



Kiwis UK Tour Special

12th November 2015

Newsletter #98

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2nd Test: England versus Kiwis



SO NOW it is all about preparing for the deciding third test, which is already a sell-out, to be played in Wigan. We are locked at one each, and there are plenty of people who said we would not even achieve that, with our rookie team. But the winner of the final test takes it all.

We go into it with the chance of snatching the series, and I would not bet against it, with training going well.

On Wednesday the boys are at the training ground of Liverpool FC. If you think rugby is big at home you ain't seen nothing, because the Premier League football teams over here command enormous media attention. The papers are full of it every day.

It won't be our only experience of football grounds because the DW Stadium venue for the final test is the home of the Wigan Athletic, and of course we hold our captain's run there on Friday.

On Thursday we travel to Manchester for the International Series dinner, to be held at the Imperial War Museum, with both sides in attendance.

The big highlight of Friday will be the test dinner, where there is always a special guest to present the players with their jerseys.

Terrible Bus Ride

To say we had an eventful week in London with the Kiwis would be an understatement.

I have already told you about the terrible trip we had on the bus back from Hull to London, but to recap, I have never seen anything like it, bumper to bumper.

It was so bad we abandoned the bus in favour of the tube – the underground train. We took two

different trains and still made it to our hotel 90 minutes before the bus.

Players Get The Blues But Result Gives Us A lift

During the week we had a couple of players down with the flu, and another with a nasty bug.

But training went well and there was a confident mood going into the second test.

What a game it turned out to be. It was all about defence, with England and the Kiwis locked up at just 2-2 at halftime, before we got home 9-2.

Even though the game was dominated by defence - with only one try – it was still captivating.

The defence was courageous from both sides, with Lewis Brown's tackle on Tom Burgess at the end of the first half one of the best I have ever seen.

The Kiwis forced 14 repeat sets but England's defence held, and I could not tell you when I last saw an effort like that.

Our bench was magnificent. Martin Taupau, Brown and Alex Glenn gave their all, and Ben Matulino had a much better game than a week earlier.

Tohu Harris was incredible, playing 80 minutes and setting up the Kiwis only try, catching a pass off his bootlaces before sending Shaun Kenny-Dowall over.

I could not care less about some of the press, which said it was terrible spectacle, because winning ugly is just fine by me.

A Much Better Bus Ride

The trip to the hotel on the bus was nothing like the journey after Hull. That was like being in a

morgue, this time Issac Luke had the music sorted, and there was plenty of celebration.

One man who will be proud is former Vodafone Warrior and Kiwi Ali Lauitiiti, who presented the players with their jerseys.

He played for my Mangere East Hawks and after departing the Warriors and a 19 Kiwis test career for two-and-a-half years with the Leeds Rhinos, ended up doing seven, playing 196 games and scoring more than 60 tries on his way to four Super League titles.

Bus Gets The Boot

The management team decided they had seen enough of buses and we all travelled to Liverpool by train, catching the Virgin Buccaneer. A journey that would have taken around five hours by coach was halved. The train was amazing, the players able to get up and move around, visit the snack bar, and take in the scenery.

It was more work for the management team though. They spent the entire journey welded to their computers reviewing the second test and working on a game plan that will secure the series.

I for one was not sorry to see the back of the bus. Even so, we have been told that the 40 minute journey we have been making to training by bus, will take even longer at the weekend, and so we have been told to leave early for the final test.

If I never see another bus again it will be too soon for me.



Wigan Makes Us Welcome

Our first forays into training were at the training facilities of the Wigan Warriors, and what a fantastic facility it is. The club did everything to make us welcome, and even put on a meal for us.

In the players' lounge there is a full-on kitchen complete with a chef, who cooks the players breakfast and lunch, so diet is constantly monitored.

And I was delighted to see in the club gym a huge portrait of Wigan players enjoying the hospitality of the Vodafone Warriors, working out in our gym during their visit to New Zealand last year.

Even after good food at the training ground we still managed a fabulous dinner at the Meet Argentinian restaurant, a terrific steakhouse.

It was a brilliant feed and I got to tell you, when a butcher rates the meat, it's good.

Video Career Hits A snag

Check out my Facebook page – Sir Peter Charles Leitch. I have been doing videos and I have to admit, I have even surprised myself. One of them has clocked up more than 300,000 views.

But my interview with Wigan coach Shaun Wane won't be matching that. I did what I thought was a one of my best interviews ever with a fantastic man. He's clever, generous, knows more about league than most people, just a fantastic bloke who is also incredibly funny.

Only I had the camera on camera, not video. Oops.

Sam Tomkins Drops By

It was a pleasure to see former

Vodafone Warrior and now Wigan Warrior Sam Tomkins. He dropped by to catch up with some of the boys, fresh from more surgery on his knee, and he will be out until at least Easter.

He especially asked me to pass on a message that he will never forget his time in New Zealand, the warmth with which he was received, and the generosity of Kiwis.

Burgess Hogs The Headlines

Meanwhile all the talk in England is about Sam Burgess going back to league. He is a bit like Jonah Lomu was to Kiwis, an absolute mega-star. To be fair, he is taking a lashing in some quarters about not sticking with rugby, and being a bit of a sook by going back to league.

The argument is that he was not tough enough to stick with it at this rugby club, Bath, and complete his rugby contract.

Easy to say from behind a typewriter.

Send The Kiwis Your Support

Remember, you can send an email wishing the Kiwis all the best to nadene@nzrl.co.nz.

Curtis Goes Home

Full credit to the management team for releasing young Curtis Rona so he could travel home to be with his partner, who is having their first child.

It was incredibly emotional as he said goodbye to the boys, talking about how much he had enjoyed the experience of being in the squad, how much he had learned, and how committed he was to the Kiwis and our Black and White jersey.

But, probably an outside chance for the test, I think it was absolutely the right thing to let him go home, because the Kiwis values are all about the importance of family, and that is not just the Kiwi family, but our families at home.

He may not have made the tests but he did make a valuable contribution to the wider squad, and I don't think we have heard the last of Curtis.

The Bulldogs centre or wing has a huge future, and it was a pleasure to be around him.

World Series Tickets On Sale

Tickets to see the best league teams from both sides of the world in the 2016 World Club Series have gone on sale.

The expanded tournament goes into its second year after a successful first year, and will see Super League teams Leeds, Wigan and St Helens face the top three NRL teams – the Cowboys, Broncos and Roosters in February.

St Helens and the Roosters play on February 19 at Langtree Park – 40 years on from the first ever World Club Challenge, which involved both teams.

February 20 sees the two runners up in their respective Grand Finals, Wigan and the Broncos, at the DW Stadium. And on February 21 the Super League champions and treble winners Leeds face the NRL Premiers the Cowboys at Headingley Carnegie Stadium.

Tickets for St Helens-Roosters are available at <https://ticketing.saints-rlfc.com/login.aspx>

Tickets for Wigan-Broncos at www.wiganWarriors.com

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Tickets for Leeds-Cowboys at www.leedsrugby.com

A package for all three games can be purchased at www.rugbyleaguetickets.co.uk

Cowboys Fans Can Grab A tour

The Official Cowboys Supporters Tour commences in London with fully guided sight-seeing as well as great experiences such as touring Wembley and Lords, with lunch at the famous Lords Tavern. The tour will also attend a Premier League match, travel to Leeds, the league heartland of the north, and where the Cowboys match is to be played. The tour also takes in a Cowboys training session and options to attend the Roosters and Broncos matches.

To see the full itinerary and details click here

Posh Do At The House Of Commons

The Rugby League Business Network and their guests visited the Palace of Westminster ahead of the second test.

As well as drinks on the House of Commons terrace, those attending were entertained by BBC Sport pundits Eorl Crabtree and Robbie Hunter-Paul.

Network director Mark Ramsdale said it was a terrific night and our old friend and former Kiwi Hunter-Paul reckoned it was a pleasure to meet league fans in Parliament. "There should be more of this kind of thing in our sport. It provides a great opportunity for the game, and for the people in the network."

Founded in 2014, the Rugby League Business Network is a not-for-profit organisation created

to bring business people together through league to support one another and the game. It is free to join and currently has more than 1300 members.

Kiwis Prove A Drawcard

International Rugby League returned to London last Saturday with a crowd of 44,393 at the test between England and New Zealand at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Stadium. The game was also watched by almost two million people live on the BBC, making it the most watched UK sport event on TV over the weekend.

It was the first time the stadium had hosted league and the event clearly appealed to fans from all over the country, with more than 60 percent of the crowd coming from London and the South East of England.

RFL Chief Executive Nigel Wood said: "The prospects for league in London have never been better. Our research suggests there are about 10 million people in the UK with an interest in league and a fifth of them live in London and the South East."

The series comes to a climax on Saturday (November 14) at the DW Stadium in Wigan that is already sold out.

Ref Decided

Ben Thaler has been appointed referee for the third test in Wigan on Saturday, with Gerard Sutton as the video referee. A three-man appointments panel made the decision after reviewing the performances of the refs in the opening two games of the series. They determined both had done an outstanding job but that Thaler would be the man in the middle and Sutton the video referee.

Injured Players All On Course

Injured Vodafone Warriors Manu Vatuvei, Thomas Leuluai, Shaun Johnson and Ben Henry are all on target to for the 2016 season kick-off.

Manu is running and should resume full training early next year after surgery on his shoulder. Ben played just four matches before his 2015 season was ended by a knee injury and Thomas suffered the same injury 10 games. Both return to full training in the New Year.

Shaun's recovery is also on schedule. He had two screws removed from his left ankle last week and is set to start running later this month.

Only back rower Sione Lousi and 2015 Vodafone Junior Warriors captain Toafofoa Siple are expected to miss the start of the 2016 season. Sione could be out for four to six months after needing more surgery on a wrist injury, while Toafofoa needed a full knee reconstruction, and starts running next month.

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AT THE 2ND KIWIS VS ENGLAND TEST

Some of the Kiwi fans at the game on Saturday.



This is some of the sign-age being used at the games and to promote the game around town.



We weren't short of fans at the game on Sunday.



Where ever we go we find Vodafone Warriors fans.



More Vodafone Warriors fans.



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- **Professor Ross Lawrenson**
Medical Researcher
- **Mr Allan Bennett**
Patient

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Tuesday 24 November
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Edgar Centre, Dunedin

Light Refreshments provided

Speakers:

- **Dr Serge Luke and Dr Alastair Hepburn**
Urologists
- **Dr Shaun Costello**
Radiation Oncologist
- **Mr Ron Brass**
Patient

Please register by email to melissa@prostate.org.nz or call Melissa at **0800 477 678** before Friday 20 November

Second Test

By Barry Ross



AUSTRALIAN FANS were pleased to see New Zealand tie the series in London on Saturday. After their 26-12 victory in the first Test at Hull, England went into this game knowing a win would give them the series. This put a lot of pressure on the Kiwis but they were up to the task. The defence from both teams was outstanding and this, along with the wet conditions, made try scoring difficult, with just the one four pointer in the 80 minutes. On saying this, the handling was excellent, and there was plenty of attacking play out wide. Although New Zealand won by just 9-2, they were the better side and probably should have scored at least two more tries.

The Kiwi forwards were impressive and each one of the starting six did plenty of hard work in the tight play. The bench carried this on when their turn came. An illustration of this came just before halftime when Lewis Brown, who had come on for Issac Luke, stopped Tom Burgess when the big English forward looking like scoring. Still only 23, Tohu Harris was magnificent all over the field. His finger tip handling allowed Shaun Kenny-Dowall to score the game's only try and his defence was rock solid for the entire 80 minutes. He rightly was singled out for praise by coach, Stephen Kearney, after the game.

Adam Blair continued his good form of this year. The Bronco forward made more than 40 tackles and was always a threat with his powerful runs at the edges of the rucks. Blair, who was playing his 33rd Test for New Zealand, turns 30 soon after the start of the 2016 season, but he still has plenty to offer the Broncos and his country.

As usual, Issac Luke was a danger around the rucks. The English TV commentators selected him as their Man of the Match. To have someone with his clever skills at the coalface of most rucks is a big problem for his opponents.

One player I must give a wrap to is Jason Nightingale. He is the complete winger in both attack and defence, while he is even more valuable with his ability to make metres from the play the ball when he moves into to dummy half to help his forwards. He does this often and in this Test, he did it six or more times. Jason always gives 80 minutes of proactive football in every game he plays. In the 74th minute of this Test, the Dragons player did some good work 20 metres out from the English line that should have

resulted in a try and three minutes or so later, he made a crunching and driving one-on-one tackle on his opposite number, Joe Burgess, which stopped the Englishman in his tracks 20 metres out from the England line. Like Adam Blair, Jason also turns 30 next year but it is late in the season, during the final series in September. He was playing his 27th Test and has scored 16 tries in these matches. For St. George/Illawarra, Jason is on the verge of reaching the 200 first grade games mark. At the end of the 2015 season, Jason had played 197 games in the top grade and has 86 tries to his credit. Four months ago, he signed a new deal with the Dragons that will see him remain with the club until the end of the 2017 season. Barring any serious injuries, he could pass the 100 first grade tries figure.

Coach Kearney selected 20 year old Brisbane Broncos half, Kodi Nikorima to start the match and that proved a good decision. Nikorima and his five eighth partner, Peta Hiku played well, but watching from afar, I believe that New Zealand would have already won the series if the injured Shaun Johnson and Kieran Foran, were the halves combination. These two world class players have been really missed, but I must also give credit to Nikorima and Hiku for doing a good job under difficult circumstances far away from home.

The commentators made an interesting point when Kenny-Dowall scored New Zealand's try. They revealed that Shaun's father, John Dowall, had won a Gold Medal in the Javelin at the Paralympics. John did this at Sydney 2000, where he won a Gold in the F44 Javelin and a Silver in the F44 Shot Put for New Zealand. He also competed in the 1996 Paralympics.

The crowd figures for the three Tests in this current series have been great. The figure at Hull for the first Test was 23,393, then at London on Saturday the crowd was 44,393. That is impressive when the poor London weather leading up to the match is considered. Already there is a sell-out of 25,100 for the third and deciding Test at Wigan this coming Saturday.

KIWIS FACE 107-YEAR HOODOO

By John Coffey QSM



THE 9-2 result in London last weekend provides Stephen Kearney's Kiwis with a chance to become only the fourth New Zealand team to win a three-Test series on British soil, after the 1907-08 All Golds and the 1971 and 1998 Kiwis. Only the All Golds clinched their overall success with a third-Test victory. The 1971 and 1998 sides had won the first two matches before respectively losing and drawing the third.

So a 107-year hoodoo needs to be put to rest at Wigan on Sunday morning (NZ time). Six previous Kiwis sides have failed to achieve this, in 1947-48, 1961, 1980, 1985, 1989 and 2002. The 1947-48, 1961 and 1989 tourists lost their series 2-1, while their 1980, 1985 and 2002 counterparts at least drew their series. Some of the more dramatic third-Test headlines on previous tours were:

First series decider (1907-08 at Cheltenham): The original and privately-organised All Golds had lost the first Test to the Northern Union 6-14 at Headingley, and won the second 18-6 at Stamford Bridge, Chelsea. The decider was scheduled for another unlikely venue, the Cheltenham Athletic Ground in Gloucestershire, far from the game's heartland. Financially, it was not a successful promotion, with bad weather restricting the attendance to about 4000. There was no chance for the All Golds to repeat the spectacular play of the previous week, and the British led 5-0 at halftime. That was still the score 10 minutes from fulltime when Wellington forward Tom Cross was sent off for punching. But a try to Dally Messenger and brilliant sideline goal by Edgar Wrigley tied the scores. With time fast running out the All Golds forced a scrum near the Northern Union goal-line and Otago forward William (Massa) Johnston picked up the heavy ball and plunged across to secure a series-winning 8-5 victory.

The Strike Tour (1926-27 at Headingley, Leeds): The first tour of Britain by a NZRL team (officially named the All Blacks) was undermined by disputes between coach Ernest Mair, a Queenslander, and seven of the 12 forwards. Twice the dissenting players were cut from the team and at one stage Mair was stood down by the English Rugby League. Backs bravely stepped up to support the five remaining forwards. With injuries further depleting numbers, the survivors completed a 35-match tour through a severe British winter. The previous Tests had been lost 20-28 at Wigan and 11-21 at Hull. At Headingley, the 19 "loyal" players were angry the ERL had given the "strikers" money to tide them over during the long boat trip home. Strike action of their own was threatened as they sat in the dressing room until captain Bert Avery talked them around. They lost 17-32, winning only one scrum in every six. Back in New Zealand, 19 players were given loyalty medals and the seven dissenting forwards suspended for life. The disqualifications were ended by another NZRL board in 1962.

Try-scoring front-row (1955-56 at Headingley, Leeds): Only once in the history of Test rugby league have all three front-row forwards been among the try-scorers. Props Lory Blanchard and Henry Maxwell and hooker Jock Butterfield all touched down as the Kiwis defied all predictions to win 28-13. No other England or Great Britain team had lost to another country in 14 matches at Headingley dating back to the 1907-08 All Golds, and the current team had comfortably beaten the Kiwis in the earlier Tests at Swinton (25-6) and Bradford (27-12). West Coaster Butterfield started out as a second-rower but swapped positions with hooker and clubmate Trevor Kilkelly earlier in the tour and remained there for the rest of his great 99-match, 36-Test international career. Blanchard, from Canterbury, was a no-frills hooker-prop who later coached the 1971 Grand Slam Kiwis, while Aucklander Maxwell intimidated and frequently ran over his rivals. Loose forward Rex Percy and backs Vern Bakalich and Keith Roberts scored the other tries and Pat Creedy kicked five goals.

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Goal of the Century (1985 at Elland Road, Leeds): Having won the opening Test 24-22 across town at Headingley and lost the second 8-25 at Wigan, the Graham Lowe-coached Kiwis were held to a 6-6 draw in the decider at Elland Road. The sideline penalty converted by British prop Lee Crooks two minutes from fulltime was later declared to be British rugby league's "goal of the century". Australian referee Barry Gomersall hammered the Kiwis 18-7 in the penalty count and twice sin-binned rugged Kiwis second-rower Kurt Sorensen. Kiwis captain Mark Graham had been an inspiring figure on tour, ignoring a broken cheekbone and damaged ankle at Headingley to lead his team back onto the field after halftime before finally succumbing to his injuries. He could not play in the losing second Test, and he was the only try-scorer at Elland Road. But Crooks' three penalty goals – the last of them awarded when Gomersall controversially penalised Gary Prohm for punching – were enough to cost the Kiwis a series triumph.

Kiwis captain dropped (1993 at Headingley, Leeds): Kiwis coach Howie Tamati sensationally dropped tour captain Gary Freeman and replaced him with Canterbury half Aaron Whittaker for the third Test. Great Britain had already won decisively at Wembley (17-0) and Wigan (29-12). Freeman was a professional with Sydney club Eastern Suburbs and Whittaker an amateur at Christchurch club Halswell. Stephen Kearney, playing just his fourth Test, became New Zealand's youngest Test captain at 21. Tamati also left out experienced hooker Duane Mann and wing Sean Hoppe, replacing them with Denvour Johnston and Jason Williams. In 1965 another Canterbury half, Bob Irvine, played the third Test ahead of tour captain, Bill Snowden, who was troubled by a groin injury. Ironically, Tamati himself had been displaced (after 19 consecutive Tests) by Canterbury hooker Wayne Wallace for the third Test of the 1985 tour. Both the 1965 (9-9) and 1985 (6-6) third Tests were drawn. In 1993, however, the home team won 29-10 to complete a clean sweep.

Our most costly draw (1998 at Vicarage Road, Watford): Frank Endacott's 1998 team has the distinction of being the only Kiwis side to leave Britain with an unbeaten Test record. Captained by prop Quentin Poncia, they started with a 22-16 victory at Huddersfield and clinched the series with a handsome 36-16 win at Bolton. But they dropped their guard in the closing stages of the third match. After trailing 2-10 at halftime, a Kiwis' revival was led by brothers Henry and Robbie Paul. At 23-16, and time running out, they declined an easy penalty goal with the intention to keep the ball and wind down the clock. But possession was lost on the first play, Britain attacked, and scrum-half Tony Smith darted over for a try which was converted by Andy Farrell. The Kiwis still led 23-22 into injury time, only for Smith to kick the first field goal of his career. The Lions celebrated the 23-23 draw as if they had won, while the series-winning Kiwis sank to the ground in despair. New Zealand's wait for a three-nil series triumph on British soil goes on.

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Check out Sir Peter Leitch's Facebook page. There are some great interviews with the boys on tour. Click the Facebook logo to check them out.



Kearney Now Our Most Winning Coach

By John Coffey QSM



STEPHEN KEARNEY is now our most successful Test coach from a winning point of view. Last weekend's 9-2 victory over England at London's Olympic Stadium was his twenty-third in charge of the Kiwis.

Of course, Kearney already had claims to the title as the mentor behind New Zealand's first World Cup triumph in 2008 and the Four Nations successes of 2010 and 2014. After 40 Test matches since 2008, he has coached the Kiwis for a longer consecutive period and in more Tests than any coach in the game's history.

The previous holder for the records of most Tests (35) and wins (22) were held by Frank Endacott, whose term extended from 1994 to 2000. Both took Kiwis squads to two World Cup tournaments and Endacott coached New Zealand against Australia and Great Britain at the inaugural Tri-Nations series in 1999. They are also the only New Zealand coaches to beat Australia in Anzac Tests.

But "Happy Frank" still leads Kearney for the most prized statistic of all from a coach's viewpoint. His career record from 35 Tests was 22 wins, two draws and 11 losses, a winning percentage of 65.7. Kearney can currently count 40 Tests for 23 wins, one draw and 16 losses for a winning percentage of 58.7.

Endacott's Kiwis had the mastery of their British opponents, not least during a clean sweep of the 1996 three-Test series at home and the two-nil (with one draw) away series in 1998. Kearney's team, of course, can claim a 2-1 Test series victory at Wigan on Sunday morning (NZ time).

Footnote: The 44,393 attendance at the Olympic Stadium was a record for a single Test match between England and New Zealand on British soil. It surpassed the 42,680 at the third Test of the 1947-48 tour at Bradford's Odsal Stadium. There was a larger crowd at the 2014 England v New Zealand World Cup semi-final at Wembley Stadium but that was part of a double header also involving Australia and Fiji.



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ON A BUS TOUR OF LONDON



ON TOUR



We took the train from London to Liverpool on Monday to break the travel as the guys were getting a bit board with all the coach trips and it was a lot quicker.



The coaching team spent the whole train trip working on there laptops analysing the game while the players chilled out.



We caught the tube to catch our train very good service on the tube.

Was great to catch up with former Vodafone Warrior Sam Tomkins at training on Tuesday he had come out of hospital on Friday having his leg done and will not play until Easter next year.

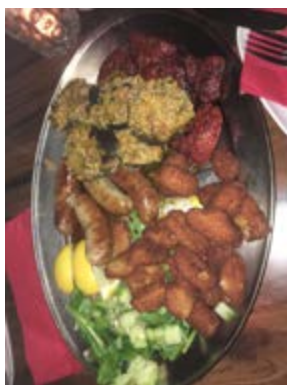


Was great to see this photo of the Wigan Warriors in the Vodafone Warriors gym in their players lounge the photo was taken when they came out to NZ to play us in Hamilton.

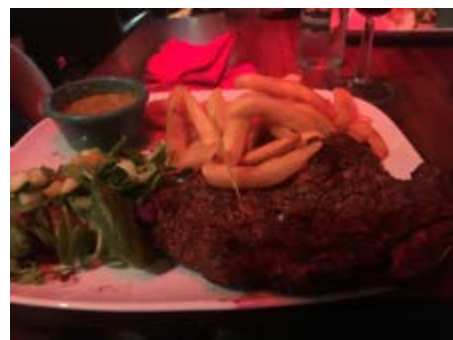
ON TOUR



On Tuesday night we went to a Argentinian Restaurant which was fantastic plenty of meat.



Our entrée of sausages, black pudding and crayfish nibbles.



My main was great the best of scotch fillet steak.



Look at all the delicious meat on the grill.



Some of the boys looking very sharp at the New Zealand house in London.



The view from New Zealand house where we were guests of the high commissioner.



I went to a bit of history the other night in Liverpool the cavern club were all the great entertainers started their careers like Beatles.



The crowds in London were manic - In the City.



The crowds in London were manic - In the Tube.



This sign was on the big screen at last weekends test telling the fans Wigan was sold out.



Another full house at the second test in London.



The crowd at the second test..

Kiwis Pay Tribute to Liverpool Hosts

By Grant Chapman, NZ Kiwis Media Manager

THROUGHOUT THEIR England tour, the NZ Kiwis have politely declined requests to perform their haka for fascinated locals, but they made an exception for the Liverpool Football Club.

The Kiwis understand that the mystique around their traditional challenge is best preserved by not rolling it out at the drop of a hat.

But the hospitality shown by such a prestigious organisation during their visit to the Liverpool clubrooms at Melwood moved the players to thank their hosts in the most sincere possible way.

This was a rare opportunity for the Kiwis too – Liverpool had never invited outsiders into their facility before and went to great lengths, even re-marking their soccer pitch with rugby league lines, to make the NZ side feel welcome.

Over the past month, the Kiwis have ticked off some pretty special experiences during their travels, playing at London's Olympic Stadium, having tea at the NZ High Commission and training at the historic Harrow School, but for many, this was the highlight.

Most of the players took the chance to show off their football skills, with big prop Marty Taupau impress-

ing most, bending the oval ball into the back of the net with a left foot from near the right touch.

Coaches Stephen Kearney and David Kidwell spent more than an hour with newly appointed Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp, comparing notes on their craft. Kidwell, the team's biggest Liverpool fan, was ecstatic to have his shirt signed by the gaffer.

"We've been blown away by the hospitality at Liverpool FC," Kearney told the club's TV channel afterwards. "It's been a wonderful experience."

"We talked about different little things. [Klopp] has spent a great deal of time in Germany and here, so I asked the question about their academy and the way they develop players.

"It was a wonderful conversation. He knew a little bit about rugby and he watched us train for a little bit, so he gained an understanding of the contact involved.

"Sometimes, you find people you talk to like that are reluctant to open up, but I found Jurgen very, very engaging." even sir Peter NZRL patron was blown away having lunch with the captain and vice captain and remarked how down to earth and friendly the player were."

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Liverpool Football Club



Mama Sakho French international modelling the Kiwi jersey.



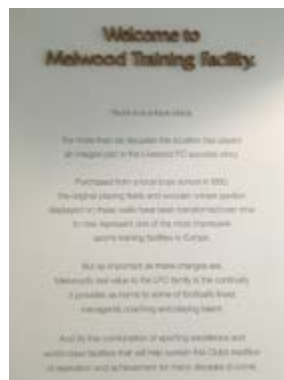
I had the pleasure of having lunch with the Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson and the vice captain James Milner, both of whom are England internationals and top blokes.



Kiwis coach Stephan Kearney catches up with LFC new coach Juergen Klopp at training.



Me with Juergen Klopp the LFC manager!!!



Inside Liverpool FC training ground at Melwood.



Had a fantastic time at the LFC HAD LUNCH WITH THESE-SUPER STARS. From left to right: Alberto Moreno, Joao Teixeira, Kolo Toure and Jose Enrique.



The kiwis with some of the LFC players after the kiwis done the HAKA..

Kiwis Training Session



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Joe Harawira

JOE HARAWIRA is the NZRL / NRL Wellbeing Manager. The focus of his role is to help prepare young athletes - who relocate from New Zealand to Australia - for the demands of the NRL pathway. Joe was recently awarded a Prime Ministers Scholarship to tour Europe visiting professional sports clubs/organisations from rugby league, rugby union and football. The objective of his tour is to build relationships and gain insights into how sports develop their athletes. Joe will take away key learning's that will improve what the NZRL and NRL do in the wellbeing space. In addition, Joe is also here to support the mighty Kiwis as we look to secure victory this weekend. So far Joe has met with such clubs as the Leeds Rhinos, Bradford Bulls and Everton Football Club. Joe says one of the highlights has been to meet with Colin Bland from the Sporting Chance Clinic. This charity does amazing work to support professional athletes across the major sports to deal with issues regarding alcohol, drug and gambling addictions. This week Joe is in France with the rugby union, rugby league and Catalans Dragons. He will join the Kiwis on Friday for their final match. Here Joe is pictured with Bradford Bulls staff John Bastion (Head of Youth Development, left) and Paul Fisher (Player Welfare Coordinator, centre).



Bradford Bulls Meeting.

No Surprise That Hard-man Sam Burgess Took the Soft Option

By John Deaker



SAM BURGESS has now arrived back in Australia after his return to rugby league with the South Sydney Rabbitohs was confirmed last week. Burgess has been heavily criticized – especially by his Bath coach Mike Ford - for taking the easy option to return to rugby league. Yet even some of his critics must surely be able to relate to why Burgess would want to go back to the code that gained him so much respect as an athlete.

Burgess wrote an open letter this week for England's Daily Mail attempting to give people better insight to his return to rugby league and Australia. Ironically, it appears the brutal English media has played a key role in Burgess getting out of his 3 year contract with Bath where his "heart just isn't in it."

Burgess makes the point in his letter that criticism from outside the England team has shocked and frustrated him, not just because of the way it's been made but also because of who's been making it.

"I think a lot of people outside the England camp had an agenda against both England and in some circumstances, me," Burgess wrote.

"Certain ex-players had an agenda and sections of the media had an agenda, too. I also think certain coaches not involved with England had an agenda."

There was always going to be pressure on the English team playing a World Cup at home – but clearly Burgess wasn't prepared for the type of scrutiny him and his team would come under – especially if they couldn't get through the 'Pool of death.'

"Slowly but surely, when you are trying to get support within the team and the voices from outside with an agenda are so strong, it's too powerful. No matter what I did, I always felt that I was fighting a losing battle," he wrote.

The contrast from being so revered by the loyal South Sydney fan-base and even most rival supporters to suddenly being criticized on an international stage in a code that he already lacked confidence is something that wouldn't be easy for anyone to handle.

While the money was good in rugby union, it was also very good for him the 2014 Clive Churchill Medal winner in rugby league. Taking on the challenge of rugby union and achieving in a more globally recognized sport surely weighed heavily in Burgess's decision to switch codes and leave his brothers and mother back in Australia.

Like with Benji Marshall's failure in rugby union with the Blues, the blame should mainly be pointed at those who signed Burgess in the first place. History has proven time and time again that a year (which Burgess had from when he began playing rugby union until the World Cup) isn't long enough to learn the intricacies of the 15 man game. The planning to get him up to speed wasn't good either, with Bath electing to use him as a flanker at times where he was never going to be able to compete for a World Cup position.

What Burgess's return does is it puts South Sydney back as one of the favourites to win the 2016 NRL. Yes, they have lost Issac Luke, but in his time with Souths Burgess proved his value as not only a great player but one who was also able to lift the players around him. Canberra's CEO Don Furner has rightfully questioned claims that Burgess will only take up \$500,000 of Souths' salary cap (the figure he was paid before he switched codes – whereas he'd command much more than that on the open market now) and that remains something to watch in coming weeks. His contract hasn't been signed off by the NRL yet but undoubtedly they are very keen to do all they can to ensure a man with Burgess's high-profile becomes part of the competition again.



Hi Sir Peter,

Thank you so very much for the 2015 Kiwis jersey.

It's a perfect fit for my son Josh and he is one extremely happy boy.

Was even sweeter seeing the Kiwis win game 2.

Kind Regards, Jamie



Thank you so much! Was a lovely surprise for my husband...Absolutely thrilled!

Happy winner

Paula Rahiri



Hi Sir Peter Leitch

Jersey received and proudly worn early hours of the morning when our mighty kiwis beat England.

Many thanks on the free jersey and wishing the boys all the best in the final test...

GO THE KIWIS!!!!

Cheers, Jordan Mirelli

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

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