1955-56 (1-2), 1961 (1-2), 1965 (0-2 and one drawn), 1989 (1-2), 1993 (0-3) and 2007 (0-3). There were tied series (one win, one loss, one draw) in 1980, 1985 and 2002. If the current Kiwis can win all three Tests they will become the first to achieve a clean sweep in Britain in 108 years. No pressure!

Since our last Test: The Kiwis thumped the Kangaroos 26-12 in the Anzac Test at Brisbane in May. Not available from that match through injury were wing Manu Vatuvei (shoulder), stand-off half Foran (elbow), scrum-half Johnson (leg), loose forward and captain Simon Mannering (illness) and interchange player Leuluai (knee). Interchange forward Greg Eastwood was not selected. Roosters prop Jared Waerea-Hargreaves (knee) and Penrith wing and fullback Dallin Watene-Zelezniak (collapsed lung) were also not available. Cowboys forward Jason Tamaulolo (knee) withdrew after selection. Returning after missing the Anzac Test through injury is centre Dean Whare.

New caps (seven): Hooker Manaia Cherrington (Wests Tigers, aged 21, born in Whangarei), outside back Jordan Kahu (Brisbane Broncos, aged 24, born in Lower Hutt), utility back Tuimoana Lolohea (Warriors, aged 20, born in Auckland), forward Isaac Liu (Sydney Roosters, aged 24, born in Auckland), hooker-halfback Kodi Nikorima (Brisbane Broncos, aged 21, born in Palmerston North), wing Curtis Rona (Canterbury Bulldogs, aged 23, born in Waitara) and forward Sio Siua Taukeiako (Sydney Roosters, aged 23, born in Auckland). The first of them to play on tour will become Kiwi number 790.

Curse of the non-playing wings: Kahu and Rona beware. In recent seasons three chosen wings have not made it onto the field. Antonio Winterstein (Kiwi 764) did not play during the 2010 Four Nations and Sosaia Feki (Kiwi 788) sat out the 2014 Four Nations. They received Kiwis numbers as part of touring teams. Not so Dallin Watene-Zelezniak, who was forced out of the 2014 Four Nations by a foot injury and the 2015 Anzac Test by suspension and has yet to become an official Kiwi. Matt Duffie (Kiwi 765) was a try-scorer in the 2011 Anzac Test before his NRL career was ruined by injuries. He recently decided to try his luck in Auckland rugby union.

Biggest loss: Foran, without a doubt. His belated withdrawal, after new club Parramatta decided an elbow problem which had not prevented him from playing for old club Manly in a dozen or more NRL matches suddenly needed "seeing to". The tough 20-Test inside back would have stepped up from the vice-captaincy to lead the tourists, as well as providing the halfback experience missing from this team. He previously captained the Kiwis in the 2013 Anzac Test and against Papua New Guinea at the 2013 World Cup.

Disappearing trick: If you detected my scepticism about Foran's absence then hold that thought. The Cowboys followed their miraculous Grand Final triumph with more sleight of hand last weekend by making 112kg forward Jason Taumalolo disappear from the Kiwis team two days after it was announced. Apparently he has an injured knee. Both knees looked fine as he made 178 metres during 44 minutes of charging at the Broncos' defensive line. He was replaced by rookie Wests Tigers hooker and Junior Kiwis captain Manaia Cherrington.

Continued on next page...

Unluckiest player: Bulldogs forward Greg Eastwood was the surprise omission, both from the original team and later when Taumalolo withdrew, especially considering his outstanding success strike-rate as a Kiwi. The 28-year-old Eastwood shared in New Zealand's triumphs at the 2008 World Cup, the 2010 and 2014 Four Nations and the 2015 Anzac Test. He also has experience of English conditions through playing with the Leeds Rhinos, who the Kiwis meet in a warm-up match on October 24 (NZ time). But it was hard to argue with the selection of new caps Liu and Taukeiako.

"Kiwi" clubs: The Roosters have provided most (five) players, Roger Tuivasa-Sheck, Shaun Kenny-Dowall, Sam Moa, Liu and Taukeiako. The Broncos are next with four, Blair, Kahu, Nikorima and Alex Glenn, while Jesse Bromwich, Tahu Harris and Kevin Proctor represent the Melbourne Storm. Then come the Panthers (Whare and Lewis Brown), the Warriors (Lolohea and Ben Matulino) and Wests Tigers (Martin Taupau and replacement Manaia Cherrington) at two apiece. With one Kiwi each are Cronulla (Gerard Beale), Canterbury (Rona), Manly (Peta Hiku), St George Illawarra (Jason Nightingale) and South Sydney (Luke). The only clubs without a current Kiwi are Canberra, Gold Coast, Newcastle, North Queensland (now that Taumalolo is not going) and Parramatta.

Goal kicking vacancy: In Johnson's absence, the Kiwis have no-one who is a first-choice club goal kicker. Luke has kicked 19 goals in his 33 Tests but none since 2011. He also has 134 goals in 189 appearances for Souths but has handed the job on to Adam Reynolds in recent years. Kahu kicked two goals under pressure in this month's NRL Grand Final but has a total of only 22 goals in 35 games for the Broncos. Lolohea has kicked 13 goals in his 26 Warriors matches and Hiku can count just three goals in 68 appearances for Manly. Anyone seen goal kicking mentor Daryl Halligan?

Taking the long way: Curtis Rona left Waitara in Taranaki for Western Australia at the age of eight and lists the Joondaloo Giants as his junior club. He played age-grade football for his adopted state before spending three NYC seasons at the Roosters. Rona made his NRL debut for the North Queensland Cowboys against Manly in round 7 last year. After scoring six tries in seven games for the Townsville club he returned to Sydney to join the Canterbury Bulldogs for 2015, registering 23 tries in 25 matches and seriously threatening Parramatta's Semi Radradra for the title of top try-scorer.

Following in SBW's footsteps: Sio Siua Taukeiako's junior club was the Otara Scorpions and he was in the Warriors side which won the 2011 Holden Cup. He made his NRL debut, and solitary appearance for the Warriors, against the Dragons in the final round of 2013. He joined the Roosters in 2014 and bided his time for a season in the NSW Cup. The departure of Sonny Bill Williams provided an opening for him in the first-grade pack this year and he made the most of it by playing in all 27 matches. Taukeiaho has also represented Tonga.

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Huge Challenge in England

By Richard Becht



EVEN THE best rugby league minds battle to pinpoint why the Kiwis have been so challenged to win internationals – let alone series – in England.

All of which serves to make the coming three-Test campaign in the mother country so tantalising; and it's more appealing still because it marks a return to an old-fashioned series rather than the one-off clashes which crop up at Rugby League World Cup and Tri Nations/Four Nations level.

Apart from the original All Golds in 1907-08 – which beat Great Britain 2-1 – only two Kiwi teams have come away from the United Kingdom with a series win over Great Britain (since split into separate national sides for England, Wales and Scotland). The last of those campaigns ended in a whitewash in 2007 when a seriously understrength Kiwi side lost the first and third Tests 14-20 and 22-28 but was trounced 44-0 in the second in Hull.

The first Kiwi team to succeed was the Roy Christian-captained, Lory Blanchard-coached 1971 side which famously won the first two Tests 18-13 and 17-14 and then went on to win the following series in France. Before that every series in England had ended in defeat; 1926-27 (0-3), 1947-48 (1-2), 1951-52 (0-3), 1955-56 (1-2), 1961-62 (1-2) and 1965 (0-2 with the last Test drawn).

Of the surviving members of the 1971 squad seven had tales to share when they attended the annual ex-Kiwis' reunion in Auckland last Sunday. Christian was joined by John Whittaker – home from Rarotonga – Mike McClennan, Ken Stirling, Don Mann, Tony Krietich and Ray Williams.

After glory in 1971 the next two Kiwi touring teams squared their series 1-1 in 1980 and 1985 (each series including a draw) while there was a 1-2 reverse in 1989 and a 0-3 outcome in 1993 before the run was halted in 1998; the Frank Endacott-coached side beat Great Britain in the first two Tests only to be denied an unprecedented 3-0 sweep by a 23-23 draw in the final encounter. There was another split series in 2002 when the Kiwis won the first Test, drew the second and lost the last before the advent on a regular basis of the Tri Nations/Four Nations.

Since beating England 49-6 in Bolton at the 2000 World Cup, the Kiwis have accounted for Great Britain or England only three times in the United King-

dom so far this century; they triumphed 30-16 in the first Test against the Brits in 2002, 42-26 over the Lions in the first of two clashes en route to winning the 2005 Tri Nations title and 20-18 in the World Cup semi-final against England in 2013. Elsewhere it has been a tale of reverses and frustrations with a collection of 10 losses and draw.

Under coach Stephen Kearney the 2015 Kiwis, ranked the world's best, head to the northern hemisphere this weekend significantly affected by the loss of several experienced players for what will be an historic series, the first-ever against England after previously meeting only in World Cup and Tri/Four Nations contests.

There will be and should be expectation placed on this New Zealand side on the back of success in the Four Nations last year as well as this season's Anzac Test yet the absence of Simon Mannering, Manu Vatuvei, Kieran Foran, Shaun Johnson, Thomas Leuluai and Jason Taumalolo can't help but be a telling factor. They were all major contributors to the recent conquests.

With seven new faces in the 23-man party the Kiwis will have to adapt to and embrace the unique obstacles an England tour provides. No matter what the mind-set is, the weather becomes a factor and there's no question England lifts to a level it is rarely able to replicate on tour in Australia or New Zealand.

The venues for this year's Tests produce another challenge; the Kiwis have never beaten Great Britain or England in Hull or Wigan (where the first and third Tests will be played) while the second will provide a first-time experience playing at The Stadium, Queen Elizabeth Park in London.

These 2015 Kiwis won't be thinking about history, only about what they can control in the here and now. One way or the other it's time to buck the trend. If they do they'll make their own history earning a place alongside their 1971 and 1998 counterparts.

Richard Becht was media manager with the Kiwis from 2007-2012, joining them on three tours to England. He has been PR and communications manager with the Vodafone Warriors since 2004 and has authored numerous books including titles on rugby league greats Graham Lowe, Gary Freeman, Dean Bell, Tawera Nikau, Stacey Jones and Ruben Wiki.

Looking forward...FROM A OLD RUGBY LEAGUE FAN

By John Holloway

WELL MATE The Old Country and the old foe beckons, we look forward now to the Mighty Kiwis and their Tour of England.... A few big names missing from Kearneys Homies line up but an opportunity for some new young guns to get a foot in the door. I have a feeling that Kodi Nikorima from the Broncos and our own Tui Lolohea will be household names in the not too distant future. On the other hand our front row 3 of Jumpin Jesse Bromwich, Isaac Luke and Big Ben Matulino are as good if not better than any other combo in the world and we all know the business starts up front. No lack of punch in Takieaho, Tapau and the old school approach of Moa, Blair, Glenn, Proctor and Harris. In the rearguard newbie Curtis Rona young gun Tuivasa-Sheck, Mr Reliable Knightingale, nifties Whare and Hiku and blockbuster Kenny-Dowel won't let us down.

In saying that the "to and froms" will be a challenge on their home ground and with an experienced core in their team list. I can't help but think that the absence of key units in Mannering, Johnson, Foran, Vatuvei and Leauluai turns this partially into a development tour for our guys especially in the halves. I am comforted Sir Peter that your calm and stately qualities will be right there on tour to guide our boys. If you can find some half decent bangers I am sure you will stick on a BBQ or two with a few lashings of that half warm pommie beer to wash it down. Good luck on the Tour, bring home the Bacon brother and Kia kaha Kiwis.

Looking back....

What a great weekend Weather wise and Footy wise that was in old Sydney town for Grand Final Weekend. Mate I was involved with a terrific group of NZ guys'n'gals over in Sydney and a pretty good time was had by all. We stayed at the 4 Points Sheraton, which as usual was full of leaguies from all over. Your good friend Arwen G was cutting a swathe thru the place with a pretty lively bunch in tow. Mind you always seemed a little more subdued in the brekkie bar. Another ex Kiwi Darryl Halligan was also about retelling tall tales and true around the NRL and International footy scene.

The layout of the hotel was a bit confined due to alterations but the somewhat below the radar 11th Floor outdoor bar is Gold with a terrific view out over Darling Harbour. Not the cheapest spot for a gargle but very easy to have another for the road and another....

My people did the Rock'n'roll musical boat trip up the harbour on GF Day and it went off bigtime with the packed crowd on board. Noted ex kangaroos hardmen Manlys Mark "Spud" Carrol and The Storm stalwart Robbie Kearns in the thick of it with our own ex Kiwi Bulldogs blockbusting centre Willie Talau who was a guest of our group. Our mob was divided in our loyalties for the match The Moate Brothers Big Frank, Teina, Temu, Daniel and Te Ariki were all over the Brissie Broncos but the Cowboy cohorts which included Austin Whittaker (yep Ex Kiwi, Johns Whittakers brother) and the energetic Englebrechtsens to say nothing of my goodself had the last say. What an enthralling match it was, fast and open to start but soon becoming tight tense and a trial of strength. When the Townsville Terriers bombed those second half opportunities I thought their day was done but they saved the heroics till the final second, unbelievable...the drama stayed at fever pitch when JT hit the upright then it erupted for the cattle rustlers with their main mans winning droppie. There was natural euphoria for virtual rookie Coach Paul Green and the multi award winning Thurston and his gang but you had to recognise another brilliant first year back effort from the master Coach Bennett who is looking (and acting) more like Clint Eastwoods Dirty Harry every season. Hodgo didn't get the Fairy Tale finish to a memorable Broncos career but that will soon be just a small blip on a fine legacy. Ben Hunt on the other hand just starting really and will want to put his super embarrassing blooper behind him in years to come, fair to say his hugely talented contribution throughout the 26 rounds was a major part of them even getting to the final. Put money on it, his partnership with his other half Milf Milford will be chock full of entertainment and match-winning potential for us fans of the great game in times to come.

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Jumped on the silver bird on the Monday and found myself sitting beside an old Richmond team-mate Ex Kiwi and noted international Coach Mike McLennan plus his boy also no mean coach in his own right Brian “Bluey” McLennan. Bluey had the ears on relaxing with a movie but Mike had some interesting observations on the Final, Bennetts strategies and league in general. Made for a quick and entertaining trip. A couple of hard case stories surfaced but as they say what goes on tour stays on tour! Altogether a very enjoyable weekend and looks like your reunion with your Kiwi Kobbbers from the 2005 Tri nations team turned into a top notch affair as well Sir Pete. Obviously they all appreciated your usual massive effort in putting the do together. Cant wait for 2016 to get here and yet again follow the fortunes of the Mighty Vodafone Warriors as they lead us the merry dance chasing the dream at that Big Dance in October.



John Holloway “networking” on tour.

Words of Wisdom from Nigel Vagana

I get a few thank you emails but after the 2005 Kiwis Reunion in Sydney before the Grand Final I got one from a great former Kiwi, and Vodafone Warrior, Nigel Vagana. It is written from someone who is obviously very close to his teammates, but even so, you will recognise who he is talking about. It was just too good not to share...

HHEY BUTCH: Just a quick thank you. It was great to catch up with the old faces who helped shape what we see today. Appreciate all you did in getting it over the line. It was also good to see that even over time....some things never change!

Namely....

- Paul Rah still heckling
- Manu still laughing at nothing
- Stacey still turning into Monkey after 10pm
- Pat Carthy still fogging up his glasses
- Rubes still on the kava lattes
- Bluey still deaf
- Pauly, Fats and Shonny still back-dooring it
- Kiddy still the undercover brother from another
- Franky P still sipping with a hole in the glass
- Bronson still the baby but still looking after everyone
- Willy H still wearing his Kiwi gear everywhere
- Nath Cayless still looking for his brother
- Butch still swearing like a drunken sailor
- Dave Sol still got his 6 pack.....of chips
- Sia still looking like he from Zamunda
- The Marist boys Roy and Motu still missing in action
- And last but not least can't forget Awen.....still the dodgy businessman....!

Nice weekend boys... Ae soleeeeeeeeeeeee... Nigel Vagana



Why I Love the Kiwis

By David Kemey



IT'S TOUGH being a bit of a freak in New Zealand. Sure I get up and watch the All Blacks at the Rugby World Cup, but the truth is, I'm just not that bothered by rugby. Never have been, never will be.

The Kiwis, well that's a different story.

There's something in our make-up that tends to have us Kiwis rooting for the underdog, and ever since I saw the Sorenson brothers, I've loved the Kiwis.

But at the moment we aren't underdogs, we are on top of the world rankings. Every dog has its day, and every day we sit there, and Aussie don't, is just fine by me.

My favourite Kiwis win of all time, and I swear I am not pissing in Peter's pocket, was the 24-0 hiding we dished out to Australia to win the Gillette Tri-Nations back in 2005, a side the Butch was footy manager of.

No one gave us a chance in hell. It's like the old football chant: No one likes us, we don't care!

But because our recent form has been so good, it's something of an odd feeling. I'd gotten used to the hidings, the Anzac test drubbings, and now we actually expect the boys in the black and white to deliver.

With that expectation comes pressure, and the number of injuries means this trip to England has the potential to go badly wrong.

And you know what, even if it does, I'd still be firmly in the Kiwis camp.

All I expect is that every player who wears our famous jersey gives 100 per cent, that they leave it all out there, and that they go down, if indeed they do, fighting.

That's because all those players who have worn the jersey before, men like the Sorensens, Lindsay Proctor, Ruben Wiki, Nigel Vagana, Stacey Jones, Dean Lonergan, Roy Christian, Des White, hell, take your pick, always gave exactly that.

The simple truth is that you can not win all the time, but the equally simple truth is that the Kiwis jersey has to matter to the players as much as it matters to the fans.

Time to add to the legacy, the rich history of our wonderful Kiwis.

Go well boys, and if someone can stick a decent hit on Sam Tomkins, I won't be too upset either.

As much as we, here at the newsletter, wish the Kiwis all the best we also want to wish the All Blacks the best for their next game against France on Sunday morning.



Go the All Blacks!

KIWIS HELPING DEVELOP OUR GAME ABROAD - CANADA

By Duane Fyfe - Our Roving Reporter

WHEN CATCHING up with Jamie at a training session with the Ontario based Canadian squad in Burlington, I asked what was his biggest challenge in re-establishing the code here in Canada. "Surprisingly, it is the limited training and playing fields available to us. When not under snow they are being resown during the spring then there is field allocation priority to those sports that have been using the fields the longest. As newcomers we are often struggling to secure the fields we need."

The geographical size of the country and cost of travel also restricts inter-provincial matches with British Columbia and Alberta and the Wolverine players selected for national honours train separately before coming together before game day.

"Rugby League is not yet a recognized sport in Canada," Jamie explains. "To meet the criteria we need to have the code established in all provinces and provide playing opportunities for players with disabilities, women and juniors. It is something we want to work towards but it will take time and resources."

Presently the Wolverines are preparing for the second match and decider against the USA for the Colonial Cup championship, this game being played this Sunday with the added challenge of again being on US soil. Further on from that match is the important America Region World Cup qualifying tournament being held this December in Florida. This will determine which team out of Canada, USA and Jamaica will progress to the 2017 Rugby League World Cup. For this tournament Jamie will step back into an Assistant Coach role as Canadian born Aaron Zimmerle who presently coaches Tweed Heads in the Queensland Cup will take up the Head Coach position.

In the meantime this full time Physical Education teacher with a young family has plenty of rugby league to look forward to. Those who value the growth of rugby league internationally should happily accept the loss of this fine young Rugby League Ambassador from New Zealand, as Canada's gain.

Follow www.canadarugbyleague.com or their Facebook page Canada Wolverines Rugby League to follow their progress.



Canadian Wolverines logo.



Jamie (centre) coaching the National squad in preparation for this week's International against the USA.



Jamie Lester hitting the ball up as Captain Coach for the Canadian Rugby League team 2011..

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Bulls Adopt Siege Mentality Ahead of Auckland Final

By Will Evans - Canterbury Rugby League

THE FIRST part of the job has been taken care of – qualifying for the NZRL National Premiership final – but Rockcote Canterbury Bulls coach Darrell Coad knows vast improvement is required from his side if they are to reverse their home loss to Counties-Manukau Stingrays a fortnight ago and successfully defend their title at Mt Smart Stadium on Saturday.

Adopting something of a siege mentality will play a part in the Bulls' preparations for their trip to Auckland for the televised decider.

The Bulls notched a comfortable 56-20 win over bottom-placed Northern Swords in Whangarei to clinch second spot on the ladder, finishing level with the Stingrays on 12 competition points but well behind in the for-and-against stakes.

It was another patchy display from the Bulls, but Coad was pleased, first and foremost, that his charges got the job done with the burden of needing a victory to reach the final hanging over them.

"When you get into those sorts of situations it is easy to put too much pressure on yourself, but we realised we had a job at hand to go up there and get the two points," Coad said.

"The boys prepared really well. A little bit disappointing in the second half, but they still played really well.

"There's a little bit to work on, but overall I was really happy with their performance."

Phil Nati, who was 18th man for the Stingrays game before getting the call-up at lock for the injured Aga Fiso ahead of the Whangarei road trip, was the clear standout, causing constant headaches for the Swords' defence with his dynamic ball-running and second-phase play.

The Bulls have consistently struggled in the period after halftime in 2015. It proved crucial in the 26-20 loss to the Stingrays, who piled on three unanswered tries early in the second stanza in Christchurch, and was an issue again in their clash with Northern.

Coad is at a loss to explain the weekly lapses – but he is determined to rectify before Saturday's decider.

"I'm not too sure why that is," the coach admitted.

"I think maybe it has something to do with the interchanges, whether we're just making some changes at the wrong time or we need to look at getting another impact player on there during those early stages of the second half.

"It's something that we talked about and it's something that we'll work through at training."

Coad, who played 10 seasons for Halswell Hornets and coached the club for two, said the intensity had ramped up noticeably at Bulls training in the lead-up to the final.

"We didn't talk too much about last weekend, I just let them know that I was pretty disappointed that we let (the Swords) score 20 points against us.

"I felt as though once again they drifted out of the game in the second half, but they won't be able to do that this weekend.

"They were really positive last night (at training). Good warm-up, we just went through some skill-set stuff. We trained through till about 20 past eight last night and we'll hopefully get another good session in on Thursday."

Continued on next page...



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The coach fired back with a one-word answer when asked what Canterbury needed to do to turn the tables on top-ranked Counties-Manukau after being outplayed a fortnight ago.

“Defence,” Coad said.

“It’s something we’ve been working on over the last month, so hopefully this weekend the penny drops and we can be really assertive on defence and get up and knock them over, stop them offloading the football.

“We need to make sure that we’re doing all the little things right and putting our best foot forward to stop (the Stingrays) from scoring points.”

Providing the Bulls with a huge boost is the return of several key performers from injury. Gun halfback Tevin Arona, who missed the Stingrays clash as well as the final-round match against the Swords, is a certain starter, while backrower Fiso and hooker Alani Kakoi will be back on deck after resting some niggles last weekend.

Blockbusting fullback Erwin Sauni, the Bulls’ best player for most of the 2015 campaign, made a successful return against Northern after sitting out the Counties-Manukau fixture.

Nati has been named on the bench with Fiso returning for the final, as has Izic Placid, who featured in the halves in the past two matches with Arona unavailable.

While the Stingrays defeat cost the Bulls a potential opportunity to host the final at AMI Stadium, travelling to Auckland, going into camp together and returning to the scene of their 2014 success may ultimately prove more beneficial for the reigning champs, using that siege mentality to their advantage.

“It’s always nice to play at home in front of your own crowd, but it’s always good to beat them up on their home soil in a final, isn’t it?” Coad asserted.

“There’s lots to play for, there’s New Zealand Residents jerseys and obviously winning the competition, so even though we’re travelling away we’re really looking forward to getting up there and having a fair crack.”

Coad dismissed any notion that the Bulls had anything to prove after the controversial conclusion to last year’s premiership, which saw Counties-Manukau and Akarana disqualified for fielding ineligible players, or that the resulting furore was providing further motivation for this weekend’s showdown.

The coach did declare, however, that Canterbury’s desire to win the competition was burning just as fiercely as it was 12 months ago, when the red-and-blacks thumped Wai-Coa-Bay 40-8 in the final to claim a maiden premiership triumph for Southern Zone.

“Our motivation is just winning it. (Going back-to-back) is something that’s in the back of minds, but we’ve just got to try and put all that sort of rubbish (from last year) to the side and concentrate on doing as best as we can and making sure that it all works out well on Saturday.”

Keep up with what’s happening on the Kiwis tour.
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National Premiership Grand Final



Vs



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- Rounds boxed: 55
- Height: 193cm Reach: 197cm
- Born: Auckland, New Zealand
- Ranked WBO #6, WBA #13, WBC #15 in the world
- Holds WBO Oriental, WBA-PABA Interim and NZ National Boxing Federation Heavyweight titles
- Youngest heavyweight in the world top 10



Kali Meehan

- Record: 42 (32KO) L:5
- Age: 45
- Rounds boxed: 201
- Height: 196cm
- Born: Auckland
- Resides: Wyongah, NSW
- Has fought for WBO world heavyweight title, losing a 12-round split decision to Lamon Brewster in 2004.
- Fought Hasim Rahman in WBC and IBF title eliminator bout at Madison Square Garden in 2004, losing by 4th round KO.
- Fought Ruslan Chagaev in WBA heavyweight title eliminator in 2010, losing a 12-round decision.
- Won 2014 Super 8 title, KO'ing Michael Sprott in the final
- Beat Shane Cameron via unanimous decision for the vacant WBA Pan African heavyweight title in November 2014.

Tonight on SKY Arena

i a Rāpare/Thursdays 8:30pm on

MĀORI
TELEVISION

code

TONIGHTS GUESTS - EP.25

BEN MATULINO

NZ Kiwi

TUIMOALA LOLOHEA

NZ Kiwi

TAWERA NIKAU

RUBEN WIKI

MATUA PARKINSON

AWEN GUTTENBEIL

KARL TE NANA

REWA HARRIMAN

Former CODE Presenters

BRAZILIAN DIVAS

Dance Demo

SONS OF ZION

MODERN MAORI QUARTET

Bands



NAU MAI HAERE MAI

Join the crew this week and enjoy the top class guests on the CODE couch.

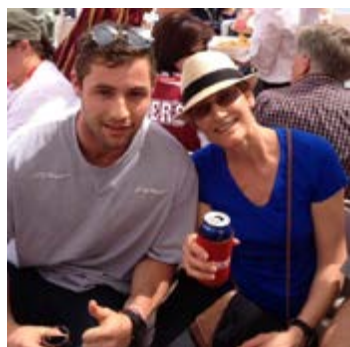
Scintillating conversation. . . laughs. . . irreverent reporting. . . giggles. . . and dangerous demos. . . yeah right!

**Lock it in 8:30pm Thursdays
MEAN MAORI MEAN!**

Couple more pictures from last weeks NRL Grand Final...



Ex Kiwi John Whittaker
brother Austin
Whittaker and Martin
O'Sullivan.



Parke and Bridget
Englebrechtsen in Sydney
for the grand final.



My mate Graham from
Vodafone thinks he is
Shaun Johnson.



Vodafone Warriors
fans these products
are coming your way
soon pocket tissues,
tissue boxes and
tooth brushes.

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

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The Newsletter Team

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