

VODAFONE



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24 February 2016

Newsletter #110

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**Mt Smart
to Remain
Home until
2028!**



Photo courtesy of www.photosport.co.nz

Mt Smart to Remain Home until 2028

By Lee Umbers



IT'S OUR house, and we're staying put. Mount Smart Stadium will remain the Vodafone Warriors' home ground until at least the end of the 2028 NRL season.

The club has been granted a 10-year extension of their existing contract and its 'fortress' is getting a facelift.

"This is a fantastic day for the Vodafone Warriors, for our players and staff, for all our members, for the city and for rugby league," said Vodafone Warriors managing director Jim Doyle.

The deal was done under a heads of agreement jointly signed by the club and Regional Facilities Auckland.

RFA CEO Chris Brooks confirmed the RFA had granted the Vodafone Warriors a 10-year extension of their existing contract, which expires at the end of the 2018 season.

While both organisations still have to ratify the details of the final contract, Brooks and Doyle hailed the outcome.

Doyle credited Brooks for opening the way for a review of the RFA's plans for Mount Smart Stadium.

"We were in a position not so long ago where we were being told Mount Smart Stadium wouldn't be our home beyond 2018," he said.

"We were passionate about staying here. We have always said it is our home and we certainly appreciate the way so many people showed their support for us to remain, particularly our members, fans and, of course, our No 1 member Sir Peter Leitch.

"We're especially grateful to Chris who was open to consultation and discussion about the stadium strategy.

"It's his attitude and his willingness to listen to our views which has enabled us to reach the point we are at today."

Brooks said the discussions with the Vodafone Warriors had been entirely constructive and were focused on finding the best solution that met the club's needs and those of fans alongside the RFA's goal to maximise the use of its facilities on a cost-effective basis for ratepayers.

"This agreement offers value to both parties," he said.

"Importantly, it offers greater commercial value to the RFA and Auckland ratepayers, reflecting the council's investments in Mount Smart Stadium and the on-going cost of maintaining the venue into the future, while also providing certainty and some enhancements for the Warriors and their fans."

Vodafone Warriors ambassador Sir Peter Leitch was elated about the decision.

"This is a huge day for everyone who loves the Vodafone Warriors, for all the members and the fans," he said.

"Mount Smart is our home. We love it here and I couldn't be happier that this has all been sorted out."

Doyle said the terms of the agreement feature an undertaking for significant upgrading of the stadium and its facilities.

"This will include replacement seating, refurbishment of the dressing room facilities and a community classroom while the agreement also allows for replacement floodlights, a new big screen and a facelift for various areas of the stadium," he said.

"We're excited about what is in store as we work with the RFA to make Mount Smart Stadium the best home it can be for the Vodafone Warriors."

Doyle also said beyond 2028 the Vodafone Warriors were keen to see the concept of a city football stadium become a reality to bring sporting codes and fans together as one in the heart of the central city.



IHAVE TO hand it to Nelson, the weather was wonderful, the people hospitable and the crowd fantastic – pity the result was awful, but we won't dwell on that, instead we will focus on the positive.

Around 10,000 people turned out for the game, and that is a credit to Barry Galbraith and Aldo Miccio, who organised the promotion and put it all together.

In a very nice touch they asked the old butcher to deliver the match ball for the day via helicopter.

I told them there were plenty of others who could do it but they were most insistent it be me. Well wean that chopper touched down and I climbed out, who should be standing there but my grandson Reuben.

The organisers had contacted family and told them they wanted to give me a surprise – well they certainly did. I have to admit that when I hugged the boy, there was tear in my eye.

It was very humbling gesture and one I will remember – let alone Reuben - for a very long time.

The Nelson experience was great. I never tire or meeting wonderful, beautiful, friendly people – and before they get too excited in Nelson, those people came from far and wide, from Auckland to Invercargill.

Another little pleasure I had was running into the young people from the Hokitika Rugby League Club – and they were are a credit to the club too. Getting them the odd autograph was a treat. It was like you were handing over millions of dollars.

It made me very happy, just as the breakers did, Brendon McCullum did, and the news we are staying at Mt Smart did. But read all about that in the newsletter.

Enjoy your week and remember, it's just another week until the NRL starts. Janice will be seeing a lot less of me I can tell you!



Ready for my ride to deliver the ball!



In the helicopter with the ball.



View of Trafalgar park from the helicopter.



My Grandson Rueben and I making the final steps to deliver the ball.



Game ball safe and sound ready to go.



Packer Steals The Show

Vodafone Warriors old boy Russell Packer stole the show at the Battle of Trafalgar in Nelson.

His stint in jail has been well-documented, and he completed his final pre-season game in outstanding fashion, making a number of telling charges.

One website called our performance “worryingly timid,” and it is hard to argue different.

Packer started the game but it was his final showing, towards the end, that caught the eye, as the St George Dragons dealt to us 46-10.

The former Kiwi was been thrown a lifeline by his Dragons coach Paul McGregor, and he did everything he could to justify his faith in him.

Josh Dugan was also in great form, moving from fullback to centre, scoring one try and having a hand in others.

Packer, perhaps understandably, did not want to be in the media, but Benji Marshall said he was the standout.

“I thought Russell was one of our best and he really set the platform. He’s such a big presence and I felt like he led the team forward.”

New Spine On Show

The Warriors showed off Issac Luke, Shaun Johnson, Jeff Robson and Roger Tuivasa-Sheck for the first time on Saturday, but to be fair, they did not sparkle.

We were behind early and never looked likely to get back into it. We trailed 18-4 at the break and there was just misery in store in the second 40, the Dragons adding five tries while Jonathan Wright scored a consolation to go with the first half try to Solomone Kata.

Warriors coach Andrew McFadden will have plenty to work on. “It was probably timely. There has been a lot of hype around our off-season recruits but we got found out. The scoreline was not flattering but we’ll find some positives and hopefully we can turn it around.”

Last Outing For Captain Mannering

The match was Simon Mannering’s final act as captain, as you will all know by now. Last week he stepped down in favour of Ryan Hoffman, saying the captaincy was affecting his enjoyment of the game.

Mannering is still only 29, and I don’t think many would disagree, he is one of our best, but good luck to him I say.

He has led the team for 136 of his 236 games, and that is a very fine record.

“I’ve had the captaincy coming up to six years and that’s a long time,” he said. “I could say I didn’t achieve what I wanted to as captain, results wise, but as a player this was probably the best thing for myself and in turn for the club,” he said.

And that alone tells you everything you need to know about the man.

He put the club first, and I think he has always done that, while not always getting the respect and credit he deserves for his work.

“It’s not the playing side of it, it’s the extra commitment outside of football that wore me down a bit. You’ve got quite a bit more commitment, travelling back and forth from Aussie and more stuff over here as captain. It was starting to wear me down and if I could have just lead the team out each week, I’d keep the role for sure.”

How’s This For Courage

I think even now not all fans realise that at the end of last season, when we were getting killed week after week, Mannering was so sick he had been advised not to play, but he turned out again and again, believing he had a responsibility to the team. That’s the truth behind why, when the season ended, he could not travel with the Kiwis to the UK.

Coach Andrew McFadden said Shaun Johnson and Issac Luke were in the mix as captain, but Hoffman was the obvious choice for him.

“Ryan’s consistency on and off the field, along with the fact he upholds all of our values at the club made him a clear candidate. He’ll handle all of those obligations easily and I don’t think it will affect his performances.”

Injuries Strike Early

New signings Roger Tuivasa-Sheck and Ligi Sao, and long-serving wing Manu Vatuvei all left the field against the Dragons.

Vatuvei exited after 25 minutes when he picked up a head knock, and while he did not return, there are no concerns about him being ready for the season-opener against Wests Tigers on March 5.

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Tuivasa-Sheck did not get the solid workout he wanted in his first full outing, going to the bench early. Despite missing valuable game time he will be fine for the Tigers.

Sao's injury is more serious. The ex-Manly forward had to be helped off after dislocating his left shoulder and the full extent of the injury is yet to be confirmed.

Apart from Sao, Thomas Leuluai, Sione Lousi, Toafofoa Siple, Henare Wells and Mason Lino are the only players expected to miss the start of the season. Leuluai is scheduled to return in round five, Lousi, Siple and Lino in round four and Wells in round three.

Bodene Thompson, Jacob Lillyman, David Fusitu'a, Raymond Faitala-Mariner and John Palavi have been on the injured list recently and weren't available for the trial but are all set to be available for the first round.

We Are Staying Put

Common sense has finally prevailed and we are staying at Mt Smart until 2028.

Regional Facilities Auckland wanted us at Eden Park or North harbour after our licence runs out at the end of the 2018, which the club – and anyone with a half a brain - was vehemently against.

Now a new deal has been finalised that will see us at Mt Smart until 2028.

One other change signalled as part of the process is a short-term extension for speedway at Western Springs until 2019, while work on an alternative location is progressed. The RFA's earlier plan was for speedway to move to Mt Smart and cricket to go to Western Springs.

In its current condition, Mt Smart actually doesn't reach the NRL's requirements, but improvements will be made.

"We were in a position not so long ago where we were being told Mt Smart wouldn't be our home beyond 2018," Warriors managing director Jim Doyle said.

"We were passionate about staying. We have always said it is our home and we certainly appreciate the way so many people showed their support for us to remain."

Doyle said the terms of the agreement feature an undertaking for significant upgrading of the stadium and its facilities.

Well Done Skipper

Last week I mentioned that outgoing Black Caps skipper Brendon McCullum would play his 100th and final test at the weekend against Australia, and that I hoped he would go out on a high.

Well he sure did, hitting the world's fastest ever test century, taking just 54-balls, and breaking West Indian Viv Richards and Pakistani captain Misbah ul-Haq's 56-ball mark.

It had to be one of the most magical things I have seen on a sports pitch, and I have said it before, I don't know much about the game, but even I can recognise something remarkable, and it truly was.

I know he has had his knockers, but consider this, McCullum is the only one of 2810 test cricketers to play 100 consecutive tests from debut.

His 302 against India at the Basin Reserve in 2014 is our best test score ever, and he holds all sorts of test wicket partnership records to boot.

He is the only Kiwi to get four double centuries or better in tests, and the only player in the world to score 100 sixes in tests and 200 sixes in one-day games.

Hard to believe he even has critics.

Go Breakers

You will recall I also mentioned I thought The Breakers would make the NBL final with a 2-0 win over Minor Premiers Melbourne United, and I was dead right.

They won the first game in Melbourne and bundled the Premiers out on their home court on Saturday, winning 91-78.

That means it is the fifth-straight playoffs sweep and their 11th consecutive post-season win.

The Kiwi club will again start the finals series on the road, but, as they showed in the semis, that will be no hardship.

If this is not the most successful Kiwi team playing in an Aussie comp, I will go he!

Butch And Bill Honoured

Two men who have been involved in Rugby League for more than half a century have been inducted as Life Members of the South Island Rugby League Kiwis Association.

Tony "Butch" Coll was 19 when Bill Whitehead made him a reserve for the NZ Marist side named to play Auckland in 1969. He would go on to represent NZ from 1972-1982.

Whitehead was manager of every Coast team from 1964-1989, teams that included 25 Kiwis, and was also liaison officer at the 1977 World Cup – which

Butch Coll captained, his last game as Kiwis skipper.

Coll said it was great to get off a late railcar, knowing Whitehead would be on the platform, with bundles of fish and chips, and it was fitting to be recognised at the same time as his "old mate".

Coll was vice-captain of NZ Marist in 1975, captain in 1974, and led a NZ Marist side against a Canterbury 13 in 1974.

Whitehead even famously arranged for Coll to be included in a Canterbury 13 in 1984 (v NZ Marist), just so he could say he had played in a Canterbury jersey. *Read more and see pictures further in the newsletter.*

Vodafone Warriors vs St George Dragons - Trafalgar Park, Nelson



Roger Tuivasa-Sheck attempts to evade a tackle from former Vodafone Warriors prop Russell Packer.



Simon Mannering leaves the field for the last time as captain of the Vodafone Warriors during last weekend's pre-season trial against the Dragons in Nelson.



Star halfback Shaun Johnson takes a "selfie" with a Vodafone Warriors fan.



Vodafone Warriors centre Konrad Hurrell in action.



Photos courtesy of www.photosport.nz

Mannering: The Perennial Achiever

By Michael Burgess - Courtesy of www.oliverlee.co.nz

IF VODAFONE Warriors fans need more reasons for optimism ahead of the upcoming NRL season, they can contemplate the potential impact of Simon Mannering in 2016.

The Warriors' captain has – for the first time in almost a decade – had a break over the entire off-season. Between 2006 and 2015 he played virtually non-stop, with four NRL finals campaigns, two World Cups, three Four Nations tournaments and an All Golds tour.

He missed last year's Kiwis tour to England for health reasons, finally allowing his body a break – one that was long overdue. The 29-year-old can be underrated – due to his non-flashy style – but Mannering has arguably been the most valuable player at the Warriors for the best part of a decade.

He was voted player of the year in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014 and was close on several other occasions. Mannering does his job – extremely well – week after week, and is the king of the 'one percenters'.

“It's hard to measure how important Simon is to this club,” said Warriors head coach Andrew McFadden. “He has very few dips in form. He has an off-game occasionally but his off ones are still 7/10 — that's why he is so valuable.”

Most of the attention heading into this season has been focussed on new recruits Roger Tuivasa-Sheck and Issac Luke, as well as the return to fitness of Shaun Johnson. But a refreshed, rejuvenated Mannering is arguably just as important.

Let's look at his numbers last season. Only one player in the entire NRL made more tackles than Mannering's 1013. He averaged a team high of 42 tackles per game, as well as contributing 47 offloads throughout the year (second-highest in the club).

But, beyond the statistics, are his football smarts and toughness. He's often the guy leading a kick chase, taking a tough carry near his line, plugging a hole in the defensive line or cleaning up a bomb.

And he never seems to tire, averaging 77 minutes a match across his 236 game, 12-year NRL career.

“In my role, you are out there for so long it is all about keeping on top of your game the whole time,” said Mannering. “That is the hardest bit, especially when fatigue sets in. As a middle your role doesn't seem super important but you can have a big effect on the outcome if you don't turn up in the right positions.”

And he keeps going, and going. By round 16, Mannering could become the second Warrior to clock-up 250 NRL games, and by the end of the season he could challenge Stacey Jones' all-time record of 261 matches at the club.

Date of birth: 28 August 1986

Birthplace: Napier, New Zealand

NRL debut: Round 16, 2005

NRL games: 236

Representative honours: 41 tests for the Kiwis

Did you know? More than one-quarter of Mannering's NRL games were played at centre.

Key statistic: Mannering has scored 53 NRL tries, the seventh top try-scorer for the Warriors.

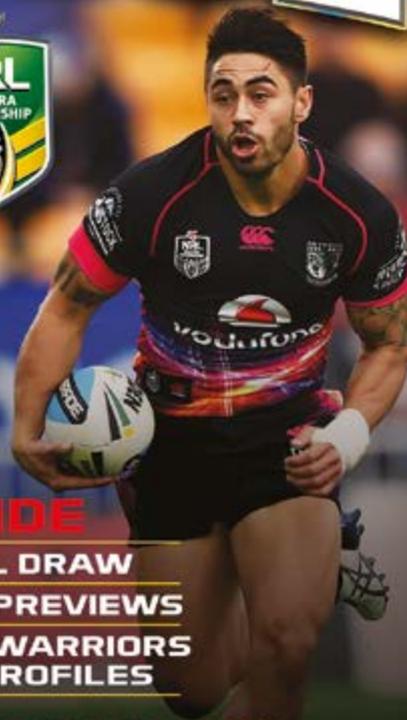
Fatherhood: His partner Anna gave birth to their second child in early February.



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- ▼ CANTERBURY BULLDOGS, WESTPAC STADIUM, WELLINGTON, 16 APRIL
- ▼ PENRITH PANTHERS, AMI STADIUM, CHRISTCHURCH, 14 MAY
- ▼ CANBERRA RAIDERS, YARROW STADIUM, NEW PLYMOUTH, 21 MAY

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Get your FREE copy of the NRL - Warriors Rugby League magazine with the Herald on Sunday THIS SUNDAY 28th February 2016

The 48 page magazine is packed full of articles including: 2016 NRL Draw, NRL team profiles, Hoffman and Tuivasa-Sheck profiles, Vodafone Warriors NRL player profiles, Vodafone Warriors NRL and Junior Warriors team posters as well as a wrap up of the Nines, State of Origin, ANZAC test and RLWC 2017 previews and much more...



MEMORIES OF the Vodafone Warriors' stellar 2002 season have been evoked with the release of the club's heritage strip for the 2016 NRL season produced by club sponsor Canterbury of New Zealand.

A stunning replica of the 2002 kit has been produced for the Vodafone Warriors to wear in their 15th-round clash against the Sydney Roosters at Mount Smart Stadium on Sunday, June 19 (6.00pm kick-off).

It's highly appropriate because it was in these colours that the Vodafone Warriors went on to win the minor premiership for the first time and then advanced to their first grand final where they met the Roosters.

Rated an all-time favourite by many players in the current squad, the black, blue, red and white ensemble is synonymous with a host of the club's greatest achievers including Stacey Jones, Logan Swann, Lance Hohaia, Awen Guttenbeil, Wairangi Koopu, Jerry Seuseu, Clinton Toopi, Ali Lauitiiti, Francis Meli, Ivan Cleary, Kevin Campion and PJ Marsh.

Canterbury of NZ general manager Dwayne Barrie said the jersey was an aspirational addition to the 2016 range.

"We're proud to have produced a jersey which so strongly evokes memories of the 2002 grand final and we look forward to seeing a new era of Vodafone Warriors donning such an iconic design," he said.

The retro-inspired jersey uses the tri-colour chevron V of the 2002 strip, updated for a more modern fit, reflecting the recent advances in garment technology.

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Richmond Rabbits President NZRL Volunteer of the Year

By Phillip Rollo - **Courtesy of the Nelson Mail**

LEANNE ANDERSON is known as "camp mum" at the Richmond Rabbits rugby league club.

She's the tireless worker behind the scenes that occupies a bunch of roles including president and treasurer, but often finds herself knitting scarves for the players' children, writing cards when their family members are sick, communicating with sponsors, cleaning up in the changing sheds and telling the players off if she hears them swearing during the game.

The Stoke woman was this week named female volunteer of the year at the New Zealand Rugby League Awards in Auckland - something she said was a huge surprise.

"I was really surprised because there were four of us in for it and one of the other women had been involved for 15 years and this is just my fifth year involved, so I was surprised they would pick me over other people who have been involved a lot longer.

"I just do what I do and I really like what New Zealand Rugby League does in the community and what they stand for. But I'm very honoured to be the winner," Anderson said.

Anderson has been involved with the Rabbits club for four years, watching them win three consecutive Tasman Rugby League championships before missing out on the finals in 2015 with a new-look squad.

"We were new into the competition in 2012 and won the competition for three years in a row but I'm extremely proud of the boys win or lose.

"As president I'm always looking for the best interests of the club and wanting to support our players. I like what we do because we work hard with our culture and our family values so we actually live up to what we say we're going to do.

"If the boys swear on the field and I hear it they usually hear about it from me after the game because I'm camp mum."

Departing Tasman Rugby League regional development officer Ryan Charles said Anderson, who also helped organise the Southern Zone 15s and 17s tournament, is "regularly the first one at games" and "the last one to leave".

"She constantly searches for ways to get the club involved with the local community and does so on top of a full-time accounting job, as well as a part-time voluntary position with the local youth community trust," he said.

"Leanne's contribution to the rugby league community with the Rabbits club and the Tasman district is something that should be admired and is a huge reason why the game is continuing to grow here in sunny Nelson."



Leanne Anderson and Sir Peter Leitch at the awards evening.



The Female Volunteer of the Year was presented to Leanne Anderson by Chris Bourke at the 2015 New Zealand Rugby League Awards.



NZRL Seeks Full-Time Kiwis Manager



Kiwis national anthem at 2015 Anzac Test (www.photosport.nz)

THE NZ Kiwis are recruiting a full-time manager to help the world #1 side prepare and execute their 2016 & 2017 international calendars, including a Four Nations championship and Rugby League World Cup campaign.

Traditionally, national team management has been a contracted part-time role, supported by administration staff within the NZ Rugby League high performance programme.

But attention to detail has become an integral part of international sporting success and, with the support of High Performance Sport NZ, rugby league is following the trend already established by other great teams, especially in relation to logistics and team culture.

“The manager’s primary role will be to ensure the optimum environment is in place to prepare and succeed on the world stage,” says NZRL high performance general manager Brent Gemmell.

“The Kiwis team manager will be required to support the head coach and NZRL management with all team activity planning, administrative and touring requirements associated with the team.”

Since surrendering the World Cup to Australia in 2013, the Kiwis have developed a strong “Te Iwi Kiwi” culture under coach Stephen Kearney (Kiwis #640), which has been key to victory at the 2014 Four Nations tournament and 2015 Anzac Test.

Three straight wins over the Kangaroos have seen New Zealand overtake the world champions for the top spot in world rankings.

With player depth at an all-time high, NZRL and Kearney are now fine-tuning the Kiwis staff structure before final preparations begin for the World Cup, co-hosted in New Zealand and Australia next November/December.

This year’s schedule features two stand-alone tests against Australia (May 6 & October 15) and a defence of the Four Nations crown in the United Kingdom (October/November).

Applications for the manager’s role close on Monday, March 7 and should be emailed, along with a CV, to [Francie Stacey](mailto:Francie.Stacey@nzrl.co.nz).

NZ Kiwis manager position description: [Click here](#).

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Aussie Boxer has “World” Title Bout

By John Coffey QSM



WHEN I was a youngster growing up in Greymouth, boxing ranked almost as highly as rugby league as the town's favourite sport. Just as there were Kiwis playing for just about every West Coast club team, there was an abundance of outstanding amateur pugilists such as national champions Graham Finlay, Vern and Maurice Tuck, John Logan and Evan Macdonald, plus two generations of the renowned Bell family.

Tiny Greymouth was so strong that in 1954 it won the Earl Stewart Memorial Shield as the top association at the New Zealand championships. Legendary trainer Doc Finlay guided his son Graham and the Tuck brothers to win their divisions. Vern Tuck also brought home the prized Jameson Belt as the most scientific competitor. Maurice Tuck fought at the 1954 Empire Games in Cardiff and Graham Finlay at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne.

Frank Bell senior (1933 national light heavyweight champion) owned a milk bar near our school. He would brace himself against the counter and invite us kids to punch him in the midriff. Big Frank never flinched -- at least not until he added a fish and chip option to the business and nearly burnt the place down! All of his sons, Lenny, Frank junior, Jimmy, Peter, Bernie and Billy were good scrappers in their own right, and so have been some of their sons.

Boxing lessons were available in the school hall but I was scratched from signing up by an over-protective mother. They were looking for two “paper weights” for the next tournament and a couple of my mates got the gig. After they flailed away with gloves as big as pillows and did no damage whatsoever to each other, the appreciative fans threw what seemed to me like a fortune in coins into the ring. As my mates feverishly picked up their riches I sat in the audience, fuming and thinking evil thoughts about my mum.

After starting at The Press in 1963 I would accompany our boxing reporter, Rod Lindsay, in his old Morris Minor to Canterbury Court during the heyday of Christchurch professional boxing. The immaculate Dion Murphy retired unbeaten after 17 bouts against all comers on nights which filled the stadium and Brian Maunsell and Laurie Ny were able supports. Rod would hammer out a blow-by-blow report on a little portable typewriter which even survived a beaten boxer sailing through the ropes and landing on it.

Further afield, the world heavyweight champion ranked alongside the Olympic 100 metres title-holder as the most famous sportsman on the planet. There were great stories about boxing ranging back to bare knuckle days. Names such as John L Sullivan, Bob Fitzsimmons, Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano and Floyd Patterson were big in sporting folklore. Sonny Liston, Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and George Foreman were larger than life. The Chronicle of Boxing is still one of my favourite reference books.

Somewhere that theory went askew in both sports. Usain Bolt has long been the undisputed world champion sprinter, though his event has been clouded by drug scandals. But the identity of the true world heavyweight title-holder has sunk in a sea of alphabet soup as various organisations (IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO) proclaim their versions of world rankings. Making it even more obscure, the Klitschko brothers long ago carried the more creditable belts behind the old Iron Curtain.

At least the coaching and promotional skills of Kevin Barry has given New Zealanders plenty to enjoy over the last two decades by guiding David Tua to a world title bout against Lennox Lewis – who no-one doubted was the undisputed champion at that time – and is now taking Joseph Parker towards another. And we have British gypsy Tyson Fury to thank for bringing at least part of the championship back into the western world.

But it came as a surprise, and was an indictment of my inattention, to watch a recent Fox Sports interview with Lucas “Big Daddy” Browne who early next month will seek to become “the first Australian holder of the world boxing championship”. The hulking, heavily-tattooed Browne is challenging Ruslan Chagaev, a German-resident Uzbekistani, for the WBA belt at Grozny in Russia on March 6 (NZ time).

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I vaguely recalled Browne being mentioned as a possible Parker opponent but needed some research to learn that, at 36, he is unbeaten after 23 fights, 20 of them won by knock-out. This former Parramatta junior rugby league player is a true heavyweight, standing 196cm, tipping the scales at 116kg and with a reach of 196cm. He has defeated a couple of well-credentialed Americans but most of his victims were about or below average.

Browne did not take up boxing until he was 30, after 13 years as a bouncer outside some of Sydney's toughest night spots. Splitting with his wife persuaded him to turn pro, firstly in cage fighting and kickboxing before starting a pure boxing path which has earned him several obscure but impressive sounding belts. The excellent Boxingrec website ranks Browne at 22 (and Parker at 11) among 1255 heavyweights. Somehow it doesn't seem right that this bloke could be one lucky punch from claiming a place alongside the great heavyweights in history.



Lucas Browne. Picture: News Corp.

South Island Kiwis Life Members

By John Coffey QSM



FORMER KIWIS World Cup captain Tony Coll and long-serving secretary Bill Whitehead were elected life members of the South Island Kiwis Association at the biennial meeting in Christchurch last Friday. It was held at 1966-68 Kiwis scrum-half Gary Clarke's impressive rugby league museum, situated at his business, Gary Clarke Plastics.

"Butch" Coll was New Zealand's best and most consistent forward during the often difficult years of the 1970s when the amateur Kiwis battled against their increasingly professional Australian and British opponents, and captain for the 1977 World Cup. In all, he played 65 matches for his country from 1972 to 1982, including 30 Tests and six tours.

Coll is a West Coaster, one of the greatest forwards from a province renowned for producing hard men in the heyday of the coal mines and timber mills. He played 227 senior games for the Marist club and 58 matches for West Coast. He was NZRL Player of the Year in 1976 and a frequent recipient of the West Coast Sportsman of the Year title.

But the affable Coll, now a Grey District councillor, is also very much a South Islander. As a youngster he spent the 1970 season with Christchurch Marist and was a Canterbury reserve. In 1976 he captained

South Island to an 18-17 victory over Sydney Metropolitan and four years later topped that by leading South to its historic 12-11 triumph against Australia.

Fittingly, Coll and association president Michael O'Donnell paid tribute to Whitehead's untiring efforts to keep the Kiwis spirit alive in the South Island. The south once provided a sizeable percentage of this country's representatives in Test and touring teams but has now become a feeder region for the professional and semi-professional clubs in Australia.

Whitehead has been associated with rugby league in Canterbury for 60 years but age and some health problems have not diminished his enthusiasm for the sport, and the Kiwis association became his focus more than a decade ago. An unabashed "Marist man", Bill also spent long terms on the CRL board of control and the former NZRL Schoolboy Council.

He was a local manager for scores of visiting provincial and overseas team. Reefton-born, Bill has always had a soft spot for the West Coast. Coll recalls him always being on hand to greet him and his team whether they arrived by late-night railcar or early-morning bus. The life membership was Bill's tenth from the grateful organisations he has served over the years.

Continued on next page...

There were no changes among the senior officers. Gary Clarke is still patron; 1951-61 Kiwis stand-off half George Menzies (who recently underwent a hip replacement in Christchurch before returning to Greymouth) remains vice-patron; and 1962 Kiwis forward Ian Drayton has been treasurer since 1969. The vice-presidents are Ray Baxendale, Mocky Brereton, Brian Langton, Rod Walker, Wally Wilson and former coach Frank Endacott.

Colin Pattinson, who lives in Dobson on the West Coast, made a very generous donation of \$3200 to the South Island Kiwis Association last year and was made a Honorary Vice President by the South Island Kiwis Association for his very kind donation.

Other rugby league topics deserving of a mention include:

Simon's sacrifice: How appropriate that Simon Mannering's last match as Warriors captain should

be in his Nelson home town. Mannering unselfishly put ego aside in stepping down, with the purpose of giving even more in a playing role to a club which has already benefited so much from his unstinting efforts. The Nelson scoreline was a shock, though.

Mt Smart survives: Warriors chief executive Jim Doyle earned the unanimous approval of members and fans by extending the Mt Smart Stadium deal until 2028. He used common sense to convince the authorities that a move to Eden Park or North Harbour was ridiculous. Mt Smart might not be the prettiest or most comfortable venue but it feels like home.

World series: Australian clubs dominated their British rivals in three matches between the best performed teams from the 2015 NRL and Super League competitions. The Sydney Roosters hammered St Helens 38-12 and the Brisbane Broncos thumped Wigan 42-12 before North Queensland over-ran Leeds 38-4 in the official World Club Challenge.

South Island Kiwis Association Meeting

Held last Friday in Gary Clarke's League Museum in Christchurch.



The team that turned up to the meeting.



Antony Woody Smith presented an Honorary Member by his Father in Law and Ex Kiwi Allan Amer.



Gary Clarke with Rod Walker.



Gary Clarke with Wally Wilson.



Mike O'Donnell and Mocky Brereton.



The legend William Whitehead receiving his life membership from Tony Coll.

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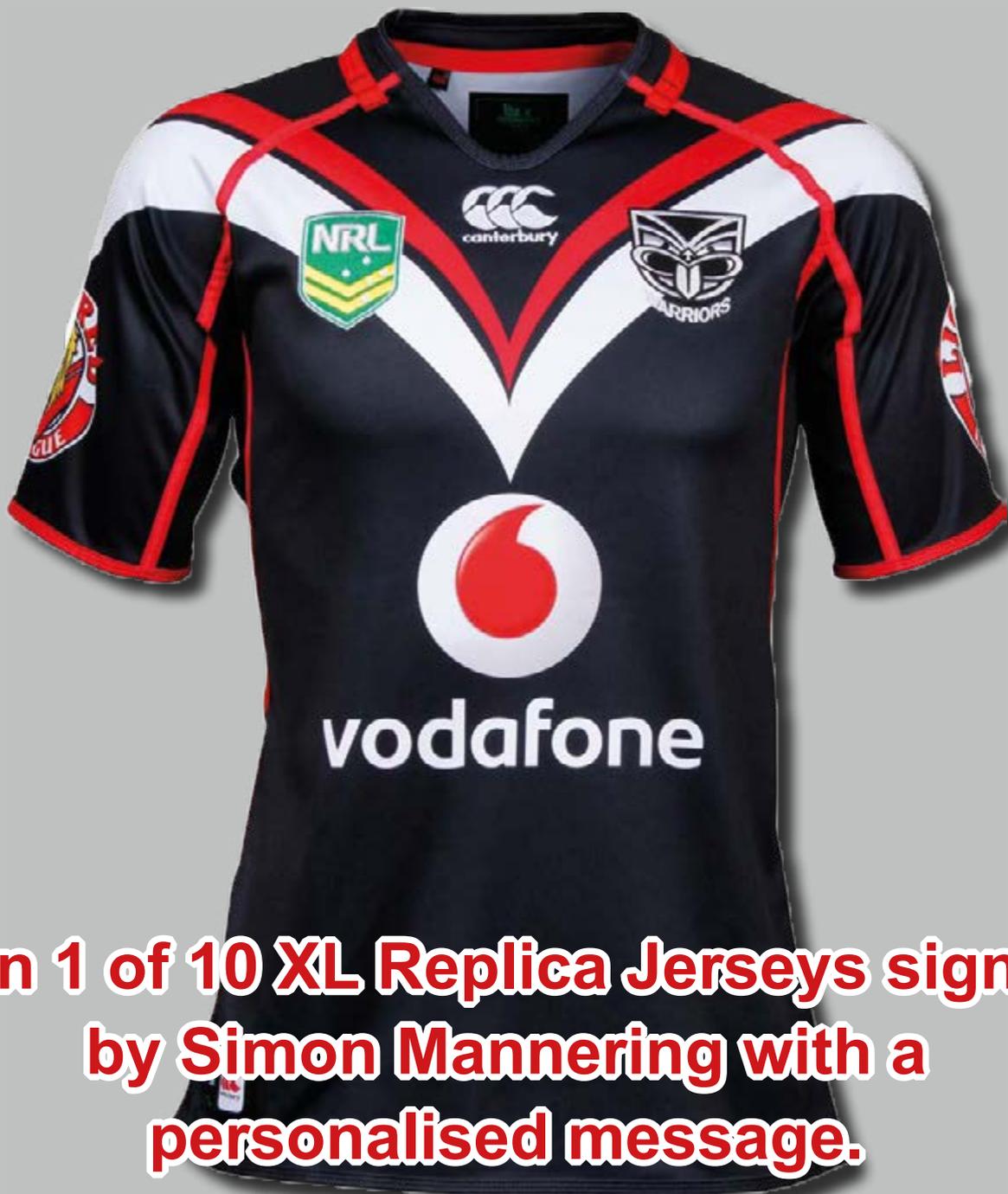


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Georgia Hale is Relishing More Responsibility On and Off the Field

By John Deaker



2016 HAS ALREADY been a memorable year for Georgia Hale on and off the rugby league field. In January she started a new role with the Warriors' community department as well as becoming the first Kiwi Ferns' player to be named to the NRL community ambassadors programme. On the field, she then played a key role in the Kiwi Ferns' 2-1 victory over the Jillaroos during the Auckland Nines – her standout performance recognized by her being named the MVP of the tournament.

Considering Hale only debuted for the Kiwi Ferns during the 2015 Auckland Nines' weekend, her progression to becoming such a key member of the team has been very swift. After playing hooker in the 2015 tournament, moving in to the halves this year was crucial in enabling her to take her game to a new level.

"I came in to the squad and was chucked in to hooker in 2015. But this time I was given the opportunity to go in the halves and it's more of a specific role and you're leading the team round the park," she says.

"I absolutely loved it and playing in a different position widened my perspective of a different position in league and what it requires."

Hale is hopeful of being able to retain a position in the halves when the National 13-aside team plays in the ANZAC test.

"At a representative level I'd like to retain a place in the halves. Also being young it creates really good leadership opportunities because you are marching girls round the park. And they listen, so it really lifts me as a player."

Being a leader is something Hale is more conscious of than most – especially other 20 year olds – due to being a league ambassador now and being so heavily involved in promotion of rugby league in her job. She is based out of the Warriors' head office and being a self-confessed "people's person" the league focus of the role plus some flexibility when there are important games and training camps makes the role ideal for her at the moment.

"I'm at the club Monday to Friday and I work closely with Jerome Ropati," she explains.

"We're out in the community promoting the club and the values that we uphold. If I do have training

or tournament commitments they encourage me to take part in that – because I am an ambassador... and they want me to show I can play."

Just like the 'Little General' Stacey Jones that Georgia idolized growing up, she provides a good example to men and women that players of all shapes and sizes can play women's rugby league and mix it with the much bigger girls. Despite trying to bulk up a bit, Hale still tips the scales under 70kg which pales in comparison to many of her opponents. That's not too much of an issue for her though.

"I actually play rugby league because of the contact. I absolutely love it," she says.

"Size doesn't really matter. You can be the biggest or smallest on the field but when you go in to contact you have to go 100% or you're going to get totally knocked off your feet - so that's the mentality I adopt."

The victory in the Nines hasn't been seen as a reason to rest on her laurels. Georgia has already been back training hard personally and the Kiwi Ferns' squad have also already got together as a squad to train with an eye towards turning round the Jillaroos 22-14 win over the them in last year's test.



Georgia Hale. NZ Ferns v Australia Women. NRL Auckland Nines at Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand. Saturday 6 February 2016. Copyright photo: Andrew Cornaga / www.photosport.nz



High-Tackle Holloway... I'll give ya the tip mate!

The Mad Butchers Weekly NRL Tipping Comp.

By John Holloway

NRL Round 1

Sue Phelan	Joe Vagana	John Coffey	Fast Eddie	Monty Betham	Bill Hayward	High-Tackle Holloway
<i>Maloney's Barber Shop</i>	<i>League Legend</i>	<i>Newsletter Columnist</i>	<i>Devonport Dutchman</i>	<i>The Warrior Boxer</i>	<i>Link Business</i>	<i>Richmond Bulldog</i>

OK GUYS n gals hold on to your hats, next week the Mad Butchers Super Duper Tipping Comp is underway. Your host High Tackle Holloway (that's me) has put together a star studded team of learned gentpersons (bloody PC) to run for the Champion Tipper Title. The only condition they face is we never bet against the Warriors!!! One point per correct tip and an extra 2 if you punt all 8 results correctly.

The headliners are the multi-talented hardman Mean Monty Betham ex Warriors/Kiwis current NZ Boxing Champ and the Legend Richmonds own, Big Joe Vagana of Machine Lease also a Warrior and Kiwi veteran. Sharp shootin Sue Phelan from the world famous classy clippin joint, Maloneys Barbershop in Victoria St (you have to go there) is set to take it to the guys with no mercy. The canny Poker cardsharp Bill Hayward from Link Business, my old mate Fast Eddie Van der Loos the Devonport Dutchman and the venerable league authority John (2 sugars in my) Coffey.

Pickin winners in the NRL weekly comp is not a past-time for the faint hearted and this year is going to be no different. A blind man can see that the Broncos and Cowboys should continue on centre stage but then it gets more even and more murkey. My old cobbah Dales beloved Rabbitohs, the Storm, Sharks and Bulldogs remain powerful but the dark horses that have bulked up are the Raiders, Sea Eagles and a menacing looking new Eels outfit. The Eels Parrapower back-attack of Norman, Foran, Jennings, Takarangi, Radradra and Michael Gordon will cause sleepless nights for opposing team bosses.

The Roosters have taken a few hits losing a lot of strike power but their performance in the World Club Series suggest they will still challenge. The improving Dragons are hard to ignore alongside the injury prone Panthers then we have the Titans, Tigers and Knights who can beat anyone on their day but to be fair are probably a little less imposing.

So that leaves the Mighty Vodafone Warrriioorrsss. Its "pee or get off the pot" time for our guys in 2016, we have the roster that could take us to the top level. Big-Buys the Luke-star and TV Sheck add the sparkle but just quietly I think the old veteran ex Sharkie Robson might be the vital key stabilising the middle. For all that there are still question marks in the centres, where to put the up and coming Lolohea is one factor that Coach Cappy has to sort and Hurrell/Kata/Ayshford and perhaps a sharp looking newbie Nicol-Klockstad are other pieces of the puzzle. Big Manu continues to dominate his wing slot with a few faces anxiously eyeing the other flank. Magic Johnson is back on track and ready to thrill, a slightly wider role may be on the cards. The pack is as good as it gets really with a wealth of experienced campaigners in Matulino, Lillyman, Luke-Star, Hoffman, BO Thompson and ex Captain Mannering.

The last named I think deserves to be able to better enjoy his last couple of years of footy without the sometimes crippling burden that the Warriors captaincy has been on and off the paddock. I am in the camp that says he could play even better.... I am happy for him. The return to fitness of Ben Henry and Thomas Leauluai certainly helps the stocks, young guns Vete, Lisone and particularly Faitala-Mariner are on track and Ata Hingano one to watch for the future. The Mad Butcher Sir Peter Leitch is already beside himself with excitement, sizzling like a barbequed Sausage it's the time of year that he really gets going.

So another great journey begins my friends lets don the mighty Warriors battle gear and get ourselves over to the Penrose Fortress of Faith to shout out for our boys. Come on Ref, blow the bloody whistle and let the dance begin.

Kia Kaha Warrriioorrsss



THE ENGLISH Super League were embarrassed by their big losses in the three World Club games over the weekend. The Australian teams won by a combined total of 118 points to 24 and this was more than the three wins last year when the Australian sides had a combined winning total of 71 points to 24. In 2015, St. George/Illawarra beat Warrington 18-12, the Broncos defeated Wigan 14-12 and in the World Club Championship, Souths smashed St. Helens 39-0. This year things began badly for the Poms, when the Roosters belted St. Helens 38-12 on Friday night, English time. The next night, the Broncos outclassed Wigan 42-12 and then on Sunday night at Headingley, North Queensland were too strong for Leeds, winning the World Club Championship by 38-4. The three Aussie teams crossed for 21 tries to five.

Despite these big defeats, respected coaches Wayne Bennett and Trent Robinson said they want these games to remain on the Rugby League calendar. I agree with them, but I don't think I would increase the number of such games, as has been discussed by officials from both countries over the past few days. There is also talk that these games, or some of them, could be played in Australia next year. The Broncos would attract a good crowd if an international club game was played at their home ground, Suncorp in Brisbane. But this would not necessarily be the case if they were held in Sydney. I would also like to see the Warriors involved next year.

Wayne Bennett would have no doubts now of the big task ahead of him as English coach.

The Roosters were impressive, despite the absence of several of their big names from 2015, because of injuries and other reasons. Players from last year who did not go to England included Jared Waerea-Hargreaves and Boyd Cordner, both of whom are injured, plus Mitchell Pearce. What would be pleasing for coach Robinson was the form of his young halves combination and 18 year old centre, Latrell Mitchell. Originally from Taree, Mitchell represented the Australian schoolboys in 2014 and can play fullback and on the wing, as well as in the centres. He is 193 cms and 104 kgs and came up through the Roosters junior representative SG Ball side. Mitchell is yet to make his NRL debut. Jackson Hastings (20) and Jayden Nikorima (19), caused St. Helens continual problems around the scrum base. Coach Robinson signed Nikorima from the Broncos and he will be a good asset in 2016. Kane Evans, a 24 year old forward, was another standout for the Roosters.

The Broncos too, had an impressive young halfback combination. Kodi Nikorima and Anthony Milford, both 21, dominated the edge of the rucks against Wigan. Nikorima the older brother of the Roosters Jayden, has already played Test football, representing New Zealand against England last year. Another Kiwi Test man, Adam Blair, played strongly for the Broncos against Wigan, as did 33 year old forward, Corey Parker. Making his first grade debut with the Broncos way back on 24 March 2001 against the Warriors in New Zealand, Parker has given 15 years of excellent service to his club and will no doubt do the same in 2016. He has played 323 first grade games with the Broncos and is the club's all time leading point scorer with 1,226 from 36 tries and 541 goals. Parker has also played 14 State of Origin games for Queensland and 12 Tests for Australia.

North Queensland deserved their World Club Championship title. Although not as young as the halves for the Roosters and Broncos, they were just as dominant in these positions against Leeds. You would expect nothing less from Cowboys captain, Jonathan Thurston. He won the Man of the Match award and collected 14 points from a try and five goals from seven attempts. This match was played in windy and wet conditions but was very entertaining. Running with the powerful wind behind them in the first half. Leeds did well to hold the Cowboys to 4-all at half time. But just a minute after the break the Cowboys scored the first of their six second half tries to none. Thurston turns 33 on 25 April but he will play a major role in the Cowboys 2016 season. In 239 matches for the Cowboys, he has scored 1,754 points from 73 tries, 724 goals and 14 field goals. He began his first grade career with the Bulldogs against the Panthers at Penrith on 8 June 2002. His total first grade record is 268 games, 1,794 points from 83 tries, 724 goals and 14 field goals.

Continued on next page...

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He has played 33 State of Origin games for Queensland and 32 Tests for Australia. In the win over Leeds, 24 year old Michael Morgan played five eighth and combined well with Thurston. All of the Cowboys seven tries were scored by their backs, with Morgan picking up one of these.

I know Brendon McCullum is 34 and has announced his retirement from Test cricket but after watching him destroy the Australian bowlers at Christchurch on Saturday, it seems he has much more to give at the game's highest level. He knows what is best for him and I congratulate him for all his achievements. His fastest ever Test century (54 balls) on Saturday will long be remembered by those watching it live or on TV. What a way to finish your career.

I must also congratulate the Australian Ladies Sevens team, who won the Sao Paolo tournament in Brazil over the weekend. After two rounds of the Ladies International Sevens series, Australia are on top with 40 points followed by Canada and New Zealand both on 28, France 26 and England 24.



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Sam Clark Grabs first Coast to Coast Win

THE COAST to Coast is the world's top multi-sport event and this year saw Sam Clark back up his pre-race confidence to run away from the field to claim his first Coast to Coast men's World Championship longest day title.

Clark, who was second behind three-time defending champion Braden Currie last year, went into the 33 kilometre mountain run with 15 leaders after the first 55 kilometre cycle leg, but was quick to put the hammer down to blast over Goat Pass in under three hours to head into the short cycle and 67 kilometre kayak leg with a 23 minute lead.

“I couldn't be happier,” he said at the finish line in Christchurch's eastern suburb of New Brighton. “Only those that know me well can actually appreciate just how long and how much I wanted this. It's quite overwhelming to finally tick that box and finally call myself a Coast to Coast champion.”

Clark was a convincing winner in 11 hours 37minutes 7seconds, coming home over 50 minutes ahead of Coast to Coast veteran 44 year old Bob McLachlan who was racing the event for the first time in twenty five years. McLachlan said he exceeded his hopes of making the top 10 with his 12 hours 29 minutes effort which saw him overtake Australian Alex Hunt during the kayak leg.

Nelson's Elina Ussher won her third women's longest day title in 13 hours, 32 minutes after catching Myriam Guillot-Boisset from France in the second half of the race. Ussher overcame severe leg cramps during the run saying she had to 'stay mentally tough' and work through the pain and not think about it and just keep pushing on.

Hayden Wilde, 18, made it a double header day for Whakatane athletes, taking out the two-day men's individual event in a time of 12:18.47 while Anna Barrett from Mt Maunganui's won the women's two day individual event in 13 hours and 45 minutes.

Organisers were happy to see increased interest and entries in the youth, corporate and tandem categories, something they expect to see more growth in for next year's event being held on the 10th and 11th of February.

www.coasttocoast.co.nz

#coasttocoastnz



Whakatane's Sam Clark hits the first of the river crossings in this year's Coast to Coast longest day World Championship one day event. He ran away from the field in the tough mountain run to set up his first win in the event

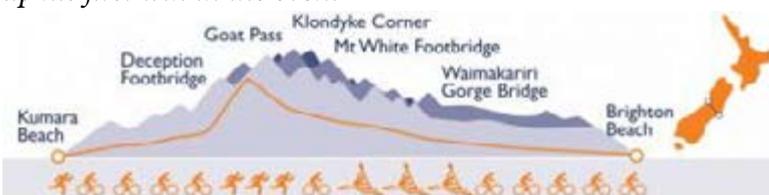


Clark celebrated his win in style at the Coast to Coast finish line in the Christchurch eastern suburb of New Brighton

CREDIT: Marathon-Photos.com



A determined Elina Ussher grabbed the women's one day lead during the 67 kilometre kayak down the Waimakariri River to claim her third Coast to Coast One day title.



Tumeke Natives

By Kim Parkinson

2015 SAW RUGBY league return to Queenstown in the form of the Xtreme Queenstown 9s rugby league festival which also welcomed the debut of the newly formed rugby league team the TUMEKE NATIVES

The 9s tournament itself was hosted by the Wakatipu Giants and was the brainchild of local resident and Wakatipu Giants player Pace Bedgood who along with his small but hardworking committee set out a plan to bring rugby league back to the region and give the local community a team they could follow and call their own.

A unique team in its own right the TUMEKE NATIVES was made up of players from all over NZ comprising of a mixed bag of experienced and newcomers to the game who were put together by a group of rugby league enthusiasts who just wanted to kick a footy around and play some rugby league.

Natives captain Matt Ashe said “The suggestion was thrown out there to get a team together for the Xtreme Queenstown 9s and after a few phone calls and emails the interest was pretty good so we said let’s make it happen”

“We had a few boys who played league for the Wests Warriors in the UK that had moved back to NZ so we thought it would be a great opportunity to get those guys back together and playing footy again”

It didn’t take to long for the Natives to get their team together with interest so overwhelming players unfortunately had to be told they had missed out on a spot in the 18 man squad.

Unable to train as a team leading up to the tournament due to the different living locations the squad were simply told to train hard, work on their fitness and watch YouTube clips of rugby league 9s whenever they could.

Team manager Kim Parkinson said

“We knew it was a big ask of the players to play a full day of 9s rugby league with no training sessions together but the buzz and excitement of the Queenstown 9s was something we all wanted to be part of”

“Ideally we would of loved the chance to have a few team training runs together as we knew we were up against some very well drilled and established clubs but at the end of the day we are just happy we have been given this opportunity to play and compete in the festival”

Tournament day was actually the first time the squad got together as a whole and after quick introductions they were put through a few basic drills and briefed on the rules of the game before there much anticipated first match.

Up first the Natives took on Dunedin’s Kia Toa Tigers, lead by their ageing but inspirational captain Matt Ashe it didn’t take the Native boys long to click and adjust to playing league 9s.

The Natives took a 4 point lead into half time after scoring a try through rampaging Kapa Te Rangi Moeke

Soon after the break Kia Toa Tigers crossed over in the bonus box and kicked the conversion to go up 7 to 4.

Another quick try from the Tigers seen their lead stretch out to 11 to 4 and the game seemed to be over.

But the never say die attitude of the Natives kept them in the match with some hard hitting and big runs keeping the game in the balance right up until the final 60 seconds where the Natives managed to score in the bonus box and kick the conversion after the hooter for a hard fought draw.

Continued on next page...

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Big games from Matt Ashe and the ever reliable Nick Read along with storming runs from Joey Meyers set the platform for the rest of the tournament.

Next up was the South Pacific Raiders and again the Natives got off to a great start scoring in the bonus box and kicking the conversion for an early 7 point lead.

From there on in it was a one sided affair as the Natives racked up 36 points for a convincing win 36 to 6.

Again Matt Ashe showed his class along with younger brother and former St Helens player Nathan Ashe who just seemed to make breaks at will.

Others to impress included Natives eventual player of the day young buck Mike Rewi who had speed for days and the pint sized but fearless Asher Fernie-harper who didn't back down to any of his opposition regardless of size.

The Natives were pumped after their big win but knew a massive challenge lay ahead in the form of The Riccarton Knights from Christchurch

Again the big boys lead from the front with Saimon Lomaloma, and Blair Price whacking anyone that ran at them and along with Hapz Tulafono and Wiri Warriner the Natives were making some big meters up the middle of the park.

In a highly entertaining match which could have gone either way the much more experienced Knights came away with the win 12 to 10.

That result was still good enough for the boys to go through to the semi-finals and taking them on we're one of Christchurch's top teams the Hornby Panthers.

The Natives decided not to change their game plan which had worked well for them during the pool stages and continued to play attacking rugby league and rely on their natural talent against the well drilled Panthers side.

In a seesaw match that had everything from monster hits to jaw dropping attacking skills the match was evenly poised going into halftime with the Panthers holding a narrow 8 to 5 lead.

Some charging runs after half time from Lighty Tulafono and Buck Hall set the platform for the backs to play some attacking rugby league but unfortunately handling errors and the bounce of the ball went against the Natives and the second half didn't go to plan as the more experienced Panthers scored two quick tries to take the win 18 to 5.

Overall the team played some great rugby league and entertained the crowd with their freestyle and attacking play and they were rewarded for that at the events prize giving where the team won the award for most enjoyable team to watch.

Events organiser Pace Bedgood said "It's pretty amazing that these guys the Natives only meet each other today and you have to remember some of them had never played rugby league before so for them to reach the semis is a huge achievement and they should be proud of themselves, the crowd loved them and it's fair to say they definitely had the biggest cheers when they were playing and I look forward to watching them compete again in this year's festival"

Keep an eye out for details for the 2016 Queenstown 9s tournament and how you can register your team.

You can follow the progress of the team on Facebook TUMEKE NATIVES RLFC or for any enquiries email tumekenativesrl@gmail.com.

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

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Rachelle Wright



The Tardieu Family - By Shontayne Hape

IT'S HEADING to the start of a season, and this Gisborne family are talking players, teams, big games, new signings, old players, who to watch for and so on. Mums yelling "Give it a rest guys, it's December, can you not talk about something else" but no... not for the Tardieu Family Karla, Dave, Jade, Zara & Zane they live for the game.

Season members of the Vodafone Warriors has them travelling 960 kms to watch their team

The girls following the Twitter, Instagram, snap chats & Facebook pages of all their fav players, and keeps them up with all the latest goss on every player.

Opportunities to meet players and get selfies is a major highlight.

When meeting Shaun Johnson, he asked why they were in Auckland having come from so far away. "To watch you boys play" they said and when he said he had spent a New Years in Gisborne they replied "oh yeah we know we stalked your Instagram account" & this adopted the nick name to the whanau as the Gizzy Stalkers.

Another highlight was Jonathan Thurston giving young Zane his headgear. What a great night that was for them all.

Tardieus travelled across the ditch to their games as well to show their support to the team.

At the start of the year the family plan the games they want to go to in Australia. March 11 in Brisbane would be cool against the Broncos round 2, perhaps let's head to Perth in July to watch them play Manly. Definitely go to the grand finale, Warriors can go all

the way this year. But only a few weeks into the year, Karla was diagnosed with Stage 4 Breast Cancer & secondary liver cancer, and given the news that you are terminal. Nines trip was then cancelled & there world had been tipped upside down. Following this news, Dave lost his father suddenly & they grieved the loss of their Father, father in law and Grandfather while going through an extremely stressful time of their life.

For now, while they plan for what the future holds, they hope that they can make at least one game of their season membership. That game being Dave's Bday 9th April against Manly. Karla is hoping that with all the chemo and treatment that she's well enough to travel to be there to watch the team that's brought much joy and happiness to her family and on her husband's birthday.

I'm sure the NZ Warriors family wish Karla, Dave & the kids all the best on this rocky road, and that Karla & Dave will be there in October to watch their team win their first NRL Premiership.



The Tardieu Family



Mad Mike beaming after winning Nines Jersey courtesy of Butch! and team Yee Haaa!



Warriors player Simon Mannering during their Pre season NRL game Vodafone Warriors v St George Illawarra Dragons. Trafalgar Park, Nelson, New Zealand. Saturday 20 February 2016. Copyright Photo: Chris Symes / www.photosport.nz

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Here is the team that help me put together the newsletter each week. We have a number of fantastic contributors who send in content each week that along with my editorial gets wrapped up by our graphic designer and sent out by our distribution man to your inbox.

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